

# **Towards a Culture for All by All for the Sake of Everyone's Freedom**

## Cultural Entrepreneurs, Cultural Means of Production, Goethe and Development

Carsten Winter

“Tolerance should only be a temporary state of mind. It should lead to acceptance. To tolerate is to offend.” (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maxime und Reflexionen*)

### **1. “Culture” and “Development” – a Normative Historical Relationship**

As a conceptual pair, “culture and development” – like the eponymous initiative – follow the tradition of Western rationality. In the West, according to Max Weber, we intervene in the world, because we perceive it (as our gods do) as having room for improvement, while everyone else understands the world as a natural order that can only be endangered by “development”. This understanding of intervention is exemplified by Goethe, when he has the uncle in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* say: “The greatest human merit is arguably still when man determines the conditions as much as possible and lets himself be determined by them as little as possible.” However, the Goethe-Institute does not espouse the idea of a *Bildungsroman* being a novel about development. The present initiative is not called “cultural development” but rather “Culture *and* Development”. The idea that culture is simply development is rejected and instead, the question of how culture relates to “development” is examined afresh, with an (inter-)cultural purpose.

We do not perceive any one order of meaning as natural; each culture and each organization has its own. Culture is historical, a normative child of its time: We are gaining an ever better understanding of under what conditions, as well as how and why, a culture becomes institutionalized and reconfigured – generally with the goal of enabling greater freedom in dealing with meaning.<sup>1</sup> Thus, culture can only be separated from society for analytical purposes, since both constitute their order less through coercion than by granting and guaranteeing greater freedom alongside more responsibility. The way they change is connected, whereby cultural change in the sense of a change in normative definitions is the focus here. Without them, the term “culture” would be semantically redundant and superfluous as a social classification.<sup>2</sup> Our scientific-empirical understanding of culture as a “comprehensive way of life”, as a possibility for “intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic” development, as a totality “of significant works and practices mainly by artists”<sup>3</sup> or as a combination of the methods, processes, contexts and actors which constitute distinctive combinations of practices and meaning,<sup>4</sup> shows how the modalities of its constitution have changed.

---

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Williams, *THE LONG REVOLUTION*, London: Penguin 1975 [1961].

<sup>2</sup> See Carsten Winter, “Sinn und Notwendigkeit normativer Medienkulturwissenschaft in der Kommunikationswissenschaft”, in Matthias Karmasin, Matthias Rath, Barbara Thomaß (eds.), *NORMATIVITÄT IN DER KOMMUNIKATIONSWISSENSCHAFT*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2013, pp.303–328.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Williams, *KEYWORDS. A VOCABULARY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY*, London: Fontana Press 1988.

<sup>4</sup> For the history of cultural theory and the conceptualization of culture as a combination of relatively autonomous sub-processes, see Carsten Winter, “Komplexe Verbundenheiten, Konflikte und Ungewissheiten – zur Entstehung kulturwissenschaftlicher Kulturtheorie”, in Matthias Karmasin,

The deeper we delve into history, the more unchangeable the normative sense of culture becomes: in the form of magic, prophecy, religion, gender, ethnicity, class, status etc. On the other hand, the possibilities have increased for “ordinary” people to determine the purpose of their lives, their intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development and their participation in works, processes, contexts and methods that are meaningful to them.

As more and more people around the world decided to give their own lives meaning and assume responsibility for themselves and for their culture and community and as they gained access to greater freedom for themselves and their culture and assumed more responsibility for these, the relationship between “culture” and “development” changed. Indeed, it continued to change until a reversal took place, with the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (1948) and its statement “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” For us in Germany, it is no longer our culture, for example in the form of religion, that is “inviolable”, but instead, according to our Basic Law, our freedom, equality and dignity, and culture must justify itself in terms of these values. The right of each individual<sup>5</sup> to justification<sup>6</sup> is the consequence of a development in which, because of the increased worth attached to this right, cultural values and institutions have lost their validity – for a long time unconditional – in favour of our freedom, equality and dignity.

The realization that values and norms lose their unconditional validity became the initial question of sociology. Because this loss could not be clarified, Max Weber postulated a new understanding<sup>7</sup> of actions and the value-free analysis of their meaning. His assumption that culture can only be understood from the perspective of its participants is the basis of modern empirical cultural research. Culture is created as the combined meaning of action, by actors, by people who can turn this meaning into a general “value concept”.<sup>8</sup> Via this line of argument Weber expounds the

---

Carsten Winter (eds.), KULTURWISSENSCHAFT ALS KOMMUNIKATIONSWISSENSCHAFT. PROJEKTE, PROBLEME UND PERSPEKTIVEN, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag 2003, pp. 169–202; *ibid.*, “Zur Entwicklung von Medien als sozialen Tatsachen, Trägern von Rationalität und Produktionsmitteln”, in Catherina Dürrenberg, Carsten Winter (eds.), MEDIENENTWICKLUNG IM WANDEL. ZUR KONFIGURATION EINES NEUEN FORSCHUNGSFELDES Wiesbaden: Springer VS – forthcoming (2015).

<sup>5</sup> For reasons explained in this text, it would make sense to use the female form in the whole text. Today, young women from orders of meaning that are not *their* cultures, in particular, contribute to our cultures being able to become cultures of all for the sake of all our freedom. For reasons of readability, however, the text does not always breach accepted conventions.

<sup>6</sup> See Rainer Forst DAS RECHT AUF RECHTFERTIGUNG: ELEMENTE EINER KONSTRUKTIVISTISCHEN THEORIE DER GERECHTIGKEIT Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2007.

<sup>7</sup> For Weber, “understanding” is, in comparison with scientific causal and therefore one-dimensional explanations, the particular contribution of sociology which breaks down the statics of “needs” declared to be “natural”: “With ‘social entities’ (in contrast to ‘organisms’) we are able: to accomplish something completely unattainable to all of science (in the sense of establishing causal rules for events and entities and the ‘explanation’ of the individual events arising from this) beyond the simple observation of functional correlations and rules (‘laws’): simply ‘*understanding*’ the behaviour of the *individual* involved, while we do *not* ‘understand’ the behaviour of cells, for instance, but can only functionally record this and then determine its operation according *rules*. This additional benefit ... is especially specific to sociological recognition.” Max Weber, “Soziologische Grundbegriffe”, in WIRTSCHAFT UND GESELLSCHAFT. GRUNDRISS DER VERSTEHENDEN SOZIOLOGIE 5, Revised edition by Johannes Winckelmann, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1980 [1922], pp. 1–30, here p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> “It is not the case that we see certain cultures or any particular culture as *valuable*, but that we are *people* of culture, gifted with the ability and the desire to consciously give our view of the world and to

normative complexity of the relationship between culture and development.<sup>9</sup> Above and beyond the older insights, cultural change can be understood as dynamic – a dynamic formulated by Goethe but one that has actually been around for several millennia, in the criticism of the “Pharisees”, for instance: “Order of every kind turns at last to pedantry, and to get rid of the one, people destroy the other; and so it goes on for a while, until people perceive that order must be established anew.” Weber recognizes that after undergoing change, culture as an order of meaning is no longer the old one – nor is it even the old one without “pedantry”, because it reorients action. Therefore, science gets ready “to change location and conceptual apparatus”:

“And this is good. However, at some stage the colour changes: the meaning of the viewpoints used without reflection becomes uncertain, the road disappears into the twilight. The light of the major cultural problems has moved on. Then science also gets ready to change its location and its conceptual apparatus and from the lofty heights of thought to gaze down at the flow of events. It follows only those celestial bodes that offer direction and meaning for its work.”<sup>10</sup>

Why does culture become “uncertain and “lose” meaning “in the twilight”? Weber recognized that this question could be answered at the level of action as a question of “meaning” and thus that this answer could be empirically clarified as the answer to a question that was new because it was forbidden as “heresy”. Weber also recognized, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, that it is not just a matter of understanding without being restrained by values whether change enables more freedom, equality and dignity, but also of understanding and distinguishing between causes and driving forces of cultural change with a view to our freedom, equality and dignity.

## 2. Culturepreneurs as “Artists of the Possible”

Culturepreneurs initiate cultural change as a change in the normative rules for the sake of their and our freedom, with the result that more or fewer free and equal people can respect the dignity of others. This chapter explains their contribution as the “art of the possible”, which is becoming the norm for more and more people.

Weber develops the concept of an “art of the possible” as a driving force of cultural change for understanding the relationship between culture and development and as a way of countering a conclusion reached by Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter

---

give it a meaning. Whatever this meaning might be, it will lead to us judging certain phenomena of human congregation, giving our view of them as meaningful (positive or negative).” Max Weber, “Die ‘Objektivität’ sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis”, in *SOZIOLOGIE. UNIVERSALGESCHICHTLICHE ANALYSEN. POLITIK*, Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Publishers 1973 [1904], pp. 186–262, here p. 223.

<sup>9</sup> “Therefore if the relativity of cultural insight through *value* concepts is referred to, following the language usage of modern logicians, hopefully it is not exposed to serious misunderstandings such as the opinion that cultural meaning should only be ascribed to *valuable* phenomena. Prostitution is just as good a cultural phenomenon as religion or money, all of these therefore and *only* therefore and *only* insofar as their existence and the form that they take on *historically* directly or indirectly impact on our cultural *interests*, as they arouse our striving for insight under historical aspects that are derived from the value concepts that make the peace of reality being thought in those terms meaningful for us.” *ibid.*, pp. 223–224.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

concluded in his *Theory of Economic Development*<sup>11</sup> that cultural change, like economic change, is a consequence of the development of new means of production and combinations of means of production – whereby he does not necessarily abandon the framework of a concept of culture as an order of meaning. Thus, according to Schumpeter, who praises Weber in the context of his statements, the “determinants” and “uncertainties” of cultural development have been largely explained.<sup>12</sup> Weber, who valued and published Schumpeter, had become famous with the study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,<sup>13</sup> which found evidence for the contrary. According to Weber, social change *cannot* be understood in economic terms, because it is shaped to too great a degree by values other than economic ones (i.e. culture), which influence the direction of this change in a more lasting way. Weber will have been appalled by Schumpeter’s proposition – which became the central topic of his second major scholarly contribution.

Weber’s essay “The meaning of ‘value freedom’ in the sociological and economic sciences”<sup>14</sup> clarifies why “value” and “evaluation” are more complex social phenomena than “sums of money” and “prices” (Weber’s formulation is less simplistic, CW). Their change is, namely, too closely bound up with the lives of individuals and communities to be able to clarify them merely in terms of production. However, Weber does concur with Schumpeter to a degree, because he recognizes “value concepts” of a culture as “a priori fixed purposes”<sup>15</sup> for the orientation of actions, which become “the object of scholarly criticism”<sup>16</sup> for the first time. For Weber those who turn purposes into value concepts are “artists of the possible”. They are not entrepreneurs, as they are for Schumpeter, but rather “politicians”. They practice this art, which is “Western” for him, because they reach for the “impossible”:

“It is – if correctly understood – true that successful politics is always the “art of the possible”. It is, however, no less correct that the possible was very often only achieved by reaching for the impossible lying beyond it. Ultimately, however, it is not the only truly consistent ethic of ‘adaptation’ to the possible – the bureaucratic morals of Confucianism – which has supplied the specific qualities of our culture in particular, is valued by all of us, more or less (subjectively), despite all other differences.”<sup>17</sup>

The artists of the possible, who turn new purposes into “a priori established purposes” and therefore provide new opportunities for orientation, will be referred to here as culturepreneurs. This usage accentuates the semantics of culture and those of the French compound “entrepreneur”, composed of “entre” and “prendre”. It does not refer exclusively to actors who stand between culture and the creative

---

<sup>11</sup> Josef Schumpeter, *THEORIE DER WIRTSCHAFTLICHEN ENTWICKLUNG*, reprint of the 1st edition, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 2006 [1912].

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 548.

<sup>13</sup> Max Weber, “Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus”, in *GESAMMELTE AUFSÄTZE ZUR RELIGIONSSOZIOLOGIE I*, Tübingen: Mohr (UTB) 1988 [1905], pp. 17–206.

<sup>14</sup> Max Weber, “Der Sinn der ‘Wertfreiheit’ der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften”, in *SOZIOLOGIE. UNIVERSALGESCHICHTLICHE ANALYSEN. POLITIK*, Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Publishers 1973 [1917], pp. 263–310.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

industries,<sup>18</sup> but rather designates general agents who undertake something for the sake of the future of their culture. Of those, we are interested here in those specific agents who also do it for the sake of all of our freedom, equality and dignity, who also demand freedom of religion (Art. 18), freedom of opinion and media freedom (Art. 19), freedom of assembly (Art. 20), freedom to develop (Art 26 [2.]) and cultural freedom (Art. 27), rights which have enabled us since 1948 “to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Because this is still risky for many people today, since 2004, UNESCO has protected cultural diversity and the right to “the creativity of individuals” (Art. 4.3) and supported “measures” for “increasing the diversity of cultural forms of expression” (Art. 4.7).

### 3. New Media as a Means of Orientation for Culturepreneurs

Individuals can only be creative for the sake of their and our freedom, equality and dignity if they have the means to deal with sense and meaning freely, as equals and with dignity in the public sphere. Historically the “diversity of cultural forms of expression” has increased at times when culturepreneurs as “artists of the possible” have developed and institutionalized new media as carriers of new forms and meaning and have thereby opened up new possibilities for dealing with sense and meaning for others. Weber called these means by which to change culture, which we today call media, carriers of culture –vehicles of orientation and meaning for all.

The text in which Weber identifies change as a consequence of new orientation arrangements remained unfinished and was published posthumously in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* as “The Sociology of Religion (Types of Religious Community)”.<sup>19</sup> He identifies carriers of culture as both “conditions” and “effects” of culture, which enable “distinct types of community activity”.<sup>20</sup> They do not constitute culture as such, but instead their “conditions and effects” as a consequence of their institutionalization as media for the production, distribution, perception and use of meaning make them carriers of culture. Culture changes as the overall context of these processes of dealing with sense and meaning, which often differ both spatially and temporally, subsequent to the development of new media, because people use them to reconfigure this complex mediation process for the sake of their freedom for their own purposes – to whatever degree they can.

Weber must be given credit for the fact that the carriers of culture he mainly analysed (magicians, priests, prophet, preachers)<sup>21</sup> are less obviously media than the printed

---

<sup>18</sup> Bastian Lange, DIE RÄUME DER KREATIVSZENEN. CULTUREPRENEURS UND IHRE ORTE IN BERLIN, Bielefeld: transcript 2007, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Max Weber, “Religionssoziologie (Typen religiöser Vergemeinschaftung)”, in WIRTSCHAFT UND GESELLSCHAFT. GRUNDRISS DER VERSTEHENDEN SOZIOLOGIE, 5th revised edition, obtained by Johannes Winkelmann, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1980 [1922], pp 245–381.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>21</sup> Weber explains cultural change as the replacement of old carriers of culture by new ones at the beginning of our history as cultural history based on § 1. *Die Entstehung der Religionen* in § 2. *Zauberer – Priester*, as the replacement of “magicians” by “priests”, who develop an occupation and ethics and constitute new forms of religious behaviour, which is explained by § 3. *Gottesbegriff, Religiöse Ethik, Tabu*. § 4. *Prophet* restricts *communicative* roles: “Prophet” from “teacher” and “preacher” to describe the development of – as we would say today – *communicative* community

medium of a book, which he touches on only briefly. In comparison with the latter, he could understand more easily how conditions and effects of meaning, particularly in the production, distribution, perception and use of carriers of culture, change and why new carriers of culture replace old ones (as media). Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773) and *The Sufferings of Young Werther* (1774), both of which he published himself, were successful because they opened up greater cultural opportunities for ordinary people. *Werther* continues what Samuel Richardson had started in London, when he renewed the genre of the epistolary novel with *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), and what Jean-Jacques Rousseau had replicated successfully with *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761). This book makes Goethe a culturepreneur for the German and even the European public: it introduces a freer understanding of the meaning of love and the possibilities for dealing with sense and meaning. Attitudes to printed media now become an increasingly important condition and effect of lifestyles, of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic possibilities. Weber recognized this conceptually early on, stating that we are not dealing with the "essence" of a culture, "but rather with the conditions and effects of a particular type of community activity, which can only be comprehended here through the subjective experiences, perceptions, purposes of the individual – through "sense" –, as the external process is a highly varied one."<sup>22</sup>

The "external process" of culture is a complex process of mediation, in which different people, for different reasons, produce, distribute, perceive and use sense and meaning with media whose cultural significance increases or decreases with its use for production, distribution, perception and use of meaning. If its significance decreases, because it is used less to deal with sense and meaning, a medium is often already art and has a different cultural meaning (to a medial one) in society.

Culturepreneurs are people who use new media to open up new opportunities for production, distribution, perception and use of sense and meaning and contribute to the institutionalization of these. They change the conditions and effects of culture.<sup>23</sup> However, cultural change is not only their achievement, but a collaborative activity by all those who, through the sub-processes that constitute culture, help it to be reconstituted under new conditions and effects. It is crucial here whether new media and their concepts of meaning are used more frequently than older ones. For the cultural meaning of older media becomes "uncertain" only when they are used less frequently. Cultural change does not happen in as revolutionary a manner as the one classically formulated by Marx, whereby following the development of new means of production, these "at a certain stage of their development . . . come into conflict with the existing relations of production. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. At that point an era of social revolution begins".<sup>24</sup>

---

religion, which is based on the propagation, reflection and continuation of communication by the carriers of culture, as § 5. *Gemeinde* explains. Max Weber, RELIGIONSSOZIOLOGIE, op.cit.

<sup>22</sup> Max Weber, *ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>23</sup> See Carsten Winter, "Kulturorganisationen entwickeln: Die normative Herausforderung der Entwicklung von Organisation im Kontext von Kulturwandel", in Carsten Winter, Christopher Buschow (eds.), KULTURORGANISATIONEN (WEITER-)ENTWICKELN. BEITRÄGE ZUR ZUKUNFT DER KULTUR, Wiesbaden: Springer VS – forthcoming 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie" (Foreword), in PHILOSOPHISCHE UND ÖKONOMISCHE SCHRIFTEN, Stuttgart: Reclam 2008 [1859], pp. 109–114, here p. 111.

Weber does not criticize the statement that “forms of development of the productive powers turn into their fetters”. He argues that change is more culture-dependent. This takes his “carrier of culture” concept into account, which sees the “final spheres” of culture in the actions of people who have been overlooked by others. If he had conceived carriers of culture as media, he would have clarified the changing role of “laypeople” in the replacement of old carriers of culture by new, media ones: laypeople use new carriers of culture if these open up better possibilities for them to deal with meaning.

Priests were replaced by preachers in Protestantism, because people wanted to orient themselves more freely and equally. Carriers of culture such as leaflets, newspapers and magazines constituted new “conditions” and “effects” for community activity and they became media because people found themselves able to use them to fulfil their own purposes and values in all sub-processes that constitute culture. Media are institutionalized differently in different lifestyles, communities and countries because they convey different values.<sup>25</sup> Culture changes when the process of dealing with meaning using new media, alongside new freedoms, becomes subject to new constraints. Freedom becomes greater when more people can deal more freely with meaning using new media and assume responsibility for this. The development of new primary media<sup>26</sup> as new possibilities for dealing with meaning at the beginning of our cultural history already points to the opportunities that the Goethe-Institut offers for everyone’s culture through culturepreneurs.

According to Christian Meier,<sup>27</sup> the free culture of Europe became possible as a result of the breach of a system of actions by Greek landowners. Their freedom, which could be restricted by their king as the organizer of their defence and guarantor of their security, was so important to them that they overthrew his regime for the sake of their freedom. Their new regime gave them the opportunity to deal with sense and meaning in new ways through the development of primary media, such as “theatre”, “gymnasium” and “academy”, as well as “teacher” and “philosopher”. These represented more efficient conditions and effects of the organization not just of their defence, but also of their way of life and of their spiritual, intellectual and aesthetic possibilities, and as such have been handed down to us as the new political conditions of the world of Hellenism, which was a different world to, say the Jewish one, which had developed other media as conditions and effects of community activity.

---

English translation <http://www.marx2mao.com/M&E/PI.html#pref>

<sup>25</sup> Carsten Winter, “Zur Entwicklung von Medien als sozialen Tatsachen, Trägern von Rationalität und Produktionsmitteln”, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> The cultural and technical forms of four groups of media are differentiated: Human media or primary media (role carriers such as prophet, teacher or preacher or role configurations such as theatre and academy), print media or secondary media (e.g. books, newspapers or magazines – these require technology and the ability to write for their production and the ability to read for their re-production), electronic or tertiary media (radio, TV and also film or recordings, which require production, distribution and reproduction technology) and digital network media such as email, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, which additionally require software, digital transmission technology and infrastructure and new communication and orientation skills to use them. A means of communication becomes a medium when it makes dealing with meaning more likely – owing to different technical conditions and expectations of the manner in which meaning is produced, perceived and used.

<sup>27</sup> Christian Meier, KULTUR, UM DER FREIHEIT WILLEN. GRIECHISCHE ANFÄNGE – ANFANG EUROPAS? Munich: Siedler 2009.

The Jews developed their first media not as landowners, but after their exodus from Egypt around the person of Moses, who had announced their covenant with their god to them. His role as “prophet” became the condition and effect of their activities as a community. However, the dissemination of their “diaspora religion”, which could be encountered in all Mediterranean cities in the Roman Empire, enabled new media, which they first developed as a consequence of the banishment of their (bellicose) ruling elite to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. There they learned from the more educated Babylonians how to read and write and began to write down their history. Their five books of Moses (Pentateuch) permit a location-independent orientation in the synagogue (initially not a sacred building, but rather a Jewish orientation assembly) and, in interplay with their recitation, provide both an orientation for the community and an orientation for gentiles, who were welcome among them. Without an understanding of their media as vehicles for dealing with meaning, the growth of this group of Jews who lived in a dispersed manner cannot be understood.

The history of “freedom”, “equality” and “dignity” shaped the role of the “Christian preacher” most of all. The evolution of this history and the direction it took in conjunction with media such as letters and later the collection of texts that we call the Bible (which simply means “book” in Greek) sets new standards: The mediality of the new role was thus institutionalized in such a way that people who used it for the purposes of orientation developed a positive practical understanding of “freedom” and “equality”, because the preconceived roles enjoined their carriers to demand of them that they be free, equal and show solidarity.<sup>28</sup> The New Testament documents the development of the role of “Christian preacher” in the global city of Antioch, as a condition and effect of new intercultural community that grew initially around Barnabas and Paul, with the Council of Apostles, which was concerned only with the conditions and effects of the new role, and the letters of the Apostles, which primarily reflected the problems of adhering to the precepts required of a Christian.

The cultural history of our freedom, equality and dignity is shaped by purposes – purposes which have served the developers of media and those responsible for them, as well as others. Culture cannot be reduced to one purpose, although it has developed from “a priori established purposes”,<sup>29</sup> whose realization made the “theatre” or the “Christian preacher” more likely as mediation institutions. These have quite rightly become the object of normative discussions – such as those currently being conducted about the value of newspapers, journalism and public radio broadcasting. If tolerance is supposed to be only a temporary state of mind, which leads to the acceptance of others as equals, media should enable culture for the sake of all our freedom, equality and dignity – everywhere around the world.

---

<sup>28</sup> Carsten Winter, DIE MEDIENKULTURGESCHICHTE DES CHRISTLICHEN PREDIGERS VON DEN ANFÄNGEN BIS HEUTE. ENTSTEHUNG UND WANDEL EINES MEDIUMS IN KOMMUNIKATIV-KULTURELLEN VERMITTLUNGSPROZESSEN, Graz: Nausner & Nausner Verlag 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Max Weber, “Der Sinn der ‘Wertfreiheit’ der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften”, op.cit., p. 264.



#### 4. Goethe as Culturepreneur for the Sake of His Freedom and the Freedom of our Culture

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe received the recognition that he sought as a result of the way he dealt with new media, which admittedly were not so new at that point. In dealing with the new media of his time Goethe was what he wanted to be. The technology for Goethe's media had been invented in Mainz, almost three hundred years before he was born in Frankfurt in 1749. Nevertheless, in the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation Catholic priests and preachers or Protestant preachers as the conveyors of the written message continued to determine how ordinary people lived and the possibilities available to them for intellectual, spiritual and aesthetical development, and to make judgements about works and practices: In the first half of the century "10% of the adult population" was literate, although this percentage was higher in Protestant regions and cities.<sup>30</sup>

When Goethe went to Weimar in 1775 (*Werther* having appeared in its initial form in 1774) he had contributed to a development whereby "thousands upon thousands" of people had advanced from reading just a few works – the Bible, the prayer book, the popular calendar – intensively over and over again to reading an extensive selection of current new releases – novels, daily newspapers, magazines – and had hence set a wonderful socio-cultural mobilization process" in motion<sup>31</sup>: "Books, newspapers, and magazines", together with the private form of communication, the letter, evolved successfully as the "media of the eighteenth century" at an "unprecedented pace",<sup>32</sup> with "publishers, bookstores and readers clustered . . . in the Protestant areas of central, northeastern and southwestern Germany".<sup>33</sup> At the centre lay Weimar, where the *Deutsche Merkur*, "one of the most influential newspapers in the last third of the eighteenth century",<sup>34</sup> had been published since 1773.

Hans-Ulrich Wehlers' *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* documents how the culture of ordinary people changed as a result of the spread, differentiation and use of new media, as described by Goethe in the following manner: "The inhabitants of small cities, of which Germany may count a large number of the best situated and best ordered; all the officials and clerks thereof, merchants, manufacturers, the outstanding wives and daughters of such families, and the rural clergy as well".<sup>35</sup> Only under the conditions of the new print-media culture was he really able to call into question in a creative, and hence medial manner, the social order of a feudal world with the "Swabian greeting", as in *Götz von Berlichingen*, or by depicting love as an individual value, which had been regarded up to that point as absurd and immoral. Unlike Machiavelli, whose works *Principe* (1514) and *Discorsi* (1532) went down in history as a literary expression of the Italian Renaissance, Goethe was successful as a culturepreneur because many people were able to read and discuss his texts. Macchiavelli was too far ahead of his time when he broke the first convention of the "mirror for princes" genre, which states that princes are necessarily

---

<sup>30</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFTSGESCHICHTE 1700–1815*, Munich: Beck 1989, p. 304.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>35</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, quoted in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *op.cit.* p. 305.

“princes by birth”, and formulated in his *Discorsi* the idea of a free civil republic. However, he understood the problem that culturepreneurs as “new orderers” are confronted with: for they have “as enemies all those who are comfortable in the old order and as lukewarm comrades-in-arms those who hope to gain by the new order. This stems partly from fear of opponents who have the law on their side and partly from the disbelief of the people who refuse to believe in something new until they can grasp it with their own hands.”<sup>36</sup>

Only 250 years later did the requirements for cultural change exist in all the sub-processes making up culture – requirements subsumed by Wehler today under the term “modernization process”. Culture, which prepared the ground for the civil rights and constitutions of national states, became “modern” not in the thriving cities of the Catholic Italian north, where printing presses were more common than anywhere else, but rather in places where old media could be replaced by new ones.

The “sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura” of the Reformation called for the preacher to be replaced by the Scriptures and for freedom, equality and dignity in the cultural form of their time to become the priesthood of all believers. The first civil epistolary novel came from England, however, where Henry VIII had broken away from Rome in 1533 (likewise for the sake of his freedom), founded the Church of England, banished Latin from the church service and with a Bible in the vernacular created new conditions for community activity and for dealing with meaning. Here the son of a carpenter, the book printer, owner of a printing press and publisher Samuel Richardson, was charged with composing a collection of specimen letters for young women. This gave him the idea for the previously mentioned epistolary novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, with which he revolutionized culture in 1740. He gave a new social group a voice, and hence more freedom, equality and dignity, by breaking with “narrative convention” and letting the bonded servant Pamela describe how she defended herself against the importunate overtures of her “master”, who later marries her. The “familiarity” in handling letters indicated by the title of the correspondence, which he published in 1741 as *Familiar Letters*, became an established form in France with Rousseau’s *Julie or the New Heloise* (1761) but only much later in Germany.

The aforementioned *Julie* was so successful on the market that booksellers loaned the book out when printers were unable to deliver it. The production and distribution of printed meaning, which was entirely unregulated by copyright or law, awakened the “spirit of capitalism” and permitted an economic and political reconfiguration of society from this point on. Thus, in his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* the moral philosopher Adam Smith called for the production and distribution of goods to be oriented towards the market”, because this would bring everyone both greater prosperity and greater freedom.<sup>37</sup>

The increasing commercial production of printing presses under capitalism made meaning more independent of the religious-feudal order of meaning of the nobility and the Church. However, not everyone’s behaviour became freer, more equal or more dignified. The people who profited were primarily those who learned to endow their own actions with meaning and rules and to assume responsibility for them. This

---

<sup>36</sup> Niccolo Macciavelli, *THE PRINCE* London: Penguin Books 1999 [1514], p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Adam Smith, *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1993 [1776].

was demonstrated by Richardson, Rousseau and Goethe, who sought to establish closer ties to (English) freemasonry. Goethe's maxim, that tolerance should only be a temporary state of mind that leads to acceptance because "to tolerate" is "to insult" is a reference to the Edict of Nantes (1598), which tolerated Huguenots – i. e. Protestants like him – but did not accept them. And indeed their freedom, equality and dignity were subsequently destroyed by the Edict of Fontainebleau (1685); only after the French Revolution in 1789 were human rights and civil rights adopted.

New cultural forms of new media, such as epistolary novels, for instance, made new relationships possible – relationships that were not provided for in the old orders of meaning and were on the basis of the values embodied by these old orders of meaning "a priori" and understandably problematic and whose meaning made them common objects of popular reasoning. This was achieved by Goethe in his *Götz von Berlichingen*, which he published himself. Here he illustrates why life is incompatible with the prevailing order, the order of the time which was tantamount to a "prison" with "freedom" only in heaven – as it transpires in the dialogue immediately preceding Götz's death. This piece of "do-it-yourself" publishing, which Goethe uses as a medium to reach for the impossible, makes him into a culturepreneur, because it opens up more freedoms for readers in dealing with sense and meaning and greater possibilities to reform their culture for the sake of their freedom, a tendency he took even further in *Werther*.

Dealing with print media even led to the founding of new institutions, in particular the reading societies and coffee houses mentioned in this context, as well as changes or advancements in existing institutions, which become reconfigured as a consequence of new cultural possibilities. One example is the freemasons, who originated as an ethical community from the organization of their professional group and wanted to refine and develop their characters as well as their technical skills and abilities by practicing values that they had determined themselves (freedom, equality, fraternity, tolerance, humanity). Thus, it was primarily the freemasons who were responsible for turning the new freedom that Goethe writes about in *Götz* and the pursuit of happiness – under pretty adverse conditions– into inalienable human rights (albeit with caveats) in the US Declaration of Independence: fifty of the fifty-six signatories were freemasons, culturepreneurs who dared to seek more freedom and happiness for themselves and others together with the responsibility that goes with them.

## **5. The Goethe-Institut: Culturepreneurs and Culture for its Own Sake and the Sake of our Freedom**

For more and more people worldwide lifestyles and cultural opportunities are shaped by new media and new possibilities for mutual acceptance and for dealing with sense and meaning: New digital network media such as MySpace (2003), Wikipedia (2003), Facebook (2004), Twitter (2006), YouTube (2006), Spotify (2006), SoundCloud (2007) or Instagram (2010), to name some of the better known ones, have become, for more and more people – whether in Bangkok or Berlin, in Istanbul or Kiev, in Peking or Sofia – the most important media of *their* culture and therefore *our* world.

Digital network media open up new cultural opportunities for everyone because increasingly they are becoming available to everyone. For the first time in cultural history, the new media mean that the new possibilities for production and distribution as well as organization and orientation of the perception of meaning are limited to

just a few people, with only private use for everyone else; now everyone has the right as well as the means to use these possibilities as they see fit. Digital network media also invert the relationship between “culture” and “development” to one of “development” and “culture” in material terms as well. Now, the major cultural difference between people – a difference that existed as long as some had media at their disposal while others did not, is decreasing. No wonder, then, that we are experiencing a major cultural shift in which the value of the media and institutions of the push-culture, the culture that some have created for all, is decreasing, while the value of the media by means of which ordinary people today lose their status as “ordinary” is increasing. For people are finally able to use media for production, distribution and for the organization and orientation of the perception of meaning, something they demonstrate globally every day with their increasing tendency to “comment”, “connect”, “link”, “produce”, “share”, “criticize”, “present”, “post”, and “like”.

Everywhere, and not just in the West, people are realizing today as they deal with meaning via media that the “a priori established purposes” of their culture, value ideas and institutions were not developed for the sake of their freedom, equality and dignity. They are recognizing, as Goethe once did, that their culture does not enable the freedom, equality and dignity that their dealings with digital network media appear to make possible. The scenario which was always the historical consequence of people’s exposure to new media – whether preachers, leaflets, books, vinyl records, a pirate radio station or Facebook and Twitter in the Arab Spring – is repeating itself: Because the existing institutions and values are losing their accepted meaning and validity, people are breaching conventions and existing laws and fundamentally calling into question values and institutions.

The initiative “Culture and Development” opens up new possibilities for the Goethe-Institut to enter into the ongoing debates about the future of culture. The question of freedom, equality and dignity is no longer a question of Catholicism or Protestantism, or of capitalism or socialism. Religion is a personal matter, and when positive and negative trade-off freedoms are asserted, no one expects the market to enable more freedom, equality or dignity; where equality is asserted as a central value, no one expects that the institution that is supposed to guarantee this – i.e., the party – will still be able to do so. Even institutions like the “autonomy of art” are losing their value, because this concept, long regarded as the highest form of freedom from both the market and the party, has been exposed as the “ideology” of its own circumstances. This freedom of art, which is only permitted to be this negative freedom of art devoid of a social function,<sup>38</sup> is diametrically opposed to the positive freedom of the culturepreneurs, who demand freedom not just for the sake of art, but rather for the sake of the freedom, equality and dignity of all of us.

In a world that has come to lack perspective, the Goethe-Institut should promote culturepreneurs who open up new cultural possibilities for the sake of their and our freedom, equality and dignity, and who use the new media intelligently, inclusively and sustainably for constituting new conditions and effects of community activity. The Goethe-Institut would promote people like its namesake, who, like him, develop lifestyles and new possibilities for dealing with the new media not for the sake of art,

---

<sup>38</sup> Michael Müller et al., AUTONOMIE DER KUNST. ZUR GENESE UND KRITIK EINER BÜRGERLICHEN KATEGORIE, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1972.

but for the sake of new cultural possibilities. To network them with culturepreneurs in this country would open new avenues to culture in Germany for them and us, new future-orientated productive intercultural dialogues, new possibilities for educational collaboration and participation in the new meaning and new orders of meaning.

In such networks the Goethe-Instituts can serve as public hubs for culturepreneurs, whose contribution lies primarily in the fact that new possibilities for more acceptance, in particular, are opened, discussed and developed. The culturepreneurs' concepts for orders of meaning differ from those that were developed over centuries in and for push cultures, in the sense intended by Goethe: In the latter, tolerance was a noble gesture for those who had sole access to the media and thereby to the conditions and effects of community activity. In the new networks of networked societies, acceptance, on the other hand, makes more sense.

For most people who open up new possibilities for engaging with meaning for themselves and others around the world, thereby in the best instance taking responsibility for all of our culture, the recognition of their new meaning, their new activities and their new relationships is what is most important to them in life. This is evinced by the comparative research on the development of media, and currently especially on new networks in music culture, where social innovations with the new digital network media have the longest traditions<sup>39</sup> and where the transformation of linear "push" music cultures into networked "pull" and "on-demand" cultures is most developed, to the extent that it has already altered the music industry to a considerable degree.<sup>40</sup> In them, artpreneurs, artists as entrepreneurs in their art<sup>41</sup> and culturepreneurs – people who become the entrepreneurs of their pop culture without commercial intentions,<sup>42</sup> regardless of whether the networks pursue commercial interests or not, are realizing that there are benefits attached to achieving a culture of acceptance. On the way to a culture of everyone for everyone who actively pursues this for the sake of our freedom, equality and dignity – with the crucifix judgement in Germany having exemplary significance here – Goethe Instituts worldwide can become promoters of culturepreneurs, who endow Goethe's name with the greatest honour by enabling the greatest acceptance of our culture.

---

<sup>39</sup> Carsten Winter, "How media prosumers contribute to social innovation in today's new networked music culture and economy", in INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MUSIC BUSINESS RESEARCH 1 (2) 2012, pp. 46–73.

<sup>40</sup> Carsten Winter, "Die Entwicklung der Medien als 'Ursachen' und als 'Wesen' musikbezogener Wertschöpfung", in: Bastian Lange, Hans-Joachim Bürkner, Elke Schüßler (eds.), AKUSTISCHES KAPITAL. WERTSCHÖPFUNG IN DER MUSIKWIRTSCHAFT, Bielefeld: Transcript 2013, pp. 321–347.

<sup>41</sup> Aljoscha Paulus, Carsten Winter, "Musiker als Media-Artepreneure? Digitale Netzwerkmedien als Produktionsmittel und neue Wertschöpfungsprozesse", in Uwe Breitenborn, Thomas Düllo, Sören Birke (eds.), GRAVITATIONSFELD POP. WAS KANN POP? WAS WILL POPKULTURWIRTSCHAFT? KONSTELLATIONEN IN BERLIN UND ANDERSWO, Bielefeld: transcript 2014, pp. 133–142.

<sup>42</sup> Katja Kaufmann, Carsten Winter, "Ordinary People. Gewöhnliche Leute als Unternehmer ihrer Popkultur", in Uwe Breitenborn et al., op. cit., pp. 339–351.