

One Image all over the World: Analysing Blue Marble's Meanings

File 1

Thank you for the opportunity to present my paper „One Image all over the World: Analysing Blue Marble's Meanings“.

I would like to take you with me on a journey. We will leave earth and look on it from above, we realise its curvature and finally get the idea of our planet as a sphere.¹ At a certain distance, Earth is shrunken to the size of a marble.² This aerial view gives you the possibility to distance yourself from the earth. With this perspective you can gain an overview over interrelations and interdependencies³. Donna Haraway names the so called Apollonian view a trick of an all-knowing god that assumes to be neutral.⁴ This implicates that this overview is related to power, too.

File 2

This notion of power in relation to earth is hundreds of years old⁵ and it is visualized for example on a coin of the Roman Empire.⁶ One side depicts a portrait of Licinius II, an emperor of the Eastern part of the Roman Empire during the 4th century of the common era. On the other side Jupiter holds a terrestrial globe. He is the main god of the Roman Empire. The globus cruciger of the Holy Roman Empire descends from the conception of the globe as a sign of authority.⁷ This representation on the slide stems from the 11th century and depicts Heinrich III, who is carrying an orb.⁸

This connotation as a sign of power is not the only concept which has been attributed to earth for centuries. In my paper I will argue that in every meaning attributed to earth you can find a

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- 1 Cp. Bredekamp, Horst: Blue Marble. Der blaue Planet, in: Marksches, Chirstoph et al. (ed.): Atlas der Weltbilder, Berlin 2011, pp. 366–374; cp. Holliday, Clyde T.: Seeing the Earth from 80 Miles up, in: National Geographic XCVIII (1950), pp. 511–528, cp. Cosgrove, Denis: Contested Global Visions. One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs, in: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 84/2 (1994) pp. 270–294.
 - 2 In 1971, James Irvin from Apollo 15 compared earth with a marble, cited in: Sachs, Wolfgang: Der blaue Planet. Über die Zweideutigkeit einer Ikone, in: Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (ed.): Terre, Repère, Terre, Bonn 1992, pp. 132–150, here: p. 140.
 - 3 Cp. Sachs, Wolfgang: Der blaue Planet. Über die Zweideutigkeit einer Ikone, in: Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (ed.): Terre, Repère, Terre, Bonn 1992, pp. 132–150.
 - 4 Cp. Haraway, Donna: Situiertes Wissen. Die Wissenschaftsfrage im Feminismus und das Privileg einer partialen Perspektive, in: dies.: Die Neuerfindung der Natur. Primaten, Cyborgs und Frauen, Frankfurt a. M. 1995, pp. 73–97, here: pp 80–91.
 - 5 Cp. Cosgrove, Denis: Contested Global Visions. One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs, in: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 84/2 (1994) pp. 270–294, here: p. 272.
 - 6 Coin depicting Licinius II, www.muenzen-ritter.com/wissenswertes/numismatikbibliothek/roemische-herrscher/licinius_ii [20.10.2014].
 - 7 Cp. Schramm, Percy Ernst: Sphaira, Globus, Reichsapfel. Wanderung und Wandlung eines Herrschaftszeichens von Caesar bis zu Elisabeth II. Ein Beitrag zum „Nachleben“ der Antike, Stuttgart 1958.
 - 8 Stefan Weinfurter et al. (ed.): Für Königtum und Himmelreich. 1000 Jahre Bischof Meinwerk von Paderborn, Regensburg: 2009, p. 153.

connotation of power, too. In the beginning it was power over an Empire, today you can find implications about various forms of power over individuals, claimed for example by enterprises or news agencies.

In arguing so, I will use images of the Earth which I have encountered during my research, in my daily life, during excursions or while browsing in the internet. Methodologically-speaking, my approach can be described with a figure from Walter Benjamin, the flaneur⁹. In being a kind of detective and strolling around I searched traces of earth pictures and the connected meanings. The sample of pictures is by no means all-compassing. But still, I think it can give a glimpse on where you can find Earth pictures or the terms Whole Earth, Blue Marble and Earthrise, how the pictures and terms are used and how it is graphically done and which meanings the producers want to evoke.

For me, pictures are not pure reproductions of reality, but rather representations of our imagination.¹⁰ Therefore they can show the meanings which their producers and distributors put and still put in an image of the globe. Earth is both, starting point and part of a semantic field which can illustrate in a very impressive way power and holistic views.

File 3

Earth images have existed for centuries. Since the beginning, different layers of meanings were added to this image like imperialistic, colonialistic, religious, economic and communitarian ones.¹¹ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new technique allowed people to discover Earth in a new way.¹² Astronauts in their spaceships took pictures of the planet. Two NASA-photographs of the Earth, titled Earthrise (1968) and Blue Marble (1972), became famous and gained worldwide recognition. At the same time, David Kuchenbuch argues, the term “one world” gained more importance. During the early 1970s the already existing meaning of “one world to share” got connected to the new meaning “one world only”.¹³ This development was interwoven with the new mode of showing earth and conveying this meanings by depicting earth. Subsequently, the distribution of earth images increased. Since then, images of the Earth have gained prominence also and especially because of the environmental movement: images of Earth were, for example, used on the covers of Whole

9 Cp. Benjamin, Walter: *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire*, in: ders.: *Gesammelte Schriften I.2*, Frankfurt . M. 1991, pp. 509–604, here: pp. 537–569; ders.: *Die Wiederkehr des Flaneurs*, in: ders.: *Gesammelte Schriften III*, Frankfurt a. M., pp. 194–199.

10 Cp. Schürmann, Eva: *Darstellung einer Vorstellung. Das Bild der Welt auf der Pioneer-Plakette*, in: Marksches, Christoph et al. (ed.): *Atlas der Weltbilder*, Berlin 2011, pp. 376–385.

11 Vgl. Cosgrove, Denis: *Contested Global Visions. One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs*, in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 84/2 (1994) pp. 270–294.

12 Maher, Neil: *Shooting the Moon*, in: *Environmental History* 9 (2004), pp. 256–531.

13 Vgl. Kuchenbuch, David: *Globales Interdependenzbewusstsein und die Moralisierung des Alltags in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 38 (2012), pp. 158-184, here: pp. 161, 166.

Earth Catalogue or for Earth Day. The image of the Blue Planet was also used by many other organizations, companies as well as NGOs.¹⁴ In doing so, it was graphically adapted to their needs. Today, these images seem to have been so widely used but still many marketing strategists see them as the best way of reaching their aims.

Now I would like to come back to my hypothesis that earth pictures are showing different modes of power. In my examples I spotted the power over distances and complexity, the management of knowledge and material streams and the disciplinary and or self-disciplinary of individuals.

File 4

Power over distances and complexity (conquering, travelling, money)

The first mode of power I want to elaborate is controlling distances and complexity using examples of conquering, travelling and banking.

Each space flight mission of American **NASA** has its own individual logo. The crew of Apollo 11¹⁵ has chosen to depict the name and counting of their mission and the heraldic animal of the United States, a bald eagle. The raptor, holding an olive branch in its claws, approaches for landing on the moon. In the background you can see parts of earth hovering in the dark outer space.

This mission was the first one to be determined to enter the moon. You can read the aim of this spaceflight out of the logo. On most emblems you can find the names of the astronauts flying with the spaceship. On this one Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins decided against writing their names on it. In doing so they wanted to highlight the fact that space travel is a common effort. The detailed depicted hostile surface of the moon reminds of the Earthrise picture, too. Finally, the olive branch shows the peaceful intention of this mission, which should be regarded as a successful effort of mankind and not only of the U.S. nation. Last but not least, the olive branch is not only held by the eagle on the logo. The two men who entered the moon, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin, also left a golden copy of this universal sign of peace on the surface of the moon.¹⁶

File 5

Not only astronauts are conquering unknown spaces. Common people like you and I also have the opportunity to discover foreign landscapes. You can go on your own or you can engage a travel

14 Cp. Garb, Yaakov Jerome: The Use and Misuse of the Whole Earth Image, in: Whole Earth Review 44 (1985), pp. 18–25.

15 www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/apollo/missions/apollo11.html [20.10.2014]

16 See also Woydt, Hermann: Von Mercury bis Apollo. Die Geschichte der bemannten US-Raumfahrt, Aachen 2009, pp. 175ff.

agency. In Darmstadt, my hometown, you can find a tourist office called **T.O.M.S. Flugreisen**¹⁷.

Last year's New Year's card depicted an Earth showing mostly the northern and central part of the American continent. On the surface of the planet red tinted symbols illustrate places of interest from all over the world. For example the Greek Akropolis, the American Statue of Liberty, the Indian Taj Mahal, the Australian Sydney Opera House or an Egyptian pyramid represent the five continents. Above all a stylized bird is flying in the blue sky which is illuminated by fireworks.

The fireworks and the written salutation "Alles Gute für's neue Jahr" herald the new year. The globe and the depicted places of interest let you dream about possible travel destinations. And the bird reminds you that you can reach even the most distant places by plain. To make sure you will get to your preferred destination and at your favoured date you can engage the help of T.O.M.S. which pretends to be an expert in organizing trips and booking flights all over the world.

File 6

The trips you have booked need to be paid for. Most of you would pay via money transfer from your current account which is administered by a bank. One possibility is the German **GLS-Bank**¹⁸. The letters GLS stand for "Common bank for lending and donation"¹⁹. Their advertisement depict a flourishing green sphere with a river meandering through grassland and fields. On the surface of the globe cavort various animals and people of different ages. Besides vegetables, fruits and trees diverse constructions are located like houses and a barn, windmills and solar panels, musical instruments or a bench, a bridge as well as a learning and playing ground. The middle of the illustration depicts a cash card.

The slogan of the coop-bank reminds you: By opening a bank account at GLS you also decide to save the world. And the drawing gives you a hint how you can realize this effort. In supporting projects like alimentation, education, social caring, alternative habitation or renewable energy you contributes to a better world.²⁰ This illustration pictures even more. It draws a vision of living together in wooden houses in a flourishing landscape and in accordance with nature. Windmills and solar panels provide environmental friendly energy, benches, bridges and common spaces allow to meet each other and teaching materials enable people to think and act humanly.

File 7

17 New year's card of T.O.M.S. Flugreisen, 2013, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

18 Advertisement of GLS, 2014, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

19 Cp. www.gls.de/privatkunden/service-kontakt/suchen-und-finden/haeufig-gestellte-fragen/ueber-die-gls-bank-und-ihre-arbeit/gls-treuhand/was-bedeutet-der-name-gls-treuhand/?highlight=GLS&TG=&cHash=bf0855f8d3e75b1071d0a779fd0e6d0f [20.10.2014].

20 Cp. www.gls.de/privatkunden/finanzierte-projekte-unternehmen/ [20.10.2014].

What do I mean by power over distances and complexity as shown in the three examples?

The power over distance means distance in two ways. In one way it means overcome the distance between two real objects like two celestial bodies or between home and a place of interest. It means creating the future, too, by envisioning it. In doing so, all three examples reduce complexity. On the NASA-Logo you can find only nature. On a first glance, nothing particular reminds you of the scientific and technical effort of leaving earth and reaching another celestial body. Only by analysing the components, acting as allegories, you can tell a story about American astronautics, cold war and the space race. T.O.M.S. let you believe that planning a journey is to think about the destination. This is correct for the spaceflight, too. And like the NASA emblem, the New Year's card does not mention the technical and organisational part. In a similar way, GLS also does not mention the effort of saving, spending and administration of money and, especially, of caring for others and nature and therefor saving the world. The bank reduces social complexity by regulating floating money. All three examples let you believe, too, that you have the power to shape your life, your surrounding and the future of you, other people and nature.

File 8

Management of knowledge and solid streams (university, recycling, package)

Management of streams such as knowledge or matter can be seen as a second mode of power depicted in earth pictures. I will show you this mode of power by using examples from a university, recycling and packaging.

A huge painting on the entrance wall of **Fatih-University**²¹ in Istanbul, Turkey, depicts a gloomy earth. The oceans are drawn in a white, never ending pattern, the blue tinted continents are held together by a tree stem and branches. The skyline of Istanbul surrounds the globe. The stem is based on a chess board. The silhouettes of white and black chess figures on the chess board are about to fall over. A well-dressed girl holding a labyrinth stands on an archive box. The child is watching the scenery while silhouettes of white doves are flying above her.

The ocean with the never ending pattern reminds you of the ocean of knowledge and the famous saying that mankind only knows a drop of it. The tree made out of continents symbolizes the community of people and the doves guarantee the peace on the "one world to share". The flourishing tree, growing out of the chess game, the mother of all games and the game of emperors, reminds you that you need knowledge and need to be smart to win over your opponent who should

21 Wallpainting at Fatih University, 2014, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

be treated as such, not as an enemy. The child standing on the storage box symbolizes the archived knowledge of former times and that you have to understand the past to learn for the future. This you should already begin at a young age and it doesn't matter if you are a girl or a boy. The silhouette of Istanbul gives you a hint that a good place to start studying is at one of the globe's greatest intersections, the metropole that spans continents, which is a melting pot for people from different cultures and therefor for creative knowledge.

Foil 9

For sure, in such juggernauts of millions of inhabitants you need solutions for handling waste. An effective way of depositing of your waste is recycling. One of the companies offering recycling solutions is **I:CO**²² which stands for "I collect"²³. In cooperation with Reno, one of Europe's biggest retailers for shoes, it collects old shoes and reuses them as insulation material or paper. In order to inform the customers about their business the companies disperse flyers. On the right side of these flyers one can see three quarter of a satellite picture of earth cutting off outer space in the background. The globe is covered with a green info box showing the emblem of I:CO. On the left side text informs you how to proceed to help I:CO recycle. On the bottom you can find the brand of Reno.

The text shows you in different ways that collecting old shoes is a win win situation for yourself and the environment. You get rid of your destroyed shoes, in return you get a voucher worth 50 Cent for every pair of shoes you trade-in. The voucher must then be used to buy new shoes: the companies thus claim that by saving money for yourself you can save the earth. The globe on their promotional material looks like we know it from the former NASA-photographs. Just without the hostile outer space. Maybe they want to focus on earth and its resources. Earth is covered with a green box which gives you more information about I:CO and its mission of installing a worldwide recycling industry. The earth covering infobox can be seen as caring about the planet. The footprint made out of leaves further increases the notion of an ecological way of handling resources and in doing so reducing your own ecological footprint.

Foil 10

Reducing the consumption of carbon dioxide and saving resources are also aims of **Lovechock**²⁴, a small, Dutch company founded in 2007 that offers organic fair-trade chocolate. Using a brown tinted earth picture, the company informs the consumers about the environmental friendly package

²² Flyer by Reno and I:CO, 2014, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

²³ Cp. www.ico-spirit.com/de/ueber-ico/ [20.10.2014].

²⁴ Package of Lovechock chocolate, 2014, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

of its products. Earth is depicted as a globe within a device that is capable of spinning it. Instead of oceans and continents a grid encompasses the globe. A heart is at the centre of the sphere. The drawing is accompanied by text which informs the customers in two languages about the special features of the chocolate covering foil.

These features are highlighted by the arrangement and combination of text and earth image. The foil is made out of compostable material. It is literally “foil for the Earth”²⁵ which can be put into the compost like its “vegetable friends”²⁶. The company emphasises the distinction between food and package. The foil is meant to be equal to the skin of fruits or vegetables. This epitomizes the pinnacle of the hybridity of human, nature, and technics, a new life cycle for a sustainable world. The idea is depicted in the earth image. It shows the world spanning production circle and the possibility of tasting food from abroad. But it is more than that. Earth has a heart: this means both, we love our Earth but mother Earth loves us too and feeds us, we are a hybrid community composed of humans and nature.

File 11

What does that mode of power, the management of knowledge and of streams of matter signify? Knowledge in itself is a form of power, and the dissemination of knowledge, too. The wall painting of Fatih University shows this impressively: knowledge of the ancients is hidden in a box and a little girl stands on the heritage of our ancestors. It means, we don't have to start with nothing. All we need to know is in which way to gain access and how to profit from knowledge. By hiding knowledge you can exclude people from everyday life and from personal development, too. To be aware of the regulation of solid streams is a kind of knowledge, too. In having this knowledge you have the power over resources and production circles. This interplay of providing and refusing is also important in regulating solid streams, for example the recycling of waste. Depicting a footprint made out of leaves I:CO reminds you on the circle of life and your own consumption of resources. Its aim is to create a sustainable consumption with the help of a worldwide recycling system which gets locally rentable at 500 tons of collected resources per day.²⁷ Sustainability is the claim of Lovechock, too, but in the food sector. To track the production process from the origin of the components over their manufacturing to their packaging, consumers of this chocolate can browse in the internet like spinning a globe. If you have access to knowledge and resources you have a choice about how to live. You can choose in a profound way if you want this kind of sustainability or not.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Cp. www.ico-spirit.com/de/world-textile--shoe-recycling-countdown/ [20.10.2014]

File 12

power over man (individuals, food)

This leads me to the third and last, in a way culminating mode of power I would like to present: the power over man, as groups or individuals.

On airports, for instance, earth images are used as pictograms to direct the passenger volume.

Because I have been on a field trip to Turkey I will show you the example of the departure area at the **Istanbul-Atatürk**²⁸ airport: As in most airport, once you have made your way through security you are then faced with border control, where you have to queue in one of two lines who are signposted with two very similar yet slightly different images. The difference is the Turkish flag that indicates the line for Turkish citizens on one sign and a stylised globe meaning “rest of the world” on the other.

The signs are part of a sophisticated system made out of corridors, balustrades and check points to guide and control the passenger volume of the airport. The arrangement serves to discipline a mass of people. If you want to reach your destination you have no choice but to follow the path that is laid out to you by this system. Otherwise you can't leave the country. Within this guiding system, the flag and the Earth have an important role. They sort people according to their citizenship and remind us that without citizenship you are excluded from flying. In the logic of an airport stateless people don't exist. They have no pictogram.

File 13

Caring for the health of people regardless of their legal status, whether they are stateless or citizens of a country, is the aim of **Earthrise**²⁹. The company was founded in the 1970s in the desert of California to grow algae as a so called “world food resource”³⁰ to provide proteins, vitamins and minerals. Its mission statement is composed of text, referring to NASA's Apollo missions, and a picture showing parts of earth. About three quarter of the illustration is covered by one quarter of the planet. Sun is rising behind parts of a detailed depicted relief-like American continent.

The company refers to the Earthrise image as a so called “powerful image”³¹ which encourage people to rediscover the so called “miracle of our living planet”³² as the origin of life and healthiness. In choosing for their logo both, term and picture, the company expresses the impact the

28 Airport Istanbul-Atatürk, 2014, Silke Vetter-Schultheiß

29 Cp. www.earthrise.com/about/mission.php [20.10.2014].

30 Cp. www.earthrise.com/about/origins.php [20.10.2014].

31 Cp. www.earthrise.com/about/mission.php [20.10.2014].

32 Ibid.

Earthrise picture had on the company. This influence depicts the illustration, too. It is not just the whole Earth, but especially inventive California that is awaking, laying in the shade and awaiting the sun rise. As the company remarks, in understanding its mission you can discipline yourself and by eating more algae instead of ordinary food, you save the earth in three ways: you contribute to your own health because of the algae's life-enhancing effects, you preserve resources because algae are growing in non-fertile soil and in supporting the company by buying its products Earthrise can donate algae to, for example, malnourished people.

File 14

So what about the power to disciplinary groups or individuals?

Michel Foucault has described discipline in a modern world as individuals having to bring themselves into service to the capitalistic system. Economic output is reached best in being productive and by complying. The power of discipline can be used to reach this aim.³³ Examples I have given to stress this point were the channelling system at the airport as well as the algae company. At the airport earth as one of the most inclusive icons of imagining to be part of the community turns into one of the hardest exclusion mechanisms you can imagine. At an airport stateless people can't claim to be because they don't own any citizenship and on our planet we don't have the status "citizen of the world". Without a home nation you are excluded and in a way you don't exist. The food company uses the power of disciplinary the other way round. It calls on our honour by claiming that everybody has the right to exist because earth is home for all people and the resources should be sufficient for everybody. The solution, Earthrise offers, is to discipline yourself and eat algae.

File 15

And here the circle of "one world to share" and "one world only" is closed. A recent NASA project of cultivating algae claims to offer a solution to many global problems and dangers such as a not having enough energy, food or water.³⁴ For them, a new stage of development is reached, the algae is disciplined.

File 16

Thank you for your attention.

33 Cp. Foucault, Michel: Überwachen und Strafen, Frankfurt a. M. 1979.

34 Cp. Tanner, Ariane: Utopien aus Biomasse. Plankton als wissenschaftliches und gesellschaftspolitisches Projektionsobjekt, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 40 (2014), pp. 323-353, here: p 324; cp. Trent, Jonathan: Energy from Floating Algae Pods, TED-Talk from 27 June 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-HE4Hfa-OY [20.10.2014]; cp.. NASA: OMEGA – Offshore Membrane Enclosure for Growing Algae, www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/research/OMEGA [20.10.2014].