

Communication without anesthesia¹

DOI: 10.1590/1809-5844201719

Laan Mendes de Barros

(Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”, Faculdade de Arquitetura, Artes e Comunicação, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação. Bauru – SP, Brasil)

Abstract

This article presents epistemological reflections about communication and aesthetic experience, that are part of the author’s research is making in the Communications theory field. The communication taken as a sensible experience, lived in the esthesia plane, of sensibility, thought in the sharing perspective, making it ordinary, and its interactions between individual and its appropriation community. The article concerns about the sense making question, regarded both in *poiesis*, that characterizes the aesthetic object constitution, and in *aesthesis*, present in the perception exercise of this objects by the spectator, marked by polyphony and polysemy. Deals also with the interpretation question in the comprehension and otherness mindset, modulated by particulars cultural and communicational mediations of the mediated contemporary society. This way, it proposes that the communications should be thought from the interactive perspective, without anesthesia.

Keywords: Aesthetic Experience. Esthesia. Sensibility. Sense making. Communication epistemology

Introduction

In this article we present some connections between communication and aesthetic experience. This is taken here as a sensitive experience, lived in the *esthesis* plan; i.e., in the plan of perception and sensibility. It is that experience that involves the individual and his or her appropriation communities in a participatory process in which communication occurs. In this case, it actually happens as communication and not simply as transmission of messages. The receiver, much more than a receptacle, is a subject of the production of meanings. It is a subject, who thinks and feels, that is not anesthetized, or “drugged”² in his or her relationship to the media. We can then think of the aesthetic experience as communication without anesthesia.

1 This article is a reviewd and expanded version of the one presented in the Communication and Aesthetic Experience Work Group of the XXV Compós Annual Encounter, which happened in June of 2016, in the city of Goiânia-Goiás-Brazil.

2 Merton and Lazarsfeld in their well-known text *Comunicação de massa, gosto popular e a organização da ação social* (ie. “Mass communication, popular taste and the organization of social action” 1978, p.114) call the process in which the media leads people to a frame of alienation a “narcotic dysfunction”.

The characterization of our field of study as an “Applied Social Science” and the implementation of communication courses in Brazil as professionalization training ended up by strengthening the emphasis on studies of media and of media products from an instrumental perspective and of the very communication process in the logic of transmission. Of course, there are many studies that apply a critical eye upon the communicational phenomena and even several approaches proposing the comprehension of communication as interaction. But it is frequently possible to observe a contradiction between research and the teaching of Communication, present in the confrontation between transmission and interaction in the concepts of Communication. It can also be observed that a rationalist and linear view of communication is predominant. This is seen in the key of *explanation* – which limits the production of meanings to the encoding and decoding operations – and not of *understanding* – that beyond the transmission and reception instances extends the production of meanings to the dynamics of interpretation, in articulations between text and context.

The intersubjectivity that occurs in communicational relations needs to be valued and the aesthetic dimension of the communication phenomena needs to be recognized. We know, of course, that media reception is distinct from the aesthetic enjoyment. This one happens in the contours of information and entertainment and is marked by a certain immediacy and daily proximity, while the other takes place in a more refined sphere of culture and implies a more attentive and sensitive posture on the part of the person who enjoys it. But we think that they can and should be thought of as complementary operations in communication, which increasingly sees itself linked to the arts and culture domains.

To consider communication as an aesthetic experience can help us understand the production of meaning as a sensible activity, carried out by active and creative, conscious and critical subjects. It can help us to recognize links between communication and arts, both very much present in media culture. That’s why the readings discussed here transit between theories of Communication and elements of Sociology of Culture as well as the phenomenology of the aesthetic experience. We do not intend in this text to develop a more elaborate structure of these different fields of knowledge. The concepts and authors here visited are brought only as supports for the connections between communication and aesthetic experience aiming at deepening interdisciplinary perspectives in the research in Communication and media culture. This article, being of a theoretical nature and the result of bibliographic research, aims to contribute, even in a modest way, to this epistemological debate.

Esthesia and the studies on Communication

The word *anesthesia* – *an-esthesia* – means absence of sensibility. *Esthesia*, from the Greek root *aisthēsis*, means *sensation, sensibility*. Hence the use of the word *anesthesia* in the medical field to indicate blockage of pain, and even conscience of pain, when the patient is about to undergo a surgery or any treatment that might cause pain. For this reason we can use the word to point out the absence of consciousness. What is true either for a state of amnesia, i.e., partial or temporary loss of memory, or for the state of alienation in relation to reality. Esthesia has to do with sensibility, affectivity or emotion. According to Sodré (2006, p.86 – Our translation), *Aisthesis* (sensibility, esthesis) “is both sensation and sensible perception”. *Aisthēsis* is also the source for the word *aesthetic*, used here in the composite expression *aesthetic experience*, in the sense of an action full of sensibility or of perception of reality. It is used in the field of the philosophy of art, both in reference to the constitution of the aesthetic object, and as the exercise of aesthetic perception. Whether in the creation or in the enjoyment of a work of art, the experience that happens is of a sensible nature. In particular, in the domain of the aesthetic perception, it is the sensibility of the spectator – in the historical time and in the social place where he is – that regulates the fruition. If the production of a work, considering its Greek root *poiesis*, can be understood as a *poetic experience*, the exercise of reception, which involves appropriation and production of meanings, can be defined as an *aesthetic experience*. From this perspective, the aesthetic experience can be understood as a sensible perception, full of sensations.

According to Rancière, the term *Aisthesis* designates a kind of experience that embraces our perception of many different things. It is an experience that involves “the modes of perception and emotion mechanisms as categories that identify them, and the thought patterns that classify and interpret them. These conditions allow words, shapes, movements and rhythms to be felt and thought of as art”³ (RANCIÈRE, 2011, p.10 – Our translation).

It is good to insist, therefore, that the human experience in which the production of meaning happens is not limited to the gears of coding and decoding a message. It goes beyond the boundaries of pure reason, questioned by Kant (1994), who proposes us reconciliation between the intelligible and the sensible. The conception of aesthetics presented by Baumgarten (1993) as a space of sensible experiences marked by movements of intuition and interpretation, seems to correspond better to what happens in the encounter between the work and the viewer, in this case an active spectator who keeps alive his or her consciousness and intense sensibility.

3 From the original: “...des modes de perception et des régimes d’émotion, des catégories qui les identifient, des schèmes de pensée qui les classent et les interprètent. Ces conditions rendent possible que des paroles, des formes, des mouvements, des rythmes soient ressentis et pensés comme de l’art”.

To ponder communication in the sphere of the aesthetic experience implies, therefore, to believe in the human person as a being endowed with insight and sensibility, that is, as a conscious, aware, sensible and creative subject. It is in this perspective that we propose this text, which seeks links between communication, culture and aesthetic experience, which aims at establishing links with other disciplines, with special attention to the relationship between communication and the arts. A more complex comprehension of communication in contemporary society demands a broader view than that of the technicalist and rationalist approaches that now predominate. The approach which includes the arts, the aesthetics and the hermeneutics can help us in this endeavor, especially when we turn to issues of production of meanings in the communication processes and to constitutive forms of media products with their varied languages.

In a brief retrospective view of Communication theories, it is possible to note that reception is understood in most cases as a passive and insensible instance. And interestingly, one of the first theories of Communication, created in the interwar period of the twentieth century, was called “theory of the hypodermic needle”, which suggested the possibility of the media to reach the “target audience”, so named in a quite blunted way. The receiver, considered a passive subject, was to be anaesthetized under the effects of this “needle” that would inject doses of alienation in him. Such a theory originated from an American matrix which bet on the possibility of the media manipulation of the masses. It considered the relationship between the media and the receivers from a behaviorist perspective and explained the media’s control over the public as based on stimulus-response or cause-effect relationships. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1993, p.182 – Our translation) summarize the fundamental idea of the theory of the hypodermic needle (also called “theory of magic bullet”): “The fundamental idea is that media messages are received in a uniform manner by the members of the audience and that immediate and direct answers are triggered by such stimuli”.

In the same line, Wolf (2012, p.7 – Our translation) defines how the public is converted into “mass” in the hypodermic needle theory: “The mass consists of a homogeneous set of individuals that in this quality are essentially the same, indistinguishable, even if they come from different heterogeneous environments and all social groups”. This emptying of individualities, the contempt for the differences and the omission of social contradictions, seem to suggest the existence of an amorphous mass of individuals without particular identities and sensibilities. The author speaks of this weakness of the audience and of prospects of manipulation present in the theory of the hypodermic needle:

Therefore, the physical and ‘normative’ isolation of the individual in the mass is the factor that largely explains the emphasis that the hypodermic theory

attributes to the manipulative skills of the early media (...) the mass is an aggregate that is born and lives beyond community ties and over against these same ties. It results from the disintegration of local cultures and in it the communicative functions are necessarily impersonal and anonymous. The frailty of a helpless and passive *audience* comes precisely from this dissolution and this fragmentation (WOLF, 2012, p. 23 – Our translation).

When the singularity of the individuals and the peculiarities of the social groups are superimposed by the idea of mass, the conception that one has of communication is quite linear and fatalistic. The ubiquity and power of the media are extolled and the universe of reception is reduced to a mere passive audience. What we have is an anesthetizing communication and an anaesthetized audience. What is worst, this anesthesia does not necessarily prevent pain and malaise. This is so because the alienation and apathy may delay but not avoid the suffering of those who are under the control of a manipulative system and therefore have no freedom of thought and feeling.

Even with the relativization of the idea of manipulation – present in persuasion theories in their empirical-experimental approach, in functionalism in its positivist view of society, or in the theories of “uses and gratifications” and “of the limited effects”, – the predominant communicational thinking assumed a causal comprehension regarding the relationship between the public and the media. The focus was on the media effects. The logic of theoretical formulations integrated to the actions of the media and of the universe of propaganda maintained itself within the framework of transmission. The receiver continued to be treated as a “target audience” to be reached and understood as an anesthetized subject without sensibility.

Even when a critical view on mass culture was adopted – as is the case of the Frankfurt School theories – the receiver continued to be treated as a thing, as the object of an action, not as a subject. As Theodor Adorno wrote, in cultural industry the consumer-receiver has no consciousness. He or she is a mere accessory of the machinery. For Adorno (1987, p.287 – Our translation) “the cultural industry is the deliberate integration, from top down, of its consumers”. He details the process of control exercised by the media on the population:

To the extent that in this process the cultural industry undeniably speculates on the state of consciousness and unconsciousness of millions of people, whom it tries to reach, the masses are not then the first factor, but a secondary element, an assessment element, an accessory of the machinery. The customer is not a king, as the culture industry would have people to believe, he is not the subject of this industry, but its object (ADORNO, 1987, p.288 – Our translation).

As it turns out, Adorno is emphatic in his criticism on the cultural industry. According to him, it objectifies the human being, turning him into “an accessory of the machinery”. The final product of the cultural industry is the consumer himself, an alienated being, anesthetized by the communicational apparatus. In the Frankfurtian perspective, “the viewer has no need of any personal thinking. The product prescribes every reaction” (ADORNO, HORKHEIMER, 1985, p.128 – Our translation). As it can be seen, from the perspective of so-called Critical Theory, what you have is a spectator without consciousness, without sensibility and discernment, a victim of the “perverse” action of the media, i.e., a viewer incapable of feeling *esthesis*.

Not even in the first studies on reception, the so-called “audience research”, the receiver came out of a passive condition. The public continued to be treated as an object for the action of media, in a quantitative and stratified mode.

Only in the studies on reception approached from the perspective of culture and cultural mediations that the receiver was brought from the margins to the center of attention and was perceived as a subject of the process. There are several Latin American studies on this epistemological segment that aim at understanding the structures of interpretation by the appropriation communities of the media narratives. And it is in this movement to rescue reception as a place of production of meanings and in the recognition that the media narratives most of times carry an artistic dimension, that it is worth valuing the *aesthetic experience* as a study axis of the communicational phenomena in the media culture. To consider the communicational phenomena and the artistic manifestations in the media as an aesthetic experience is to think of communication without anesthesia.

The “sharing of the sensible” in the sphere of comprehension

The question of the “aesthetic experience” has been brought to our attention by some recent works. In particular, we have worked from readings of the *Phénoménologie de l’expérience esthétique* by Dufrenne, published in 1953 in two volumes: I) *L’objet esthétique* (1992a) and II) *La perception esthétique* (1992b). With this cut the French thinker identifies in a clear way the two dimensions to which the aesthetic thought is dedicated: the work produced by the artist and its enjoyment by the viewer. But Dufrenne is not proposing the fragmentation of the aesthetic experience or the subordination of one dimension to the other. For him what matters is the interconnection between the aesthetic object and aesthetic perception, considered in a dialectic and systemic way, like the two sides of the same coin. For him, the relationship between author and viewer is one of collaboration. They share the work of art. “The spectator is not only the witness who consecrates the work. He is, in his own way, the performer who performs it”, says Dufrenne (1981, p.82 – Our translation).

In the same line, Ricœur assigns to the reader the condition of giving materiality and life to the text in an articulation between the work produced and the exercise of interpretation. As Gentil (a leading expert in the work of Ricœur in Brazil) records in an article published in the journal *Mente, Cérebro e Filosofia*, for the French thinker,

the text has to offer only the words that are already fixed. (...) It says what it says through its interpreter, the reader. It is the reader who makes the text speak, who updates what it intends to say, its meaning. It is through the reader that the text is brought back to life, becoming again a language event (GENTIL, 2008b, p.20 – Our translation).

Valéry (2011) goes even further as he addresses the issue of the reader's autonomy when faced with the text. For Valéry (2011, p.181 – Our translation), "*a text has no true meaning*. No author's authority. Whatever he intended to say, he wrote what it is written. Once published, a text is like a machine that anyone can use at will and according to his means".

While acknowledging the force of interpretation and the importance of the reader's or spectator's role in the exercise of interpretation, we prefer to bet in the complementarity between the poetics and aesthetics. And we understand that it keeps step with the articulations between "production and recognition" proposed by Verón in his studies on enunciation and production of meanings.

For the Argentinean sociologist and semiologist, "the social discourses are always produced (and received) within an extremely complex network of interdeterminations" (VERÓN, 2004, p.69 – Our translation). For him, the production and recognition are like "poles" of the production system and "both imply networks of interdiscourse relations", which leads us to recognize interdiscursivity "as one of the fundamental conditions for the operation of social discourse". After all, says Verón (2004, p.70 – Our translation), "because a text is the place of convergence of a multitude of determinations systems, it always allows a plurality of readings".

Such interdeterminations modulate and guide the dynamics of "production and recognition" of discursive processes. They extend the production of meanings beyond the text in "interdiscourse relations" experienced in the socio-cultural contexts in which the authors and spectators (producers and receivers) of the discourses present in the media are inserted. In this game between production and recognition, between poetics and aesthetics, interdiscursivity occurs in polyphonies and polysemy, which unfold into new aesthetic experiences and into new social interactions, full of cultural mediations.

In the same perspective of Verón, who speaks of interdeterminations between production and recognition instances, Sodr  (2006, p.10 – Our translation) reminds us that

“there are many discursive strategies in the communication game”, but that...

a language or a speech, as it is known, is not limited to the function of transmission of reference contents. In the communicative relationship, in addition to the information conveyed by the statement, therefore, beyond what is made known, there is what is possible to recognize as a relationship between two subjectivities, between the interlocutors (SODRÉ, 2006, p.10 – Our translation).

Sodré uses the term “sensible strategies” when referring to “games that link the discourse acts to relationships of localization and affectation⁴ of subjects within the language”. He gives a meaning of alterity⁵ to the idea of sensible strategies, because “when one acts affectively in communion, with no rational measures but with creative openness to the Other, strategy is the mode of decision of a singularity”. And concludes: “long before being inscribed in a theory (aesthetics, psychology, etc.), the dimension of the sensible implies a strategy to bring together the differences” (SODRÉ, 2006, p.10 – Our translation).

In another moment, Sodré (2006, p.21 – Our translation) uses Vattimo to recall that “just like the aesthetic enjoyment can be understood as a sharing experience (Kant’s common sense)”, the appeal of communication “would be the possibility to integrate the contemporary subject in a society of equals, co-sharers of a taste judgment”. He recalls that the idea of “common sense” is reinterpreted by Gadamer, since “under the gadamerian point of view the aesthetic experience cannot be set apart from the lived reality”. This idea of *understanding* is therefore based on “an intense feeling of community”, and not on a universal reason.

Still, with Sodré, we recognize that “understanding can solely be achieved in the context of community life”. After all, it is an appropriation between pairs, a “grasping” on a community level, of a shared *common* context.

In the explanatory *comprehension*, a particular phenomenon is subsumed to a general law, while in *understanding* the phenomenon keeps its singularity, that is, its incomparable and unrepeatable oneness. The essential requirement of understanding is, thus, the bond with the thing that is being dealt with, with the other, with the plurality of others, with the world (SODRÉ, 2006, p.68 – Our translation).

In this perspective, Communication is seen as *making common*, as *sharing*, and its

4 The word **afecctation** is being used to translate into English the Portuguese word **afetação** in the specific meaning Sodré gives it to transmit the idea that a person *affects* another with his or her *feelings*, partaking of his/her sensibilities.

5 This is a theme to which we will return later in this text, starting from readings of Paul Ricoeur’s essays on hermeneutics.

study implies the understanding of the interpretation process experienced by the interlocutors. That is why it is important to seek a closer relationship with the field of hermeneutics. In this case the matter of interpretation does not refer to the comprehension of a discourse from the perspective of explanation, but from the perspective of understanding, in which the speakers turn themselves one towards the other and the production of meanings happens as an aesthetic experience, as a sensible experience.

This idea of sharing reinforces the link between communication and aesthetic experience. This is about sharing perceptions and sensibility, which happens at the intersection between aesthetics and ethics, between aesthetics and politics. After all, what is shared affects the relationships with the other and the construction of citizenship itself. Rancière speaks of this “distribution of the sensible”, noting that the intersubjectivity experienced in aesthetic experience occurs in a plan of concrete spatiality and temporality. He explains:

I call sharing of the sensible the system of sensible evidences which reveals concomitantly the existence of a given common and the cuts that define places and respective parts therein. A sharing of the sensible therefore fixes at the same time a shared *common* and exclusive parts. This distribution of parts and places is founded on shared spaces, times and types of activity that determines exactly how a common lends itself to participation and how ones and others take part in this sharing (RANCIÈRE, 2009, p.15 – Our translation).

In this context of sharing sensibilities, it does not really make sense the connotation of reception as a secondary instance of the communicative process or as a mere reaction space. The interlocutors are, from this angle, more than mere control and destiny poles of the signs’ process. The receiver is also much more than a “target audience” to be hit or a maneuverable mass. He/she is not anesthetized or in a state of ecstasy in relation to what he/she receives. In the space of fruition, the spectator gains autonomy in his/her relationship with the message he/she receives and which he/she appropriates. The meanings are therefore not limited to what was conceived and made available in the product resulting from the action of the author. They are reinvented in the aesthetic perception, in the spectator’s encounter with the aesthetic object in a given historical time and social place in a common context, a polysemic context.

The production of meanings happens, therefore, in the plural and collaborative environment of each day. Moreover, it involves logical and mythical operations, which bring out cultural dimensions of yesteryear. From Agnes Heller readings on the issue of everyday life and the ordinary subject who lives in a common space, Faro (2011, p.106 – Our translation) argues that:

The daily living therefore populate our relationship with the world and strongly interferes in the reading we do of everything that surrounds our existence. It is in this immediate space in which the daily living is confined that the history of culture shows the presence of the logical and mythical processes through which the information that populates the communicational universe becomes sensible to observation and understanding.

It is therefore in the dynamics of understanding that the production of meanings occurs in a dialectical way and involves the community that lives the “sharing of the sensible”. And the subjects of this production affirm themselves in the recognition process they enjoy in the aesthetic experience. This recognition and affirmation unfold in the very “invention of the day-to-day”, to use Certeau’s expression. That is, when the exercise of interpretation unfolds into action it extrapolates the text and is materialized in the context. The interpreter thus goes along his own path in order to recognize himself in the so produced meanings. The production of meanings reinvents the daily living itself. In Certeau’s words (2013, p.39 – Our translation), “the daily living invents itself with a thousand *unauthorized hunting ways*”.

In Chapter XII of his book *Invenção do cotidiano (The practice of Everyday Life, in English)* he describes the act of reading as “a hunting operation”. Certeau (2013, p.241 – Our translation) argues that the book is a reader’s construction, who “invents in the texts something else than what was their ‘intention’”. The French historian and philosopher proposes an analogy: “Readers are travelers; they circulate through foreign lands, nomads hunting on their own, through fields they did not write, snatching goods from Egypt to enjoy them” (CERTEAU, 2013, p.245 – Our translation). He insists on the idea of this reader’s autonomy by stating that “reading is freed from the soil that determined it. It stays away from it” (CERTEAU, 2013, p.247 – Our translation).

It is in this perspective of autonomy and proactivity that we understand the aesthetic experience as communication without anesthesia. The production of meanings reveals itself, then, as mediated by the temporality and territoriality which involves the interpreter, an active spectator. More than an object of the action of the emitter or of the media, the spectator is thought of as a subject in the production of meanings. The spectator is someone who interprets that what he enjoys, who projects in the message his expectations, in a kind of a specular relation, in which he reflects his senses and perceptions. It is then a recognition process. The spectator can thus be thought of as a creative subject, as co-author, or even as a transgressor, who subverts the original meaning of the message, giving it new colors and tones.

Rancière writes about the emancipation of the spectator. This emancipation begins, he says, “when one questions the opposition between looking and acting, when

one understands that the evidences which so structure the relations of saying, seeing and doing belong to the structure of domination and subjection” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p.17 – Our translation). The emancipated spectator is the one who breaks the passive condition of subjection to the action of the creator. More than object of the action, which can only react, Rancière rescues the spectator to the condition of subject, who leads new actions in the selection and interpretation processes of the aesthetic object, starting from its semantic field and universe of representations. For the French-Algerian philosopher, “the spectator also acts”, since “he notes, selects, compares, interprets. He relates what sees with many other things he saw in other scenes, in other types of places. He composes his own poem with elements of the poem which he has before him” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p.17 – Our translation). He emphasizes, as an essential point: “the spectators see, feel and understand something as they compose their own poem” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p.18 – Our translation).

Therefore the idea of an emancipated spectator finds its echo in the conception of a communication without anesthesia, thought of as sharing and as an aesthetic experience.

It is an experience that not only reflects the individuality of this spectator but especially his inclusion in a collectivity, in a community of symbolic representation and appropriation. It is an experience that inserts itself in the contours of interpretation. It is also a common experience in the sense that meanings are produced in the space-time of a “shared common living”.

The question of interpretation, which puts the spectator-receiver in a dialectical and dialogical relationship with the author-emitter, leads us to the field of hermeneutics. If the artist interprets life and nature in his work starting from his field of representations, the spectator interprets the work in light of his own life prospects and social insertion. Thus, the production of meanings happens in the sphere of enjoyment, which is not limited, of course, to a contemplative state – from the perspective of idealistic thought – of the spectator before the work. The enjoyment implies the exercise of appropriation and socialization of the production of meanings, which then gains a collective and cultural dimension. The spectator projects in the work his horizon of expectations and tries to recognize himself in the work, in a movement of comprehension.

The spectator reflects and reveals himself in this specular relationship. Then the experience of comprehension of the work analyzed becomes the comprehension of himself. When speaking of the relationship between the text and the reader, Ricœur maintains that “to understand oneself is to understand oneself facing the text and to receive from it the conditions for a self other than that which first undertakes the reading” (RICŒUR, 1989, p.42-43 – Our translation).

Reception is not limited, therefore, to the sphere of the comprehension of the message in the logic of explanation. It is not a mere decoding of what was proposed in the

production. It is made concrete in the experience of recognition. And this recognition, which is present in the relationship between the aesthetic object and perception, takes place in the context of interaction and comprehension. More than the comprehension of what the author wished to convey to the receiver, the aesthetic perception should be considered in the logic of the comprehension. In this logic, interpretation is always an appropriation experience, which happens in the semantic-pragmatic sphere of the production of meanings. And in this perspective, reception occurs full of sensibility in the sphere of esthesis.

Interpretation, mediations and alterity

More than a transmission medium, the work, as an object offered to aesthetic perception, can be thought of in the perspective of mediations, just as Jesús Martín-Barbero (1994) proposes in his classic displacement “from media to mediations”. The aesthetic experience, considered in the key of the “cultural mediations of communication”, confirms a dialectical and dialogical view of the production of meanings. Dialogue, as Gadamer teaches us, presupposes an alterity relationship. “What makes up a perfect dialogue is not the fact that we experienced something new, but our finding in the other something we had not yet encountered in our own world experience” (GADAMER, 2004, p.247 – Our translation).

It happens when the interlocutors meet one another. One of them places himself in place of the other, but does not necessarily submit himself to the other. He can indeed confront the other dialectically. The receiver arrives with his “horizon of expectations”, which embodies a complex set of sociocultural mediations. The expectations with which he faces the work, in a dialectical dialogue with the artist, are guided by these mediations. Thus, in the aesthetic perception, the spectator welcomes and reworks the meanings of the aesthetic object that can also be understood – from the perspective of communication – as dialogue. Communication is more than transmission of information. It is a sharing of meanings between interlocutors. To communicate is, then, understood as *making common*. These meanings are also shared by the subjects with their appropriation communities in their social contexts.

The aesthetic experience occurs in society through dynamics of interlocution between pairs, oriented by a complex set of “cultural mediations”. Thus the production of meanings extrapolate a syntactic-semantic dimension and is inserted into a semantic-pragmatic level. In this perspective the production of meanings unfolds into action, *from the text into action*, a movement always present in Ricœur’s (1989) essays on hermeneutics. Although the first attention of hermeneutics focuses upon the recovery of the creative act, it should not be limited to those contours that are natural to exegesis. In this regard Ricœur argues that when

attention turns to “problems of the text, of exegesis and philology, it seems that we restrict the target, the reach and the angle of the hermeneutic view” (RICŒUR, 1990, p.135 – Our translation). And the radicalization of this displacement “from the text to action” can lead us from hermeneutics to pragmatics.

Another important dimension in the work of Ricœur is the issue of alterity, a theme already brought here before. As Gentil (2008a, p.7 – Our translation) affirms:

The other is present in many ways in Paul Ricœur’s reflection, and sometimes in a surprisingly way. It is not simply a matter of a subject standing before another subject or of the discussions about his apprehension or constitution as an object for consciousness, or even just the problem of intersubjectivity. It is true that I live with others, I live among others, near and far, in time and space. In time: my predecessors, to whom I have a debt that I ought to recognize; my successors, whom I should take into consideration in the consequences of my actions and therefore in my deliberations and decisions (...) In space: my contemporaries, near and far, from the intimacy of love to the impersonality of anonymity, passing through the individuality of friendship.

That is, in Ricœur’s understanding of alterity, the other is present in the time and space of the living experience of each individual; the other is present in the very conception of ipseity of each one. The other is in us. In this sense, the idea of the aesthetic experience as a shared communication, i.e., as interaction, suggests that we should think not only of those we live with but also of those we bring with us, in our constitution and our memories, including also those who will come after us but are already present in the form of expectations. Ricoeur’s reflections on reciprocity and recognition allow us to deepen the idea of sharing of the sensible and of the aesthetic experience in the scope of the daily life experienced in community.

When Seel (2014, p.36 – Our translation) discusses the scope of the aesthetic experience he calls our attention to the fact that it extrapolates the limits of art. For him, “he who is not untouched by world events – including the aesthetic events – will not be able to recognize in the emergence of art an event of presentation of being in the world”. He reinforces this idea by stating that the aesthetic experience “finds fulfillment in our being attracted to the possibilities of perception and understanding within and outside art”, possibilities that, according to him, cannot be exhausted, controlled or determined.

That is, the aesthetic experience does not deplete itself in the aesthetic object or in the exegesis of the analyzed work. It moves forward into the scope of hermeneutics. The aesthetic experience implies a specular relationship established between the aesthetic object and the aesthetic perception, in the dynamics of interpretation that go beyond the internal

economy of the work, when the spectator surrenders himself to a fruition experience in a comprehensive enterprise. And, as we discussed earlier in this text, understanding occurs in the sphere of the common life, in the time-space of the daily living.

Picado (2012) articulates the two dimensions of aesthetic experience in the context of the media culture: the aesthetic object available in the media universe and the aesthetic perception experienced from the reception dynamics.

When we consider that media processes carry in them a dimension related to aesthetic approaches of analysis, we cannot restrict ourselves to the notion that mediatization is a phenomenon of a poetic origin: this means that its foundation cannot be found in the order of productive strategies that characterize its concrete genesis, but in the relational character which constitutes any desired *poiesis*. That is, if their aesthetic dimension is not derived from the productive order of the mediatization meanings, then this dimension must be considered in its necessarily interactional character (PICADO, 2012, p.9 – Our translation).

In this sense, as we've dealt with in a recent text, it is worthy to recall “the idea of the mediatized aesthetic experience from the perspective of the interaction, in order to contemplate the encounter of the poetic with the aesthetic itself, which happens in the time-space of reception” (BARROS, 2014, p.6 – Our translation). And reception, when treated as an aesthetic experience, cannot be analyzed as an instance of alienation or insensibility. It must be understood as a sensible experience, full of esthesia.

The mechanisms and possibilities for communicational interaction are innumerable in the mediatized contemporary society. As Braga proposes, in *A sociedade enfrenta sua mídia* (*Society faces its media* – Our translation), beyond the instances of emission and reception there is a “social interactions system on the media” which he describes as a third system. He says:

We therefore propose to develop the discovery of *a third system of media processes* in society that supplements the processual features of the general social mediatization, making it to function as *communication* in an effective way. This third system corresponds to productive and guiding *response activities* of society in interaction with media products (BRAGA, 2006, p.22 – Our translation).

It is therefore in the idea of interaction, of “sharing of the sensible”, that communication in the media-based society can be thought of as an aesthetic experience. When we recognize that society is structured by the media – as a cultural interaction and

political articulation element – it becomes more than a technological apparatus for the transmission of messages. It is advisable then to retake the displacement proposed by Martín-Barbero, from the “media to mediations”, especially in the second movement of its formulation, which he calls “communicational mediations of culture”.

In the preface of the fifth Spanish edition of his classic book *De los medios a las mediaciones* (published in English as *Communication, Culture and Hegemony*), Martín-Barbero places his “cultural mediations of communication” concept as if in a mirror when he speaks of what he calls “communicational mediations of culture”⁶. At that time he had already raised questions about his original theory with new categories of mediations: institutionality, technicality, sociality and rituality. In his scheme, Martín-Barbero proposes two axes: one of a diachronic nature, which connects Cultural Matrixes and Industrial Formats; another of a synchronic nature, which articulates Logics of Production and Reception and Consumption Competencies.

This new perspective of the mediations keeps a kind of complementarity with the idea of media culture. This is so, because in the “deferred and diffuse” circulation that the meanings of the media discourses experience in the media-based society there are multiple mediations participating in the processes of appropriation and re-signification of these meanings. The aesthetic experience becomes poetic experience and the meanings are elaborated in the light of sensible shared experiences. Mediations and mediatization are two theories that may well support our reflections on communication and aesthetic experience in a common context and culture of shared communication, of “sharing of the sensible”. It is in this perspective that to think of communication as an aesthetic experience can lead us to an understanding of communication without anesthesia.

References

ADORNO, Theodor. A indústria cultural. In: COHN, Gabriel (Org.). **Comunicação e Indústria Cultural**. 5ª ed. São Paulo: T.A. Queiroz, 1987. p.287-295.

ADORNO, Theodor; HORKHEIMER, Max. **Dialética do Esclarecimento**: fragmentos filosóficos. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Ed., 1985.

BARROS, Laan Mendes de. A questão da experiência estética nos debates de epistemologia da comunicação. In: **Questões Transversais**: Revista de Epistemologias da Comunicação, vol. 2, n.3, janeiro-junho. São Leopoldo: Unisinos, 2014.

BAUMGARTEN, Alexander Gottlieb. **Estética**: a lógica da arte e do poema. Rio de Janeiro: Vozes, 1993.

⁶ This reformulation appeared again in his work **Ofício de cartógrafo**: travessias latino-americanas da comunicação na cultura (MARTÍN-BARBERO, 2004).

BRAGA, José Luiz. **A sociedade enfrenta a sua mídia**: Dispositivos sociais de crítica midiática. São Paulo: Paulus, 2006.

CERTEAU, Michel de. **A invenção do cotidiano**: artes de fazer. 20ª ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2013.

DeFLEUR, Melvin; BALL-ROKEACH, Sandra. **Teorias da Comunicação de Massa**. 5ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1993.

DUFRENNE, Mikel. **Estética e filosofia**. 2ª ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1981.

_____. **Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique** – Tome I – L'objet esthétique. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992a.

_____. **Phénoménologie de l'expérience esthétique** – Tome II – La perception esthétique. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992b.

FARO, José Salvador. À Flor da Pele: narrativas híbridas, cotidiano e comunicação. In: **Intexto**, v.2, n.25, dez. 2011. Porto Alegre: UFRGS, 2011, p.105-114.

GADAMER, Hans-Georg. **Verdade e Método II**. Complementos e Índice. 2ª ed. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2004.

GENTIL, H. S. Paul Ricœur: A presença do outro. In: **Mente, Cérebro e Filosofia**. São Paulo, n.11, 2008a, p.6-15.

_____. O que é interpretar? O mundo da ação e o mundo do texto. In: **Mente, Cérebro e Filosofia**. São Paulo, n.11, 2008b, p.16-25.

KANT, Immanuel. **Crítica da razão pura**. 3ª ed. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1994.

MARTÍN-BARBERO, Jesús. **Dos meios às mediações**: comunicação, cultura e hegemonia. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 1997.

_____. **Ofício de cartógrafo**: travessias latino-americanas da comunicação na cultura. São Paulo: Loyola, 2004.

MERTON, Robert; LAZARFELD, Paul. Comunicação de massa, gosto popular e a organização da ação social. In: LIMA, Luiz Costa. **Teoria da cultura de massa**. 2ª ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1978.

PICADO, Benjamim. Dos objetos da comunicação à experiência estética: discursividades estéticas nas teorias da comunicação. In: XXI COMPÓS ANNUAL ENCOUNTER. Juiz de Fora: UFJF / Compós, 2012. **Conference proceedings...**

RANCIÈRE, Jacques. **A partilha do sensível**: estética e política. 2ª ed. São Paulo: EXO organizacional / Editora 34, 2009.

_____. **Aisthesis:** scènes du régime esthétique de l'art. Paris: Galilée, 2011.

_____. **O espectador emancipado.** São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes, 2012.

RICCEUR, Paul. **Do texto à acção:** ensaios de hermenêutica II. Porto: Rés-Editora, 1989.

_____. **Interpretação e ideologias.** Rio de Janeiro: F. Alves, 1990.

SEEL, Martin. No escopo da experiência estética. In: PICADO, Benjamim; MENDONÇA, Carlos Magno Camargos; CARDOSO Filho, Jorge (Orgs). **Experiência Estética e Performance.** Salvador: EDUFBA, 2014. p.23-34.

SODRÉ, Muniz. **As estratégias sensíveis:** afeto, mídia e política. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2006.

VALÉRY, Paul. **Variedades.** São Paulo: iluminuras, 2011.

VERÓN, Eliseo. **Fragmentos de um tecido.** Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Unisinos, 2004.

WOLF, Mauro. **Teorias da Comunicação de Massa.** 6ª ed. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes, 2012.

Laan Mendes de Barros

Journalist and editor. Degree in Visual Arts. Master in Social Communication at the Methodist University of São Paulo. PhD in Communication Sciences from ECA-USP, with post-doctorate in Communication and Culture from the University Stendhal – Grenoble 3. Professor, Department of Communication (DCSO), Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Communication of Universidade Estadual Paulista “Julio de Mesquita Filho” – FAAC-UNESP. Lecturer and researcher at the Graduate Program in Communication (Masters and PhD) at the same institution. Conducts research in the following subjects: epistemology and theory of communication, communication and culture, communication and aesthetic experience and music and media. Email: laan@faac.unesp.br

Received on: 06.16.2016

Accepted on: 01.30.2017