

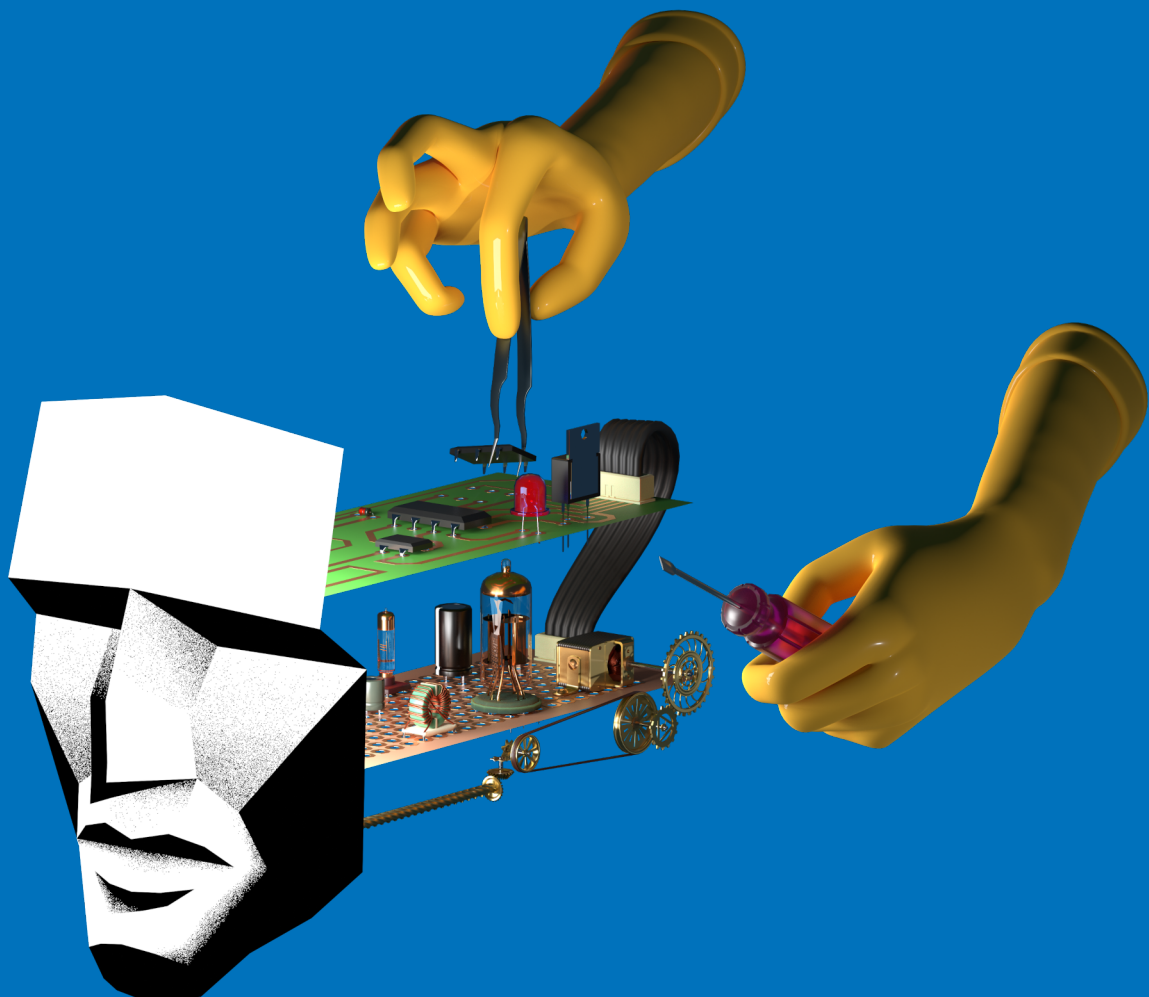


INTERNATIONAL
ICON
STUDENTS' CONFERENCE MAINZ

The Appeal of Manipulation

Proceedings of the 2nd International
Students' Conference ICON 2019

Edited by Jan Jokisch



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung



[This page intentionally left blank]

The Appeal of Manipulation

Proceedings of the 2nd International Students' Conference ICON 2019

Edited by Jan Jokisch

In collaboration with Nadine Heckmann, Melanie Kroska,
Elena Syvokonyuk, and Dr. Daniel Schmicking.



2023

Acknowledgements

ICON would like to thank the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz and its Studium Generale for providing the infrastructure necessary for a successful conference, use of Gutenberg Open Science as an Open Access platform for the publication of our proceedings, and for further access to the different structures and possibilities offered by the university.

Further thanks go to the project *Lehren Organisieren Beraten* of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, which was financed by the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung [German Federal Ministry of Education and Research] and which ultimately financed large parts of ICON before being discontinued on December 31, 2020.

From a student perspective, ICON is indebted to Dr. Daniel Schmicking, who not only founded ICON but, to this day, serves as a driving force of the program and a constant source of motivation and support. Dr. Schmicking is a true ally to students.

Lastly and personally, I would like to thank my friend Vassilis Cooper for the outstanding cover for this volume, and the Goethe Institut Córdoba for providing me with an office for all my endeavors, one of them being this volume.

About ICON

ICON Mainz is an interdisciplinary and international students' conference at the University of Mainz. ICON offers students from all over the world a platform to exchange ideas and broaden their horizon by connecting with other students across all borders.

The ongoing goal of ICON is to further the recognition of students within academia and beyond. We want to prove that students and their research can make important and valuable contributions to science and the world. That is why we strive to give students a platform to present and discuss their findings and network across disciplines.

What is special about ICON is that the organization team is made up of students from different disciplines and nationalities: It is a conference organized by students for students.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Published 2023 through Gutenberg Open Science.

<https://openscience.ub.uni-mainz.de/handle/20.500.12030/9003>

<http://doi.org/10.25358/openscience-8986>

ICON MAINZ

ICON-Team, Studium Generale, & Dr. Daniel Schmicking

icon@uni-mainz.de

<https://icon.uni-mainz.de>

Cover art: *Machination* by Vassilis Cooper.

Introduction: Editing as Manipulation

Jan Jokisch

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

Aggravation and regret soon subsided as I recollected the inspiration in the hills, the lawn chair under the jacaranda, the inner drive, the glow, without which my task could not have been accomplished. I told myself that nothing had been wasted after all, that my scenario remained intact in its folder, and that one day I might publish it – not in pettish refutation of a munificent film but purely as a vivacious variant of an old novel.

Vladimir Nabokov, Foreword to *Lolita: The Screenplay*

In a volume so directly named after a central concept – *manipulation* –, it is usually customary to include a short overview on the concept in the introduction, go over the different interdisciplinary uses, and ultimately try one's hand at a definition or systematization. Given both the multifacetedness and the more than ample everyday use of the term *manipulation*, it seems both impossible and pointless to try an introduction into the term and its research in just a few pages. We both sufficiently know what manipulation is and are still generally stumped when we find new uses of the term – positive and negative. Thus, instead of helpless and tedious attempts at classification, I will let the papers collected in this volume define by example. These papers will, each in their own way, shine a light on the topic and illuminate a different aspect of the term. An attempt at a definition will lie within and beyond those fragments.

Thus, given the subject of this volume and my position as its editor, I would like to allow myself the meta-commentary of speaking about my own work, the act of editing, as a form of manipulation; thereby introducing yet another fragment as a possible steppingstone on the way to a definition.

One of the ways in which editing is a form of manipulation, manipulation of the texts and the reader – which in this case is the same thing –, has already been employed by me in the form of framing. The papers that make up these proceedings aren't just free-floating instances of writing in some pragmatic vacuum, they are part of a specific form of a collection – conference proceedings –, they are prefaced, edited, published, digitally

bound behind a cover, tied to the real-life event of a conference, and bound to real-life entities and organizations like universities, committees, and a group of dedicated students. All these factors represent the outcome of the editor's decision-making. They decide which papers to include, how to include them, how much time and space to give them, thereby steering the way these proceedings as a whole and the separate papers are perceived.

Now, it is rare that anyone would read a whole volume of conference proceedings (digital) top to (digital) bottom. Preface, acknowledgment, the copyright page as well as this introduction will most likely be skipped. Almost nobody will inquire further into the organizations mentioned or the people listed on the title page. The standard reading of proceedings or any other form of scientific collections of papers or essays is by distinguishing which – if any – papers are worth reading and then skipping forward to them. However, whether they are read or not, it still matters that those parts exist. Their presence lends credibility and is an important part in the appearance of diligently edited and published conference proceedings. While their existence might not be consciously noticed, their absence would be, for it would be seen as an indication of a lack of scientific standard and might dissuade potential readers from ever even engaging with the volume all together. By investing time into all these aspects – that are not directly tied to the content of the papers –, I have nevertheless influenced the papers, their appearance, their audience, the stance a reader might take to them. Just by means of framing I have manipulated both the reader's expectations and the way those papers will be read by them.

Framing is just one way of manipulation in editing. There is a more obvious and maybe more interesting one in the form of proofreading. The first submitted draft of an author's text and the text ultimately published can be vastly different. And this time-consuming and delicate process is subject to, the stage of, and represents in-itself a wide array of manipulation techniques – of author and text as well as content and form. After all, every part of the text can – at least in theory – become the subject of scrutiny, of debate, and of change.

If performed in good faith, editing is benevolent and tries to bring the text to itself, tries to channel the author's expression into a publication that is true to them, their positions, and their opinions. Editing functions here as a supportive act which aims at helping the author make the most of their work and research. This process reaches from

direct matters of content like voicing doubts, pointing out inconsistencies and hyperboles, and asking for citations, to more formal matters like proposing a paraphrase, asking for a clarification, and suggesting a change in the overall structure of the paper. Author and paper here are manipulated according to the interests of the author.

If performed in bad faith, however, it tries to divide the author from their text, to restrict their possibilities of expression, or facilitate misunderstanding. Classic examples for this are censorship, intentionally taking something out of context or framing it in a way that misrepresents the author's opinion, or plainly ghostwriting for a supposed author with a total disregard for their actual opinion. What happens here is that the editor puts their own opinions and interests over the author's and uses the publication for their own agenda – one the author either opposes or is unaware of and would oppose if known. Author and paper here are manipulated according to the interest of the editor – and/or third parties – alone.

Between those two extremes is a whole array of more ambiguous cases. Here, I especially want to consider all the cases where the editing process adds something to the text that otherwise wouldn't have been part of it. With this, we have moved past the paraphrase or simple request for clarification of the strictly benevolent proofreading. The editor might introduce a metaphor, coin a specific term, translate a phrase, or coax an author into drawing a conclusion or including an idea that they otherwise would not have had or wouldn't have felt compelled to express.

This is a common practice. The act of editing also always serves as a review. It is concerned with the validity of the text's claims, their relevance, and ultimately the question of the benefit of publishing the text in the first place. Part of this process is, therefore, the desire to publish an especially strong text, a text that might even be stronger than anything the author could have written on their own.¹ This is legitimate. After all, a strong paper is seen as the author's sole achievement, while a weak paper is seen as the editor's failure. But in this very process, the author might be left behind, their efforts and opinions muddled up in the editor's. And while it should be in the author's best interest to have an especially strong paper tied to their name, it opens up the question of agency

¹ I hereby do not mean to claim that the editor is smarter than the author or needs to be. Collaboration simply yields stronger results. We all do well to remember who we are and on whose shoulders we stand.

and authorship, it dishevels what people expect from the role of author and editor – seemingly almost leaning into ghostwriting.

Now, I don't want to blow this issue out of proportion. I don't think there is anything fundamentally wrong with this editorial practice. While the author takes responsibility for the things published under their name, they are ideally of the opinion the paper expresses and willingly accept the change the editor suggests. The problem here stems more from the cultural practice of and the societal expectations on the role of the author; it stems from the outdated idea of the solitary genius author deserving full credit for every single idea expressed in the work – and when it is marked as a quotation, it is their genius exegesis of this quote or their genius combination of this quote with the topic or with other research that should be entirely accredited to them. Ultimately, however – and I think this is the most productive approach to take in this matter –, my concerns as an editor are about publishing a strong paper that is educational and useful, expresses valid and important ideas, and has a high chance of having a social or cultural impact. Papers are not published for the benefit of individual authors, but to further discourses, the sciences, and – even though this is mostly a fantasy – humanity as that. The current concept of authorship – aside from its legal dimension – seems antiquated here and only obstructs these goals.

Important, however, is that things aren't always cut-and-dried. I mentioned earlier that, all editing aside, the author ideally believes the opinions the paper published under their name expresses and willingly accepts all changes and suggestions made by the editor. And this being *ideal* means that there are less than ideal cases. And for those we don't have to look into intentionally malevolent editorial practices. Editing, to some extent, always relies on nudging the author a little, showing the importance and benefits of certain changes to the paper, and ultimately – and unknowingly – always dangling the sword of Damocles of a non-publication of the paper over the author's head. This means that the editor can – with the best intentions and a clear conscience – enforce changes to the paper that the author – especially when they are still at the start of their career – might feel powerless to oppose and thus begrudgingly accepts. After all, for the author it is about the non-trivial matter of being published. And in the hyper-competitive field of academia, every publication counts. The pressure an official or semi-official instance like an editor

can exert here should not be underestimated – especially not by the editors who might be abusing this power unknowingly.

Having said all of this, I feel a certain urge to defend myself. I will try to resist it and just say that I, despite the sarcasm and exhaustion that have filled my comments and emails at times, and despite some of my changes and suggestions cutting deep into the substance of the paper, sincerely hope that none of the authors here have ever felt pressured by me or powerless against my authority, and that they can be entirely happy with their paper because they can hear their own voice speak from it.

Those papers, fragmented as scattered steppingstones towards the elusive and multifaceted concept of manipulation, are as follows:

Ismail Frouini's text "Manipulated Subjectivities: Power, Body, and Resistance" talks about the situation in post-colonial Morocco. During the "Years of Lead," as this period is commonly called, political prisoners were manipulated on the level of subjectivity and body by being stripped of their name, having their gender redefined, and their personality deconstructed. Against this manipulation they rebelled linguistically and literarily through the practice of autobiographical prison writing, which served as a form of resistance and an attempt to reclaim power over one's self-determination.

Norman Darío Gómez' "Manipulation through languages: Rewriting and ideology during Hispanic American Colony" reconstructs the history of the Castilianization of the Spanish Americas through the lens of translation and linguistic manipulation. It discusses the different techniques the Spanish Crown and Jesuit priests employed to gain linguistic control over their colonial territories. Finally, it looks at the precarious modern-day situation of languages and language learning in Hispanic America.

Daniel Grisales Betancur's paper "'Not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious': Understanding historical narratives and the role of archaeology as the Angelus Novus" starts out with Colombia's recent history and the manipulation of the historical narrative through the state, and ultimately aims at finding a definition of the discipline of archeology as a means to combat these forms of manipulation. At the center of Grisales Betancur's argument stands a criticism of a Hegelian concept of history – inspired through Marx and Benjamin –, since it lends itself to a defense of the status quo as historical necessity. Ultimately, archeology is shown to fit the function of Benjamin's Angelus Novus in seeing history as

the scattered fragments of actual material remains, thus undermining a concept of history based on progress.

Liliia Hrytsai's text "The Role of Nudging in Sustainable Energy Consumption" discusses nudging, a form of positive reinforcement to influence people's decision making, in the context of sustainability and green policies. Nudging, which from the outset seems related to manipulation, is analyzed with a special focus on its ethical dimension. Based on a thorough discussion of the empirical research, the paper finally proposes that nudging, especially in the area of sustainable energy consumption, is a useful tool with minimal ethical concerns, if used properly.

Karolina Król's "Manipulation in the Polish Holocaust Narrative: The Influence of Language in Dehumanization, and the importance of Piotr Macierzyński's *Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* [An Anthology of Poems of SS-men]" is a clever deconstruction of the Polish Holocaust narrative through the works of Piotr Macierzyński and other like-minded authors. Król sets out by painting a vivid picture of Poland's relationship to their Jewish citizens and the idealized image of human suffering in the concentration camps that springs from this. She then uses Macierzyński's poems to show the attempts made to portray the real horrors of Auschwitz as well as Poland's ambiguous relationship to them, far from the story of martyrs, heroes, or satanic evil – and thus, far from a language that dehumanizes people not by portraying them as less than human but as more, stripping their humanity from them by denying the humanity of their suffering.

Sören Porth's "Suggestion of false memories under blind interviewing conditions" gives interesting insights into the manipulation of memory by means of interviewing. Using his own empirical research, Porth shows the influence of suggestive techniques in interviewing as well as repeated interviewing on the suggestion of false memories. Interesting about this is that these cases don't generally rely on the malicious intentions of an interviewer but can happen in any interviewing situation. They are, thus, a form of highly negative manipulation that – in the case of therapists or journalist, for example – can spring from the very best intentions.

Malin Christina Wikstrøm's "The Translator as a Mediator: Potential Intentional or Unintentional Manipulation during the Translation Process" looks into the process of translation and discusses to what extent the translator might be considered a manipulator. After acknowledging the existence of different forms of manipulations in translation,

Wikstrøm focuses on the most intriguing kind: unintentional manipulation. Here it is the unreflected biases of the translator that lead them to base their translation on a lacking interpretation of the text and thus to produce a faulty translation. In general, she advocates for a better visibility of the translator, since this, in turn, would allow the reader to better reflect the two voices present in the text and to take a more critical stance towards the translation.