


Production of visibilities as potencies of fabulation: dimensions of everyday practices of image creation and consumption

Produção de visibilidades como potências de fabulação: dimensões das práticas cotidianas de elaboração e consumo da imagem

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ABSTRACT: *What is it possible to see with so much content to look at? This text outlines some relations between image fabulation and the contemporary regime of uninterrupted production of visibilities, focusing on transformations in the creation and consumption of representations. Based on theoretical reflection and a literature review, it is argued that the indefinite increase in the production of images tends to affect their fabulation potency. The argument develops from the definition of the image's fabulating potency, as representation and also as an edge open to the imagination, this edge being the space for the creation of a power that acts against: the political control of the image as a way of regulating the production of the visible and its dissemination, and the elaboration of a regime of production of visibilities based on the market logic inscribed in the fabulation of the social.*

Keywords: *image; fabulation; visibility; visuality; media.*

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RESUMO: *O que é possível ver diante de tanto conteúdo para olhar? Este texto delinea algumas relações entre a fabulação da imagem e o regime contemporâneo de produção ininterrupta de visibilidades, focalizando as transformações na criação e consumo de representações. A partir de reflexão teórica e revisão de literatura, argumenta-se como o aumento indefinido da produção de imagens tende a afetar sua potência de fabulação. O argumento se desenvolve a partir da definição da potência fabuladora da imagem, enquanto representação e também enquanto borda aberta à imaginação, sendo essa borda o espaço de criação de uma potência que age contra: o controle político da imagem como forma de regular a produção do visível e sua disseminação e a elaboração de um regime de produção de visibilidades pautado na lógica de mercado inscrita na fabulação do social.*

Palavras-chave: *imagem; fabulação; visibilidade; visualidade; mídia.*

Introduction

“And, looking at everything, I saw nothing.” This phrase, the title of a book by Mexican writer Margo Glantz (2021), originally published in 2018, encapsulates the central argument of this text: what are the potential fabulatory capacities within a regime of uninterrupted visual production? This question emerges, among other considerations, when one reflects on data from 2020 indicating that 347,000 images are uploaded to the Instagram platform every minute, amounting to nearly 500 million images daily — these figures, which have continued to grow in recent years, do not account for the vast volume of content shared across other platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.

Driven by the need to sustain a continuous stream of posts in the pursuit of potential financial return — “monetization,” in the terminology of digital platforms —, users are compelled to produce content incessantly. Social networks themselves are replete with tutorials emphasizing the importance of maintaining posting frequency.

Beyond the pursuit of financial return, the production of images for social media has become an integral component of social practices, at least since the early 2010s. This shift has been facilitated by the technical ease of image creation via smartphones, in conjunction with the capitalist model embedded within digital platforms. As summarized by Andrea Giunta (2018, p. 262):

Multiplied, itinerant, mediatized, financed, images seem to have unleashed their power in global times. Far from having been diluted within circuits of power, they reveal that there is something in them that cannot be controlled: their capacity to present, to fix in an image something that must not be represented.

This scenario gives rise to numerous questions concerning the conditions under which these images are produced, circulated, and consumed, as well as the processes through which meaning is constructed. Although relatively recent, this phenomenon has already generated a substantial body of research aimed at exploring these dimensions (MARIN, 1998;

HAROCHE, 2004; CÉSAR, 2009; ROSA, 2016; MILLMANN; SANTOS; ROSA, 2018; PRASS; ROSA, 2018).

In dialogue with this body of work, the present discussion may be framed around a central question: what can be seen amid such an overwhelming volume of visual content? How have the fabulatory capacities of the image been altered by its uninterrupted production? Fabulation is understood here through the lens of Jacques Rancière (2012; 2019) as a fictional operation that constructs a scenario or scene in which the images, bodies, gestures, and sounds that emerge deviate from expectations, subvert established conventions, and disrupt the anticipated connections between different temporalities. Fabulating constitutes an aesthetic and political act that dismantles dominant modes of seeing, reconfigures the spatial and temporal coordinates traditionally assigned to subjects and their bodies, redefines imaginaries, and fosters a sensory opening toward alternative ways of perceiving, feeling, and understanding diverse forms of life, experience, and existence. Such fabulatory operations generate visualities that diverge from what was expected to be seen.

There are, of course, visualities that reproduce violence, as well as those that reconfigure the conditions under which images and signs are produced and circulated, questioning the rules that determine who is permitted to portray and be portrayed, to construct their own images, or to appear in the images of others. In this context, visibility constitutes a political and aesthetic operation that shapes regimes of visibility capable of manifesting both violence and emancipatory insurgency. Visibility, therefore, pertains not only to the image itself (its formal and expressive elements), but also to the gaze (historically constituted and contextually situated). Within the work of images, visibilities emerge from visualities that are the result of processes of production, circulation, and experimentation. This perspective allows for the recognition that “an image can only expose its theme correctly if it implies the relationship with language that its own visibility is capable of arousing by disturbing it, always demanding that it reformulate itself, that it put itself into question” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p. 46).

Unfulfilled expectations constitute a fabulatory process that “alters the status of the visible, the way we look at things and how we move among them” (RANCIÈRE, 2019, p. 51). In a broader sense, fabulation encompasses new forms of word circulation, the exposition of the visible, and the production of affects, all of which generate new capacities and sustain emancipatory practices. It is associated with “the invention of an instance of collective enunciation that redraws the space of common things” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p. 60). This process introduces an alternative mode of staging by producing different relationships between words, the kinds of things they designate, and the types of practices that resignify the sensory map in which anonymous subjects “dig gaps, open derivations, modify ways, speeds and trajectories according to which they adhere to a condition, react to situations and recognize their images” (RANCIÈRE, 2000, p. 62).

Building on these initial considerations, this text explores the relationship between the fabulatory potencies of the image and the contemporary regime of uninterrupted visual production. The aim is to examine certain transformations that influence the work of images in terms of their capacity to resignify the world. The discussion is structured as an effort to provide a theoretical framework for previously conducted research, which focused on various empirical studies but still appeared to require broader conceptual development (MARQUES; MARTINO, 2020a; 2020b; 2021; MARTINO; MARQUES, 2022).

It is argued that the development of a regime of uninterrupted visual production tends to diminish the fabulatory potency (*puissance fabulatrice*) of images, primarily due to the reduced time available for sustained visual engagement. This argument unfolds in three stages, in which the fabulatory potency of the image is examined both as a form of representation and as an open boundary for the imagination. This boundary constitutes a space for the emergence of a counter-power that opposes the political control of the image as a mechanism for regulating the production and dissemination of the visible, as well as the establishment of a visibility regime grounded in market logic and inscribed within the social fabulation process.

The fabulation of the image as an aesthetic and political operation

As a starting point, the concept of fabulation, according to Rancière (2013), may be understood as an alternative mode of narratively articulating an event that does not adhere to the logic of causality that determines the success or failure of lived experiences. To fabulate, as previously noted, is to evade “the arrangement of necessary or plausible actions that, through the orderly construction of the plot knot and the outcome, makes the characters pass from happiness to unhappiness or from unhappiness to happiness” (RANCIÈRE, 2013, p. 7). As a narrative category, the notion of the fable is generally associated with a form of storytelling intended to convey a moral lesson. In such narratives, a “moral of the story” is to be derived from its references, allegories, and images, typically aimed at articulating distinctions between good and evil, and between actions to be pursued or avoided.

Hence, its contemporary usage refers not only to fictional stories, but more specifically to those populated by talking animals, mythical or quasi-magical beings, figures that are sufficiently anthropomorphized to ensure the intended message is clearly conveyed. The fable reflects the society in which it is produced, insofar as it is imbued with an implicit moral framework: the tale, the narrative, and especially the fairy tale may challenge a society’s moral conventions, the fable, by contrast, positions itself as a narrative custodian of social practices.

The moral dimension of the fable distinguishes it not only from other narrative forms but also from the realm of imagination. For this reason, the present text employs the notion of “fable” without necessarily invoking its narrative structure: the fable is understood here as a form of moral imagination, an exercise in the collective sharing of a morality that, reinforced by the notion of the “moral of the story,” becomes an exemplar of behavior within the social fabric. Thus, if every fable contains a moral, it also tends to function as a manifestation of morality in motion, not merely by delivering a message at its conclusion, but by revealing, throughout its development, the values at stake and in contention.

The elements associated with the conditions and forms of fabulation within a society inevitably carry a wide array of axiological components — its values, both implicit and explicit judgments, dynamics of conflict, mechanisms of hegemonic construction, and the capacities for agency and resistance among its subjects. This calls for a reconsideration of the origins of fabulation within a given society: what constitute the sources of a period's moral imagination, and how these are articulated in relation to the conditions of subject agency within social practices.

In the contemporary context of mediatization, it would be hasty, or even naïve, to disregard the role of media as one of the sources of fabulation, just as it would be insufficient to attribute this role to media alone. From Rancière's perspective (2013, p. 8), such a logic “contradicts the life it intends to imitate. Life does not know stories. It does not know actions oriented toward ends, but only situations open in all directions. It does not know dramatic progressions, but a long, continuous movement, made up of an infinity of micro-movements.”

Contemporary fabulation is closely connected to the inputs provided by the media, intertwined with the social practices of subjects who, within their conditions of agency, continuously elaborate and rework this material. This offers an initial framework for considering the relationship between fabulation and the image — not just any image, as will be further explored, but specifically those that are simultaneously the product and source of the act of instituting and reinstituting a fabled morality.

Thus, particularly within the digital media environment, fabulation emerges as a collective regime of image production. In this context, image production extends beyond the mere recording of moments or events; it primarily involves the construction of relationships. Even when produced individually, an image participates in a collective fabulation concerning its content, its message, the narrative it conveys, and, most importantly, the moral of the story, that is, the value judgments attributed to the subject who created the image.

Each image shared in a social media post appears to form another knot in the fabric of a fable plot aimed at either reinforcing a given morality or challenging it — albeit at the risk of incurring various sanctions. Within the conceptual framework of this text, this risk corresponds to becoming the “villain” of the fable; in more empirical terms, it equates to “being canceled.”

In this sense, insofar as fabulation is directed toward the constitution and reinforcement of a social morality, it invariably entails a collective dimension that both legitimizes it and draws upon it as a resource for defining shared values. This underpins the “educational” character, if the term may be employed, of fabulation — not in a strictly cognitive sense, but primarily in terms of the gradual internalization of morality, incorporated into the habitual conduct of each subject. This notion approaches the ethical framework of Aristotle, as referenced by Rancière (2012) in his definition of the fable as a form that distinguishes itself from other modes of discourse.

Equally important, from a narrative standpoint, is the recognition that the fable differs from other narrative forms through its deliberate moral intentionality. While fictional or documentary narratives may contain moral elements implicitly, the fable is explicitly constructed upon them.

Thus, fabulation is not merely the construction of stories about a given fact, but rather the use of such stories to convey a clear moral judgment about that fact. Subtlety has little place in fabulation, which may explain its resonance within the contemporary regime of image production. The impulse to document, record, and capture an inexpressible reality, enabled by increasingly sophisticated smartphone cameras, also reflects a desire to participate in a collective fabulation about how society is or ought to be, how behaviors are or might become, and which practices and ways of life should be admired or rejected. It may not be an overstatement to suggest that each image posted on digital media carries the potential for a collective fabulation concerning its value.

Associating fabulation with the moral codes that guide the gaze and agency of subjects is one of the gestures emphasized by Rancière

(2019) in defining how fabulation acts upon the sensible, producing shifts in the organization of the visible. For Rancière, fabulation, in its aesthetic and political dimensions, engages in imaging operations that interrupt and alter continuities, generating new registers of appearance. These operations give rise to image-making practices that create ruptures (verticalities within the horizontalities of given narratives) and form sensitive communities. It is as if fabulation constructs the architecture that enables a specific mode of appearance, producing intervals and revealing a montage that articulates images in unexpected, unforeseen ways. “The image as a visual form is linked to something broader, a way of thinking about the common or thinking about the history of the transformations of the common world” (RANCIÈRE, 2019, p. 34). The work of the image, then, draws strength from the broader framework established by fabulation, generating new arrangements, reframings, and reorganizations of established perceptual forms. It composes a montage that highlights intervals, a space that enables inhabitation of the “in-between” “arising from the indeterminate relationships between given images and the meanings they may evoke in association with other images, words, and temporalities originating elsewhere” (RANCIÈRE, 2019, p. 69). These indeterminate arrangements, coupled with the undecidability of meaning that characterizes the operation of images, produce controversial scenes. It is crucial to note that, for Rancière, montage is an action that both assembles multiple images and emphasizes the singularity of an individual image (an image-scene) when it introduces a line of flight from the horizontal unfolding of a narrative governed by consensual causality.

The interval produced by the image through fabulation liberates “what was indexed under the record of the only possible real, presenting to this ordinary and already consensual real a dehierarchization and another possibility of appearing” (RANCIÈRE, 2019, p. 55). Thus, both image and word remain in motion, situated in tension between a past and a future, between one invention and another. They compel the viewer to engage in experimentation and to shift the coordinates that organize the visible, the thinkable, and that which affects us.

The image, as a dissensual political act of scene creation, underscores the gesture and rhythm of “playing with the ambiguity of similarities and the instability of dissimilarities, operating a local rearrangement, a singular rearrangement of circulating images” (RANCIÈRE, 2012, p. 34). The work of the image is therefore linked to the production of intervals and discontinuities that resist scripting the experience of subjects. Indeterminacy, namely, the impossibility of fixing a destination or definitive meaning, prevents images from being mere expressions of specific situations or events. This requires viewing images within a network, an “intrigue” composed of multiple elements and layers of meaning.

As previously mentioned, such intrigue emerges from image operations that, through fabulation, generate forms of sharing within a “gap fabric” (RANCIÈRE, 2009a, p. 319), an intervallic topography of a game that reconfigures the positions and coordinates where bodies appear, as well as the relationships between bodies and the estimates of their capacities, words, and images. Fabulation is directly linked to political appearance and to the “game that undoes a given order of relationships between the visible and the meanings related to it and constitutes other sensitive plots that can contribute to the action of political subjects” (RANCIÈRE, 2009b, p. 515). This work, unlike the incessant and scripted regime of image production intended for consumption, constitutes a political experimentation in the repositioning of bodies within political space, provoking necessary disturbances and tremors that open cracks and fissures in the naturalized modes of apprehending and describing events.

Thus, it is important to consider the scene as a “space” in which appearance is associated with the act of speaking, with the emergence of corporealities that do not conform to the expected order, and with the construction of a reality through the sedimentation of elements that enable the creation of an alternative imaginary (RANCIÈRE, 2018a; 2018c).

Literature and images gain prominence in the processes of fabulation and scene editing, as they enable the invention of “another image of time: a time of coexistence, equality, and interexpressiveness of moments, as

opposed to the time of hierarchical succession and the destruction of a moment by the one that succeeds it” (RANCIÈRE, 2017, p. 136). The editing and reassembly work involved in the creation of scenes modifies how different temporalities are interwoven within experience, as well as how they are rendered communicable. In fabulatory montage, time is redescribed, “but it also means that time is thus singularized, highlights and reliefs are created, contrary to other times when time is shattered, crushed. Ultimately, time is decomposed and recomposed” (RANCIÈRE, 2021, p. 35).

For this reason, fiction constitutes one of the forces that produce the scene, functioning through the destabilization of relations of domination and proposing alternative approaches to confronting and transforming reality via a redistribution of time. The dehierarchization initiated by the fabulative process, therefore, derives, according to Rancière (2016; 2019), from a dissensual fictional operation that discloses the existence of multiple modes of constructing both reality and temporality.

In fabulation, not only do temporalities coexist in a dehierarchic manner, but so do subjects and their modes of life. This process requires embracing the risk of fabulating alternative possibilities, as it establishes “another way of inhabiting time, another way of sustaining a body and a spirit in movement” (RANCIÈRE, 2018a, p. 34). The practice of fabulation challenges chains of causality and predictability, producing an experimental and dissensual narrative that unfolds through the controversial scene and its destabilizing temporal configurations.

However, how can conditions for the creation of destabilizing fables be enabled when the political work of images is continually undermined by the mass production of images intended to hinder imagination and emancipation? The central tension lies between what is deemed representable or not, and the nature of the relationship that the work of images establishes between the visible and the sayable, as well as between the sensible and the imaginable.

The production of visibilities as image control

Historically, the fabrication of images appears to be connected to the construction of narratives aligned with potency — not necessarily political or institutionally organized power, but rather to the opening of a possibility of engaging with reality through image representation in order to dominate it. Fundamentally, this is always a collective fabrication of the image, and this perspective continues to serve as a framework for the possibility of controlling reality through the manipulation of its representation (ZÁTONI, 2011).

The control of images is inseparable, in this sense, from the control of the possible fabrications associated with them, particularly when considering the potential to establish a regime of the imaginary founded upon the direction of its core representations. Representing reality is tantamount to controlling it; it constitutes a form of magical control — since it is image-based and thus imaginary — that enables understanding and, potentially, the steering of reality toward some desired outcome. The prohibitions on image production, as well as the state monopolies over the creation of grand images in ancient civilizations — and even in some cultures today — seem to revive this notion of capturing the visibility of reality, transforming it into the visibility of art, a phenomenon that manifests across multiple dimensions.

The sovereign power embedded in the regime of visibility production is also manifested in the representation of images of divinities: goddesses and gods, painted, sculpted, and made visible, appeared in close proximity to a cult of images directly connected to those they represented — the divinity, once captured in image form, was brought near and could display its powers and capacities at any moment. The possibilities of representing divinity were closely tied to the use of visibility as a medium to establish relationships with these deities; imbued with symbolism, images of divinities in Middle Eastern and European cultures up to the 3rd century functioned as a means to make their attributes present and tangible (CARTLIDGE; ELLIOTT, 2001; WILLIAMSON, 2004).

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Making one see, preventing one from seeing: these two modes of image fabulation closely follow the narratives linked to potency. Regimes of visibility inherently direct what can be imagined, narrated, or fabulated through the images available to us: “What we see is only valid — only lives — in our eyes through what looks at us. However, the division that separates within us what we see from what looks at us is inescapable” (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2018, p. 29). Western heritage, in this respect, appears more aligned with the regimes of Greek iconology and the Roman *imago*, where visibility is central to the exercise of governmental and religious authority, than with its other foundational source in Jewish culture, which prohibits representation.

The History of Art, alongside the history of religious practices, provides evidence of images associated with Christianity dating back to the 2nd century. Visibility has consistently been one of its defining features — manifested not only in paintings on church walls, stained glass windows, and murals but also in the architectural form and symbolic layout of religious buildings. These visual and spatial elements find their distant yet iconic descendants in the monumental commercial structures of large metropolitan centers within a globalized economy (OYARZUN, 2015).

This insight touches on the core notion of the “image” as a product of a regime of visibility: historically, images have rarely been created for mere aesthetic appreciation, but rather to make visible a specific form of power — whether political, as in state sovereignty, or economic, through patronage, commissions, or other mechanisms aimed at capturing power through representation and its public display (GIUNTA, 2018; 2020).

In its origins, according to Peters (1983) and Gobry (2010), this form of power is often examined through the distinction between the concepts of “icon” and “idol,” terms that today may share a common meaning but originally referred to different facets of the relationship with representation.

The icon, derived from the Greek term *eikon*, is a representation that directly refers to the object it depicts: upon seeing the icon, one anticipates a significant resemblance to the reality it represents. It is important

to note that this is not imitation, which the Greeks called *mimesis*, but rather a form of construction emphasizing the similarity between reality and representation.

In contrast, the idol, originating from the ancient Greek *eidolon*, refers to the image formed within the mind, connected to a certain object — not as a mere daydream, which the Greeks called *phantasma* (the root of “phantom” and “fantasy”), denoting the uncontrolled, and sometimes involuntary, formation of images. The idol does not necessarily represent the mental content itself but is linked to the idea behind it — its proximity to the word *eidōs*, from which “idea” derives, supports this interpretation. Consequently, this distinction implies a need for stricter control: while the icon could inspire, the idol is what becomes truly incorporated into the mind.

Thus, the capture of reality as materiality was primarily associated with the regime of the icon, whereas its transformation into a symbolic element emerged more forcefully within the sphere of the idol, conceived as something akin to an “idea.”

It is no coincidence that political regimes of various orientations often seek to construct a comprehensive iconography of power, manifested in clothing styles, the aesthetics of paintings, photographs, and films, or, more recently, in social media posts. The vilification of an adversary’s image typically unfolds on the same visual terrain, but with an inverted intent: it involves prohibiting the adversary from producing their own forms of visibility. This dynamic evokes the orthodox function of the icon and the heretical connotation of the idol, the latter associated with falsehood and the distortion of what is deemed the legitimate divinity in each context.

Thus, the fabulation of the image manifested in the icon being endowed with a sense of correctness and faithful representation, whereas the idol was consigned to a position of disdain, from which narratives could also emerge, albeit in a negative register. The distinction between these two categories has been reiterated and reconfigured in various forms throughout history.

It is important to emphasize that these regimes of visibility, as expressions of power, are not confined to a historical past, as a strictly genealogical perspective might suggest. On the contrary, as numerous studies indicate, the constitution of forms of representing reality, whether through the evolution of techniques or the shaping of new mentalities, perceptions, and modes of seeing, remains a pressing issue in the present. This is particularly evident in light of the near-infinite proliferation of image production sources, most notably materialized through the widespread use of smartphones.

If, on the one hand, there exists a form of visibility anchored in selfies, photographs, and videos produced to document events and moments as a means of affirming certain “acceptable” and legitimate ways of life, there is, alongside it and in constant tension, a fabulatory practice that resists the appropriation of image-making. This practice expands the scope of remembrance, fosters the formation of sensitive communities, and enables the circulation of experimental and dissident narratives (RANCIÈRE, 2019).

Considering the question posed by Derrida (2004), one might ask: what is the accumulation of so many archives truly attempting to preserve? Is it a matter of capturing, on the surface of images, a situation in order to extend its existence beyond the ephemeral moment? If so, why are such events so rarely revisited? It appears that, to some extent, the act of archiving exceeds the significance of the archived content itself; photographs, films, and recordings are not necessarily produced to preserve a moment in the archive, but rather to assert visibility — not as evidence of the object’s existence, but as a testament to the presence of the one who captured it.

The regime of visibility production is marked by an emphasis on the act of production itself: taking a photograph, filming a video, recording a moment, sharing, storing, and engaging with these materials acquire an intrinsic value, often one that surpasses the significance of the event depicted. The moment is not necessarily recorded because of the event’s importance, but because of the importance attributed to the act of

recording. The archive thus becomes the foundation from which the group's collective fabulation is constructed — a testament to the idea of “having been there” (HAND, 2013, p. 25).

The value of exposure, highlighted by Benjamin (2006) in his essay, applies in contemporary times not only to the work, but, perhaps more emphatically, to those who produce visibility, especially because it incorporates, at this moment, the narrative expectations of elaborating fables linked to a group in which one is inserted — the proof that one “was there,” the group photos and videos, the echo of a perspective of truth and authenticity of the image resemble an exposure no longer exclusive to the work or the moment, but to those who record it. As Diana Aisenberg (2017, p. 139) recalls, “*the identity of the object seen fades, as does that of the subject who observes it.*”

Changes in the potency of image fabulation

At this point, it is pertinent to revisit a distinction proposed by Lucrecia Ferrara (2002) regarding the concepts of the visual and the visible, terms that, although closely related, are not strictly synonymous. This distinction proves significant for understanding the aesthetic regime of contemporary image production. As an initial approximation, one might argue that visibility calls forth the gaze, whereas visibility is shaped by the intentionality of the observer. It is therefore worthwhile to return to the specific passage in which Ferrara articulates this conceptual differentiation:

A distinction is proposed within the visual by creating two categories: visibility and visibility. Visibility corresponds to the visual recognition of a reference and, being more passive, is limited to the registration of sensory stimuli. Visibility, on the contrary, is properly semiotic, as it aligns with perceptual cognition as alterity, that characterizes and challenges the density of signs (FERRARA, 2002, p. 101).

What can be seen and observed inherently carries the potential to become visible; anything that can be apprehended by the sense of sight

qualifies as a visual element. However, as a visual element, it is not necessarily constituted to be seen, and it only produces an effect on vision if there is a gaze directed toward it. In this sense, the visual is an open element, its visibility is contingent, not intrinsic, and depends on a logic of observation. Its apprehension does not arise from its own properties, but rather from the presence of a gaze that seeks, investigates, and is actively interested in seeing.

In this sense, visibility would be presented as the characteristic of everything that can be seen, regardless of whether there is a gaze with the intentionality to apprehend it. If visibility is the characteristic of that which can be seen, visibility is linked to the image made to be seen, endowed, itself, with an intentionality that tries to transmit, communicate — or impose — on the eye that looks at it, seeking to produce a certain effect, transform it, deliberately, at the beginning of a relationship of an aesthetic nature — in the sense of generating the production of something in the subject.

An image endowed with this aspect of visibility presents itself as an intentional act, an expression of the artist's desire to provoke a specific effect within an aesthetic framework. The artificial landscape, the designed garden, or the constructed park may indeed incorporate elements of “nature” in its strict sense; however, their configuration is directed by an intentionality aimed at capturing the gaze of the observer (WARNKE, 2004; CAUQUELIN, 2019).

The aesthetic regime of visibility asserts itself through a more or less frenetic logic of production: it is an image created to be seen, appreciated and, in contemporary terms, consumed. In this context, the focus is no longer on the image as a product of fabrication in response to the visual, but rather on the production of visibility itself, which becomes objectified as a form of aesthetic commodity.

This distinction becomes particularly pronounced with the development of image production technologies from the 19th century onward, extending over the subsequent two centuries into the contemporary aesthetic regime, in which visibility, through its very excess, obliterates

and renders visibility invisible. If, nearly a century ago, Benjamin (2006) identified a transformation in the status of the image due to its technical reproducibility, it is now possible to observe, as a consequence of this process, a shift in the very conditions of image production. The capacity to produce images, now accessible to anyone with a smartphone, emerges as the possibility for the virtually infinite elaboration of new visibilities.

What is at stake, therefore, is not merely the capacity to reproduce something through technology, as Benjamin (2006) underscores, but rather the infinite and uninterrupted production of visibilities, ranging from images generated within complex commercial and technical systems, such as content platforms, advertising, or the entertainment industry, to what Torezani (2022) identifies as the self-referential production of the selfie, captured on a personal smartphone and published with the expectation of garnering approval (likes) from a community that shares the same fable regarding the meanings attributed to such images. The aesthetic moment of technical reproducibility, as described by Benjamin, appears to be extended, and in some respects transformed, by an aesthetic regime characterized by the infinite production of visibilities (GIUNTA, 2020).

Producing the visible entails conceiving images not primarily to be seen, their most apparent function, but to be consumed as quickly as possible, immediately supplanted by the next. Once consumed, these images are expected to be discarded, if not physically erased from a smartphone or memory card, then at least from the immediate perceptual field of the individual or group that created them. This collective fabrication of an immediate visibility regime minimizes the space of memory to its smallest possible dimension, as image production must remain continuous and, thus, incompatible with extended duration in the sense articulated by Bergson (2012). Visibility has no duration, especially insofar as its importance does not lie in being seen, but in being produced and consumed almost immediately, rewarded by sharing or liking — transformed, from a certain scale, into “monetization,” a measure of contemporary visibility in its rate of conversion into capital.

Against the impoverishment of image fabulation caused by its confiscation within the capitalist regime, an important point of intersection emerges between the thoughts of Rancière (2016; 2019) and Benjamin (2006). In Rancière's perspective (2017; 2019; 2021), the coexistence of temporalities enabled by the reorganization of experience through fabulation results from the breakdown and fragmentation of the "time of the victors," which becomes intermingled with other temporalities, thereby losing its organizing and controlling power. The process of identifying, articulating, and assembling events and temporalities opens an interval (*écart*), a threshold on which subjects oscillate between nothingness and totality. This threshold is where Rancière (2017; 2018b) converges with Benjamin (2006): both prioritize not the linear progress of time but its interruptions, suspensions, and deviations, valuing the decisive moment preceding the leap toward the "creation of a defamiliarized, dedomesticated space" (RANCIÈRE, 2017, p. 182). According to Rancière, the emancipatory fable dissolves the dilemma of choosing between the "time of the victors" and the "time of the oppressed." The time of the "unvanquished" highlights the agency and dignity of the oppressed, as it constitutes a precarious coexistence of temporalities, a common articulation that presents and brings together facts, objects, subjects, words, situations, and events to transform the perception and intelligibility of the world, conceiving time in "its stops, superpositions, turns, detours and explosions" (RANCIÈRE, 2019, p. 85).

In this regard, fabulation is not merely a momentary glimpse through "a half-open window into a world of ignored lives and emotions," but it also carries "the power of shattering, of multiplication that explodes the dominant time — the time of the victors — at the point of its supposed victory: on the edge of the nothingness to which it relegates those who are outside of words and outside of time" (RANCIÈRE, 2017, p. 172). Once this time has been ruptured, space must be created for the play that is essential to the renewal of forms of life. Within this space, otherness must evade our relentless impulses to categorize, evaluate, judge, and submit

everything to the already familiar; it must remain strange, unfamiliar, and precisely because of this, unsettling.

Final considerations

The fabulation potency of collectively produced images can emerge as a point of challenge and resistance against a regime of visibility in which the uncontrolled proliferation of visual stimuli approaches the very limits of visibility. As observed, the imaginary established through fabulation, whether manifested in art, cinema, or literary texts, reveals an interval within “a supposedly homogeneous temporal continuum” (RANCIÈRE, 2018b, p. 35), enabling moments to surface from thresholds that challenge the gaze and foster oscillation between the reproduction of the familiar and the potential emergence of the new.

Benjamin (2006) conceptualizes the play space (*Spielraum*) as a vital space of life, a site of resistance and inventive, transformative politics. Fabulation can be understood as configuring such a play space, an “empty space” that opens up possibilities for the redesign and rearrangement of everyday elements and practices. This space fosters movement and creates an interval that disrupts life’s continuity, since playing inherently involves experimentation and transformation. Rancière observes that the fabulation guiding the work of images transforms “the consensual device into an experimental device that reveals the possibility of the impossible” (RANCIÈRE, 2024, p. 103), assembling a multiplicity “of serious or fanciful narratives, of historical documents, of collections of witness objects or myths lost in the mists of time” (RANCIÈRE, 2017, p. 132).

Thus, the fabulation that transforms the coordinates of experience establishes a liminal space, a space of play that has intervals and voids in which one can breathe and redefine the course of things. It is still possible to experiment, because there is still an unfilled space, a space to play, imagine, create together, fracturing the logic of the spectacle from within.

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