

Historical time and Latin American uprising: on suspension as a critical moment

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ABSTRACT

Following on some of the ideas proposed by Georges Didi-Huberman in an exhibition at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, this article offers reflections on uprising as a repetitive, sovereign, and collective gesture of a search for freedom. First, we define this idea of the uprising based on a series of recent works by authors such as Judith Butler, Elsa Dorlin, and Jacques Rancière. We will try to think about the relation between revolt, revolution and crisis, emphasizing the temporary characteristics of these terms. Following that, we specifically address the relationship between uprisings and the suspension of historical time that has been clearly proposed by the Italian historian Furio Jesi in *Spartakus*. This leads us to a review of the same notion of suspension from Walter Benjamin's perspective, while also considering proposals made by Giorgio Agamben and Aby Warburg as fundamental interlocutors. Finally, we will discuss the current state of the concept through the lenses of some recent occurrences in Latin America.

KEYWORDS

Historical time. Revolution. Image.

Introduction

In 2016, Georges Didi-Huberman curated an exhibition at the Jeu de Paume in Paris, which was repeated with some variations in other cities around the world such as Barcelona, Mexico, and Buenos Aires. The archontic principle of the exposition was linked to uprisings as a gesture, to insurrection as the interruption of a prolonged process of oppression, of a state of dispossession that has become intolerable. The exhibition coincided with the writing of the last book by Didi-Huberman's *The Eye of History* saga, *Peuples en larmes, peuples en armes* (2016) and in a way announces the beginning of the series, *Désirer désobéir: ce qui nous soulève* (2019).

This starting point allows us to review a powerful thesis from Giorgio Agamben about the breaking down of subjectivity in totalitarian contexts. As stated in *Homo Sacer* (1995), the first volume of his most important saga, the concentration camps reduced the lives of their victims to a merely biological existence deprived of rights. The controversial ideas of the Agambenian series became a theoretical parameter to explain other situations of social oppression. The authors that we will address below consider that the collective gesture of wanting to be free from oppression is never lost, even in the most challenging and unworthy conditions.

Convinced of the Freudian *dictum* on the indestructibility of desire, Didi-Huberman argues that desire is what pushes one to search for light in the darkness of oppression, no matter how great that oppression is. It is there, precisely, where the possibility of uprising opens up for one's own survival and for the emergence of hope and implies raising the gaze, the voice, the body.

Following some of these ideas, we will propose in the pages that follow a conception of uprising as a "gesture without end, continually starting again, sovereign, just as we can call sovereign the desire itself or that instinct, the 'push towards freedom' (*Freiheitsdrang*) that Sigmund Freud spoke of" (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p. 17). In the most diverse historical situations — tragic, seen as passive, of emotions marked as powerless by the tradition of political thought — it is possible to observe the gesture of insubordination. It is precisely this unexpected, extemporaneous and disruptive character of the revolt that we want to emphasize here. The revolt is not something that is expected as an inevitable link in the course of events, nor is it planned strategically and progressively in the strict sense. Rather, it supposes a suspension of historical time as an opportunity to a new time, a time of crisis that hopes to battle against the temporality of oppression. It will be necessary, at this point, to distinguish revolt, respectively, from revolution and crisis.

We will specifically examine the relationship between uprisings and the suspension of historical time that has been clearly proposed by Italian historian Furio Jesi in *Spartakus: simbologia della rivolta* (2000), which will lead us to a revision of the very notion of the suspension from Walter Benjamin's perspective, while also considering proposals made by Giorgio Agamben and Aby Warburg as fundamental interlocutors.

Uprisings

In her essay "Bodies in Alliance and The Politics of The Street" (2015) and inspired by the events of the so-called "Arab Spring" (2010-2012), Judith Butler wondered whether uprisings undermine the canonical notion of *naked life* expressed by Giorgio Agamben. Naked life gave an account of a form of existence without rights, which came into being with concentration camps (AGAMBEN, 2015, p. 79). Butler holds that the possibilities of political agency are surprisingly essential and that, certainly, the alienation of rights by political institutions is not identical to the impossibility of exercising those rights. The politics of "occupancy," of constituting a public space that responds to oppressive, stable, permanent forms that make up a significant part of politics, can clearly take place at any time.

There is a previous and brief text, titled "Uprising",¹ in which Butler announces the hypothesis that Didi-Huberman defends in *People in Tears, People in Arms*: before taking up arms, people have endured oppression "for too long," such that "every uprising is both urgent and belated" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 26). The uprising occurs when indignation is too great and when people have been denied the possibility of "living with dignity or freedom" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 23) for an excessive period of time.

Didi-Huberman maintains that in an uprising, an individual's emotions are transformed into a collective gesture. Similarly, Butler argues that there is no single act, no matter how provocative or how much indignation it gives rise to. What causes an uprising can never belong to a solitary individual: "Those who rise up do so together" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 23), Butler states. The indignation that motivates the uprising may be individual, but it finds recognition in the shared circumstance and in what Butler calls "a first moment of gathering" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 25), although a revolt is far from being

¹ Acknowledging that the specificities of each singular event may lead to favoring one concept over the other, we use "uprising" and "revolt" as synonyms given the impetuous nature that characterizes them both as historical phenomena. The notion of "revolution", on the other hand, even though it also entails a bet on discontinuity, will remain linked, as we will explain, to the seizure of power and the critical destabilization of its institutions—which is not always the case with "uprisings" and "revolts".

a meeting, in principle, no matter the level of recognition that creates it or the level of activism among networks it maintains. This refers in some way to the definition that Jesi addresses and that we anticipate here, in which the revolt cannot be thought but in terms of the collective.

Everyone experiences the epiphany of the same symbols — everyone's individual space, dominated by one's personal symbols, by the shelter from historical time that everyone enjoys in their individual symbology and mythology, expands, becoming the symbolic space common to an entire collective, the shelter from historical time in which the collective finds safety (JESI, 2014, p. 53).

Butler's reflection is based on the presence of the body in the public space and what comes into play in that occupancy, whether physical or virtual, in terms of permanence and not of occasional visibility. Actually, "an uprising has to happen again and again, relying on the concerted physical actions of those who rise up" (BUTLER, 2016, p. 32). Of course, this condition supposes a terrible risk: the death of the rebels and the failure of the revolt. As the author explains, failure is part of the definition itself. We can find an expression of the relation between revolt and failure in an example taken from Elsa Dorlin's *Se defendre* (2018). She recalls the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and its deep political meaning — although its evident destiny, even for the partisans themselves, was a failure. Dorlin cites the words of Menachem Kirszenbaum and the message that was sent to the Nazis as the self-defense was organized: "We declare war on Germany. This must be the most desperate declaration of war ever made. We will see whether the Jews can achieve the right to die in battle" (DORLIN, 2018, p. 92, our translation).

Antonio Negri follows this line of thought. He also states that uprisings are caused by a multiplicity of singularities, but that it is a "collective adventure" that leads to "the interruption [that] can become the place of utopia" (NEGRI, 2016, p. 39). This act produces subjectivities that come together in an "active we" moved by what qualifies as a desire that, in Spinozian terms, is motivated by joyful passions that determine the "cupiditas, the desire for freedom and happiness" that "are not exhausted in arson and looting, in border crossings and clandestine existences and occupations. On the contrary, they are excited, they suffer their no-making it as a harsh limit that must be overcome at all costs, not as a form of impotence" (NEGRI, 2016, p. 41).

As proposed by Negri, we could think that the revolt supposes a set of collective powerful affects. These are not "positive" in a traditional sense of the term, but rather

in the sense that they increase the capacity for action of the collective that embodies them. This is the reason why indignation (Butler), failure (Butler and Dorlin) or sadness (as we will see shortly) can be understood as affects that drive social transformation.

In the catalog of Didi-Huberman's *Uprisings*, it is also Jacques Rancière who, concerned as he is with the potentially passive nature of the spectator, holds that people in revolt are a multitude of spectators — passive by definition but potentially agents — like those who salute the battleship from the stairs in Odessa. The reference is obvious: Sergei Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* (BRONENOSETS POTESKIN, 1925). Didi-Huberman gives a detailed study of this film in a variety of works, minutely analyzing what he calls the "scene of lamentation" over the death of the rioter Vakulinchuk, who, as the film states in part III, "demands justice." This sequence closely follows the gestures of dejection and the genuflecting bodies of those who mourn the sailor in order to observe the transformation that is produced when individuals are convinced that, as a "we," they are able to resist and demand reparation. But Rancière refers to the sequence that comes immediately after, in which the people of Odessa decide to resist the army that is approaching to suppress them, activating the dialectical displacement from passivity to action. When the guards attack them and force them to come down from the steps, the people of Odessa have no choice but to move. Considering this, Rancière argues that a first action is always necessary to transform *pathos* into reaction, to conjugate "movement and rest" (RANCIÈRE, 2016, p. 55). The only thing that mediates between spectating bodies and action is the suspension of immobility: that means, the movement. We must only consider that the word "spectator" has, in its Latin etymology, a root (*spectator, spectatoris*) that implies the habit of looking and observing. Therefore, the spectator is the observer, but they are also someone who has contemplated something and can bear witness. This connotation related to critical assessment is what can be considered in Rancière's idea of the emancipated spectator.

It is precisely in the tension established between movement and rest that we can think of the relationship between uprisings and historical time. Marie-José Mondzain recognizes this sphere as a playing field in which a radical discontinuity and a challenge are configured. The challenge is that of risk and of the abyss of the transitional. She remembers, in this sense, that it is the tension between insurrection and peace that defines the functioning of democracy. The Greeks expressed this dynamic with the notion of "stasis," which expresses "both the fixed, stable state of what stands firm, and the insurrectional movement about to trigger civil war" (MONDZAIN, 2016, p. 55). Stasis is configuration and destruction at the same time, a caesura that both holds together and separates insurrectional uprisings from order, which otherwise would be nothing other than bureaucracy, in the author's view.

Based on these considerations, we propose to revise Benjamin's idea of a "dialectics in suspense", which is linked in his philosophy with the time of the revolution. We propose a dialogue between Benjamin and Jesi's, Warburg's and Agamben's considerations on times of uprising. On the one hand, we maintain that the revolution contains the uprising, but uprisings and not revolutions cause that suspension of the linear course. They establish a time that is different from the homogenous and empty one — bourgeois temporality, the temporality of domination, in Benjamin's terms, for example — , a time in which anything could happen, even if it is not the establishment of a revolutionary story and a new order. On the other hand, we distinguish uprisings from crises, in the way that Reinhart Koselleck understands it (1972; 2007). In some of its many meanings, the crisis supposes — for this author — a kind of suspension of historical time. However—as we believe there is a difference of magnitude. If the crisis implies change, the revolt is pure opportunity; moreover, the suspense of the revolt can be suspended.

That which rises

Furio Jesi understands uprisings with careful attention to their differences from revolutions. The latter aims to establish a new order with new institutions. Dan Edelstein has given significant specificity to this idea: revolutionary collectives confer authority to a subject (individual or collective) as a mediating instance towards a future of equality. In contrast, an uprising implies the pure suspension of historical time, a rejection of institutions and this is where the authentic moment of the collective is produced.

As Andrea Cavalletti argues, the uprising does not establish the time of the dream, even if it uses the dream as a rhetorical image in public protests, and if the dream appears discursively among protestors. On the contrary, one could say that it is "only in the instant of revolt that human beings live in a waking state" (CAVALLETTI, 2014, p. 14-15), that they awake from the temporality of bourgeois productivity, which presupposes cross-linking and solitude.

Uprisings, then, propose a certain detention, but they also seem more linked to the "immobile time of myth" (JESI, 2014, p. 40) in the sense of a crystallization of a present that opens a time that did not exist. Jesi expresses as follows: the time of the uprising is not that of the revolution. Although the desire in both circumstances may be the same — in short, seizing power — uprisings imply an experience of time within "a strategic horizon [that] does not in itself imply a long-distance strategy" (JESI, 2014, p. 46). In contrast to a revolution, which orients final objectives in the long term, an

uprising “suspends historical time” and “suddenly institutes a time in which everything that is done has a value in itself” (JESI, 2014, p. 46). That is, every action implies a commitment to the present and the assumption of risks, given that the consequences are not known and cannot be foreseen; “every revolt is a battle, but a battle in which one has deliberately chosen to participate” (JESI, 2014, p. 53).

The revolt is thus distinguished, not only from the revolution, but also from the crisis. It was Koselleck who devoted much of his work to the study of this concept. In *Kritik und Krise* (1959) and in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1972), the crisis occupies a meaningful piece of his reflections. However, the polysemy of the term is so extensive that it is possible to find scattered meanings in Koselleck’s work. Lucila Svampa (2016) and Gennaro Imbriano (2013) agree on at least two definitions that overlap with the way in which we are thinking about the revolt here: the interruption of historical time. In one sense, the crisis constitutes a situation where a series of mutually exclusive alternatives emerge. Then they demand an absolutely radical decision. In the other sense, the crisis represents a moment of irrevocable historical transition towards a better or a worse situation.

Janet Roitman (2014) points out the performative character that the notion of crisis has today for the construction of historical narratives. It is usual to hear about financial crises, climatic and ecological crises or the “crisis of the Middle East” to designate a certain state of things, both exceptional and permanent, that allows an epistemological access to the historical course. It is oriented by the question: how did we get to this point?

In these mentioned meanings, “crisis” contains the characteristics of exceptionality (momentary or permanent), implies an uncertainty about the future and a kind of reconsideration of the past under new epistemic keys. Unlike the crisis, the revolt, as a pure suspension, pure opportunity, can be suspended.

Let us consider the Chilean case. The uprising that began in October 2019 and led to the convocation of a Constitutional Assembly to revoke Pinochet’s constitution seems to have been suspended. Of the hundreds of thousands of young bodies in the Plaza Dignidad who clashed against the conformity of the transition, all that remains is the slowed pulse of intellectual interventions and the sensation of suspended time characteristic of isolation. Nelly Richard explains it this way: “Then came the pandemic. As we know, its interruption of the restless pace of a present in Chile of collective mobilization: its suspension of the future in a stationary, diluted, confused time;

also its emptying of public spaces, its quarantine and police patrolling the streets” (RICHARD, 2020, n. p.).

We do not mean here that the revolt in Chile has ended in failure: In October 2020, 80% of voters ratified their desire, and practically on the anniversary of the uprising, the confirmation of its motivations was celebrated. We *do* want to point out the temporary nature of the revolt, its relationship with the interruption and the way in which the murmur can be suspended.

Historical time and space determine the symbolic grid of the uprising, the stability of which depends on the instant and its opening to refuge in contrast to “normal time” that “is not just a bourgeois concept of time but the outcome of a bourgeois manipulation of time” (JESI, 2014, p. 61). The uprising should not be thought in terms of a project with a determined historical subject and a teleology in some transcendent sense. Sergio Villalobos-Ruminott expresses this problem as follows: “what matters is when the moment of the uprising is forced to pass through the logic of a particular historical situation, its untimely condition is sacrificed, subordinating its force to a particular political rationality” (VILLALOBOS-RUMINOTT, 2021, n. p. , our translation). Therefore, we can state that the uprising has a catastrophic, unplanned, anomic nature, contrary to the discipline that comes with the modern project.

Now, how should we think about historical time? What is the most appropriate illustration of it? An interruption? An explosion? A pause? We will analyze this in the following two sections.

Time of revolt

Benjamin conceived suspension as a form of caesura, an inexorable detention for the appearance of history (what was previously articulated as a dynamic between discontinuity and detention). Within this complex notion of a dialectical image are the *now*, the past time, and — as it is continually stopping and moving, surviving — the future and the dimension of desire that belongs to it. We could read in *The Arcades Project* as follows:

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of

the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language. Awakening [N 2 a, 3] (BENJAMIN, 2002, p. 462).

From Benjamin's perspective, we must think of the uprising in terms of an interruption, which is also the detention of a conceptualization of history and its actors. For the author, the struggle against fascism is also against the paralyzing dogmatism of the concept of progress as it appears in the theses of *On the Concept of History*. Benjamin argues against Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* diagnosis of the failure of the revolutions of 1848. It was not class background that stood in the way of the transformative power of the uprisings, but rather their inability to assign new meaning to history, having understood it in the same terms as the enemy. For Benjamin, the "stubborn faith in progress" is common to fascism, communism, and social democracy (1969, p. 258). As is manifested in thesis XIII, the subject that fights is not a social class or a specific group with a specific demand but rather whoever truly manages to grasp an instant of consciousness of lived injustices as an opportunity for emancipation (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 262-3).

In Benjamin's work, there is a criticism of the representation of time as homogeneous and empty, which must be replaced by another that encapsulates the criticism of this representation of historical movement. Indeed, the author believes that this must constitute the basis of the criticism of the representation of progress at all. Thesis XIII articulates three criticisms that are the foundation for a new vision of history: first, that we must distinguish between human (social, moral) progress and scientific and technological progress; second, that we must interrupt the logic of a progress that has been infinite and consolidated centuries of exploitation; third, that indefinite progress consolidated a continuous time that has been the inexorable continuity of oppression. With these considerations in mind, Benjamin demands a rethinking of the representation of time such that it expresses interruption, fissures in an indefinite road of oppression. This time is heterogeneous and full, in opposition to the homogeneous, empty, and continuous nature of the time of progress. The time of interruption is included in thesis XIV, in which Benjamin proposes the other side of the homogenizing dogmatism of progressivism: "History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by, the presence of the now (*Jetztzeit*)" (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 261).

In his work on Benjamin's theses, Michael Löwy refers to a letter that Adorno sent to Horkheimer after receiving a copy of the theses. In it, Adorno compares the conception of time in thesis XIV to Paul Tillich's *kairos*. This member of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research opposed *chronos*, formal time, to *kairos*, as a "full" historical time in which every instant implied a unique opportunity for opening. Löwy's interpretation regarding this mention of *kairos* is that Benjamin does not directly refer either to a "now time" or a messianic time but rather to the present, which is defined in thesis XVI as follows: "A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop" (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 262).

According to John E. Smith (2002, p. 47), the expression "a time for" is a translation of the term *kairos*, a good time to do something, "an appropriate time." This aspect of time must be distinguished from *chronos*, which alludes to time as a system and a measurement, a quantity of duration, a length of periodicity. *Kairos*, then, refers to the qualitative nature of time and emphasizes the aspect of meaning and the idea that there are constellations of occurrences full of possibilities that arise in that concrete temporal position and not at other times and under other circumstances. For Smith, the connections between *kairos* and *chronos* have been and can be interpreted in multiple ways, but he proposes that *kairos* supposes *chronos*, that is, that the latter is a necessary condition underlying qualitative time, which implies that, in itself, *chronos* is not sufficient for us to understand the specific historical interpretations or processes of the human experience. *Kairos* means a time of tension and conflict, a time of crisis that implies that the course of events poses a problem that clamors for a solution, but this crisis brings with it a time of opportunity.

According to Agamben's interpretation in *The Time That Remains*, we must go back to the definition of *kairos* that appears in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*: "chronos is that in which there is kairos, and kairos is that in which there is little chronos" (AGAMBEN, 2005, p. 68-69). In this definition, it becomes evident that we must not only think of it as an opportunity or an occasion but that *kairos* has no other time, rather a "contracted and abridged chronos" (AGAMBEN, 2005, p. 73). It is a time for transformation and reform. *Kairos* is, for example, the appearance of Christ, who, in Christian theology, comes *in kairos*, that is, as "full time." This time implies culmination in temporal development marked by the manifestation of God in a real historical order.

Both Löwy and Tillich apply the concept to the interpretation of history, in which the dynamic is found in those individuals and movements that seek to identify the opportunity in some crucial occurrence in history to suture in the form of a

transformative action. Smith identifies this with the period of perfect self-knowledge in Hegel, with the idea of the classless society in Marx, and with the final state of science or positive philosophy in Comte. For Tillich, these would be *kairoi* in the absolute sense, in that they serve as ideas that determine the responses to all occasions in which the opportunity presents itself — or is perceived — as existing in some current constellation of events. In keeping with these considerations on *kairos*, there is no need or logic, either physical or economic, in the historical process because they are assumed as something that moves through the unity of freedom and destiny that distinguishes history from the natural order.

Kairos appears, then, as an interruption in the continuity and homogeneity of chronological time such that the fissure can come about; such that, bearing in mind Benjamin's criticism of progress, the interruption of the logic of domination and, with it, the catastrophe, become possible. The experience of time as *kairos* is precisely the condition of possibility for any truly transformative activity. Following Benjamin, Agamben interprets the relationship between history, time, and action as follows:

Every conception of history is invariably accompanied by a certain experience of time which is implicit in it, conditions it, and thereby has to be elucidated. Similarly, every culture is first and foremost a particular experience of time, and no new culture is possible without an alteration in this experience. The original task of a genuine revolution, therefore, is never merely to 'change the world', but also — and above all — to 'change time' (AGAMBEN, 1993, p. 91).

"Changing time" implies modifying the general perception and assuming a different logic with which to traverse an experience. This requires an examination of the epigraph by Karl Klaus that appears at the beginning of thesis XIV: "Origin is the goal" (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 261). This goal alludes to a return to the lost paradise through *tikkun*, *apocatastasis*, *restitutio omnium*, but it also implies a diversion of the established order, that is, an alternative path to the one given. This is Benjamin's call to revolution, in terms of interruption of the domination's temporality, understood, then, as "a Messianic cessation of happening, or, put differently, a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past" (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 263). As is evident, Benjamin is interested in the notion of revolution because of the temporality of its origin and the new time — a full time — that it inaugurates. For Benjamin, what is revolutionary is that moment of suspension that here, in the terms of more contemporary authors, we are calling revolt.

In thesis XIV, “revolution” is linked to fashion, and, in turn, the temporality of fashion is identified with that of Hell, as an eternal repetition of the same. That is why the dominant classes can hide behind fashion. By contrast, revolution is the interruption of that eternal hellish return of fashion to leave space for profound actions, a leap outside the continuum, whose temporality is not that of *chronos* but rather a kairological leap toward the past and the future. The past contains the now and explodes chronology through another representation and another conception of time and historical processes.

Thesis XV revisits the idea of the “explosion” (*aufsprengen*): “The awareness that they are about to make the continuum of history explode is characteristic of the revolutionary classes at the moment of their action” (BENJAMIN, 1969, p. 261). The oppressed of all times (the revolutionary classes) are responsible for the revolutionary explosion, from which they must derive what Benjamin refers to as a “new calendar” to become a “historical time-lapse camera” (1969, p. 261). In the revolutionary explosion, all past times of revolution are condensed (the French Revolution is a nodal point to which Benjamin refers on various occasions). The new calendar implies a full time, a *kairos*, a time loaded with memory and the contemporary at once. These revolutionary beginnings are under permanent threat from historical conformism that will try to systematically interrupt this kairological time. Empty temporality is, in this thesis on clocks, the literalization of quantitative and measurable time par excellence (it therefore makes sense that the 1830 revolutionaries shot at the clocks, as Benjamin describes). The time of clocks also appears as an evident accomplice to domination by industrial and capitalist civilization, with a time marked by production and factory work (in sharp contrast in Benjamin’s terms to primitive societies, which are not only classless but also, in a way, timeless).

This logic of history — removed from the chronological and the linear — transforms history into a dissemination of images in which all kinds of time play out, invoking a scattered historicity in which the now is past and the past is desire and decadence. To provide continuity to the essential discontinuity of history, Benjamin considers the montage as a fundamental method. History is image; image is the starting point of history.

The interval and the pause

In the early 1920s, Aby Warburg introduced the notion of the dynamogram, which we have discussed elsewhere (LOSIGGIO; TACCETTA, 2019, p. 69-76). Dynamograms are affective elements of the historical *pathos* that are repeated over time and take the

form of images. They bring novelty and open spaces for thought. Warburg highlights the temporality of these dynamograms: they are never derived from a causal chain, but instead represent leaps or intervals (*Zwischenräume*) that come before a reorganization of the course of history (WARBURG, 1923 *apud* GOMBRICH, 1970, p. 253). Various authors have connected the interval to the effects of the montage in cinema (MICHAUD, 2006; DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2017; KLUGE, 2010).

Philip-Alain Michaud (2006) studies this cinematic quality of Warburg's thought and points out that the main feature is movement, that is, the way in which the work of art tries to capture the subject in action. He thinks of history as a montage and shows that Warburg's philosophy of image leads art history to the observation of moving bodies. In this sense, the nascent art of cinema, contemporary to Warburg, makes visible the gradual transmission of moving figures toward the animistic reproduction of the living beings; hence cinema's ability to reproduce corporeal fluidity in the same way that the eye is trained to capture the body in movement.

Although it is difficult to translate the notion of "*Zwischenraum*" (literally, "the space in between"), it leads us to think about what takes place between images, i.e., in the gaps, in the intervals. According to this principle, *Mnemosyne* could be thought of as an iconology of intervals in which Warburg builds a topographic memoir of history and art. It is an iconology that does not place importance on the significance of the figures, but rather on the relationships that these figures form with each other in a visual apparatus "irreducible to the order of discourse" (MICHAUD, 2006, p. 12). The key concepts to understanding it are the notions of introspection and montage. There are two procedures inherent to history and film, and that in the black plates in *Mnemosyne* are the key to exploring the origins of the reasons that account for enigmatic pre-discursive function.

Michaud claims that Warburg's attempts can be linked to the Humanities in the late 19th century, but he speculates that the history of cinema may be where we can find a better equivalent for the work with images and history. Thus, works of art and films are open not only to a purely or exclusively artistic dimension but also to concerns related to temporality and history. Indeed, *Mnemosyne* can be thought of as a device to follow the migration of figures throughout the history of representations and even the most prosaic strata of modern culture. It deliberately rejects art's normative hierarchies, enabling an image's extra-artistic definition.

Mnemosyne's chains of images construct a sense, producing a new language in art history, like a visual syntax built on intervals in which meaning arises. In Warburg's atlas, the subjective dimension is displaced to the "in between" images; in film, something

similar happens because montage behaves like a physical and material suture and allows the meaning to emerge “in” the suture, which is both diachronic and synchronic.

This idea of the interval that exists between one image and another finds profound political meaning (related to uprisings) in the metaphor, used by Warburg himself, of catching one’s breath, of a pause before beginning the march again (WARBURG, 2010, p. 178). Through an analysis of a work by Rembrandt, Warburg proposes that, contrary to hegemonic institutions, uprisings are not necessarily a moment of unconscious euphoria but rather an interval, a space for thought that allows for beginning again.

Our hypothesis follows the proposals of various authors who maintain that Warburg’s interest in Rembrandt is a direct response to the surge of antisemitism and the advance of fascism throughout Europe (WARNKE, 1999; SCHOELL GLASS, 2008; RAMPLEY, 2010). It is said that in his 1926 conference, Warburg argued against the propagandistic use of the Dutch painter’s work in the late 19th century. The Pan-German art critic Julius Langbehn’s books, and especially his work compiling images in *Rembrandt as Educator* (1890) had become dangerously popular and associated Rembrandt with the *volkisch*. The latter book had been reedited twenty times in six months. In his conference, Warburg wanted to distance Rembrandt from what was understood during that period as “patriotic art” (WARBERG, 2010, p. 174).

The conference places the focus on the historical motive of the conspiracy of the Batavi, in 69-70 AD, led by Claudius Civilis (Julius Civilis) against the Romans. Rembrandt’s *The Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis* was commissioned to decorate the new town hall in Amsterdam and, as we know today, it was only hung on its walls between 1660 and 1662 because the painter’s pictorial decision did not satisfy the authorities. Far from showing the heroism of the armed leader, Rembrandt opted to illustrate a curious scene of conspiracy and revenge in which Claudius called on other tribal leaders to plan the uprising. It is not a scene of violence, but of calm, of the pause for thought that comes before collective action. The discomfort, according to Warburg, arose because the representation of popular uprising was associated with reflection and a particular relationship with the leader. Rembrandt redeems the spirit of a “popular will” and a “behavior with the chief that is absolutely opposed to emperor worship” (WARBERG, 2010, p. 176, our translation). It is evidently a contrast between Claudius and Mussolini.

According to Warburg, official Dutch art transmitted the sovereign-subject relationship in the Roman style instead of the Germanic one. Rembrandt recovered the relationship of the people with the ancient Germanic king: he imagined that relationship determined by the popular will instead of a relationship of worship in which the people are subject

to the leader's whims. The painter — counterintuitively — imagines the uprising, then, as a collective reflection. And his own experience with the past is illustrated as an “ever transient pause between impulse and action” (2010, p. 178, our translation). Warburg feels an identification with Rembrandt: “it depends on us how much we give to lengthen, with the help of Mnemosyne, this pause for breath” (WARBERG, 2010, p. 178, our translation).

Final considerations

Considering what we have so far discussed on uprisings, the interruption of the historical course and the interval as a polarity between reflection and action, we find many points in common with our current situation in Latin America. In the late 2010s and early 2020s, the current was marked by uprisings. In Argentina in early 2018, feminism occupied the streets, demanding the legalization of the right to voluntary interruption of pregnancy; in October 2019, Chileans mounted mass protests against a long series of regressive economic measures that culminated in the decision made by Sebastian Piñera's neoliberal government to increase the cost of public transportation tickets. Similar motives mobilized Guatemalans in 2020 after the Congress approved a highly unpopular budget for the following year. In 2021, workers, farmers, and students in Colombia rose up against the increase in social and institutional violence this country has been subject to for sixty years. In all these cases, the uprisings made visible the histories of injury to life, and, except for Argentina, the governments tried to quiet them through the use of force, murdering protestors, but also through old and new techniques of social discipline. A documentary video by *The New York Times* recorded for the first time testimonies about the Chilean police's recourse of attacking protester's eyes in the most intense months of the uprising.

These cases allow us to return to the arguments we have aimed to include in these pages. The uprising is the occupation of the street and the suspension of historical time, which must be read as the coming together of desires and powers. Not even the pandemic managed to cut this process short, and the suspension, the pause before movement, ratified the discussion of the type of democratic imaginary that must be sustained in Latin America. During the uprising, the streets of Chile were filled with bodies and, in particular, with the slogan: “Chile has woken up,” which they shouted and sang. Waking up is also that pause before getting up, in the same way that the suspension of the pandemic can be the moment of catching one's breath before the new constitution.

Lifting their eyes and maintaining their gaze seem to have been the greatest disobedience of the Chilean people in 2019. They wanted not only to see, but to regulate their images; they wanted not only to lift their eyes, but to instate a new regime of vision to take on injustice. That is why the army mutilated their eyes with an utter lack of decency. If we paraphrase, Butler might say that all those eyes deserve to be mourned because they saw the suffering, the frustration, and the challenge of moving from *pathos* to the *ethos* of standing beside others. There was no “Liberty” in Chile guiding the people because all the iconography of the 19th century has been replaced by an urgent multitude that was erected on the ruins of the 21st century and proclaimed visible and obstinate bodies; sometimes powerless, never defeated. Because as “the tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living,” as Marx argues in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, now the eyes of Chilean look at pain head on, transforming it into discourse, demand, rage, and uprising.

In this article we have tried to define the revolt as that collective gesture of insubordination that responds to social oppression, even in those situations of extreme violation of rights that seem most incontestable. Revolt can arise in social contexts that appear to be extremely passive and where the saddest and most unproductive affects seem to be observed. We have pointed out the unexpected character of the revolt, in its specific temporality, which differs from the temporality of the revolution and the crisis. The time of revolt is the time of suspension, of the opening of an opportunity-for. Its time, we have seen, is also risky: it can become a failure.

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