

Show and Hide

Projection As a Media Strategy Located between Proof of Truth and Illusionising

We do not possess a homogeneous concept of projection – neither for the history of science and technology nor for the history of art and media. The term describes a heterogeneous array of artefacts, technical systems, and particularly visual praxes of experimentation and of culture, where pieces of the worlds we experience or imagine are cast upon a two-dimensional surface. *Projection* oscillates between two extreme poles of meaning: first, the spectacular proof – in the literal sense of the expression – that something, which is sent through an image machine, was or is like what we see in the half-space of the screen; second, the production of a reality *as an image*, which exists as we see it only in the projection.

In an archaeological excursion,¹ I shall present salient historical examples from projection's heterogeneous genealogy as evidence that simply opting for one or the other pole of meaning is not a solution. In science as in art, the compelling issue is to develop the potential of projection within the illusionisation-orientation tension in such a way that recognition of the constructedness of the worlds projected remains an aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. I shall elaborate this argument in five fragments of a planned genealogy of projection.

Phylum of Meanings

To aid historical understanding of the heterogeneous field of praxis and theory covered by projection up to the beginning of the modern era, a classical distinction, for example, as made by the Jesuit mathematician Zacharias Traber in 1675, is helpful.

¹ Cf. the concept and elaboration of my method, see Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media. Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means*, trans. Gloria Custance (Cambridge, MA, 2005, in press).