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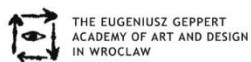
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The Ogrocadaver ~ In The Name of the Pseudonym

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Promoter - Professor Christopher Nowicki

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To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim

Oscar Wilde

INTRODUCTION

The first and most immediate question to posit is undoubtedly *what is The Ogrocadaver?* The title of this dissertation refers to the pseudonym of choice for Basque artist Iker Bengoetxea Arruti (Donostia-San Sebastian, Nov. 1979), the 41-year-old artist who is writing these lines.

With the mystery solved it might as well serve to warn about the nature of this text; it is not a novel where the riddle is revealed in the last paragraph but, on the contrary, it is the opposite of that, a doctoral dissertation inserted into the framework of scientific research in the field of art, with a concrete outline and specific goals. What are those goals? At a personal level to deepen, assimilate, intellectualize and qualify to verbalize the structures of my art that have always been, to me, *felt* rather than known. The processes of creation have always been something I internally understood entirely, being conscious of them all the time but never expressed in another form other than *artistically*.¹ The occasion now demanded to do it literarily which required me to question all my thoughts, put them in order and make them understandable for others. It might look like a relatively easy task but nothing is further from truth. To display all these thoughts and sentiments in a single storyline and make sense of them, after fishing them from a chaotic nebula of ideas, intuitions, associations, inner visions, presentiments, introspections, soliloquies etc., that after all, shape what I actually am, and which to this day have always been expressed in all sorts of artistic ways but never by the way of speech² has been really challenging to me. On the other hand, another aim of this doctoral dissertation was to reveal some contents and reasons for my art and the artist behind it, with specific emphasis on the use of pseudonyms.

The basic axiom of my artistic proposition is that I do not share the concepts sustaining my art work with the general public. I focus the interest in the art per se and implement a confusing or unexpected attitude concealing my identity.

I never liked to talk about the meaning of my artwork because I feel it sterilizes its nature. Like Winslow Homer said "*I regret very much that I have painted a picture that requires any description.*"³ I avoid anything that pushes me to describe my art. I started to refuse making statements or descriptions and began using pseudonyms, which resulted in a kind of confusing behaviour as a means of

¹ 'Artists are often depicted (and represent themselves) as working intuitively, reliant on unexamined inspiration and working without any traditionally-defined 'research' objective.' W. F. Garrett-Petts, and R. Nash, *Re-Visioning the Visual: Making Artistic Inquiry Visible*, (website) Rhizomes 18, winter 2008, Spec. issue on 'Imaging Place', para. 14, <http://www.rhizomes.net/issue18/garrett/index.html> [Accessed February 2, 2021].

² I always said that if I wanted to explain why I created a particular print or painting, I would had written a book instead.

³ Robert M. Poole, {cited in} *Hidden Depths*, (website) Smithsonian Magazine, May 2008, para. 32. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/hidden-depths-38616301/> [Accessed May 8, 2021].

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expression. Rather a performance of mystery where the artwork is supposed to be in the spotlight while the artist hides backstage.

It is important to stress the intention of this thesis in this regard, in order to anticipate an apparent contradiction by the fact that I allegedly hide the contents of my artwork but am now leaking them here. What is discussed in this thesis is the elusive profile and will for confusion as means of expression of Iker Bengoetxea Arruti, specifically by the employment of pseudonyms. It is just one among other strategies focusing in the revelation of some processes, motivations, inspiration, and origins in regard of the usage of alternate cognomens within the frame of this academic work. Thus, my activity as an artist remains the same: the general public does not receive all this contextual information, my name, biography, statements, catalogue descriptions or career achievements, so the elusiveness and other features of my artistic propositions stand intact. For sure, some people will have access to this dissertation and will have the chance to look at my art with a different viewpoint but this not a problem at all since I am not obsessed with keeping my identity hidden. It is just an artistic proposition that I feel comfortable with.

In short, this thesis is written by Iker *the person* whereas my artwork, although being in reality created by the same person, has a strategy attached to keep it confusing. So, the artwork is created by this pseudonym, The Ogrocadaver, and should be credited to it. As a matter of fact, I designed the idea of The Ogrocadaver to play a number of roles and it does not even pretend to be a person but rather an entity. Therefore, there is an intended separation between the person and the artist and thus, uncovering its mystery should not suppose a negative side effect to the confusing and elusive endeavour. The contents revealed here do not constitute any contradiction for the procedures and ways to gain the goals of The Ogrocadaver. The contents stay immutable as long as they belong to art circles, where they enter into contact with the general public. This dissertation belongs to in academic circle, which is a separate environment.

What matters here is that there are differing sets of rules. As an artist, I express what I want and how I want by the art piece, while the general public, composed of non-expert and expert individuals, accept or reject it according to their specific terms. Conversely, as a doctoral candidate I must prove certain level of expertise, either technical or conceptual (or both), only to later be judged by scholars who will throw upon my propositions completely different terms than those of the general public. That is why what I offer to those separate agents, the general public and the evaluating authorities, the outsiders and the insiders, are two different things. The general public do not need to know *why*, they need to enjoy, whoever the artist is. A doctoral committee demands fixed requisites to accept my proposition.

Introduction

In agreement with my supervisor Professor Christopher Nowicki, we considered that the originality and specificity of a number of characteristics of my art and usually veiled concepts, might rigorously match the requirements of a doctoral degree in the field of art. For instance, one of my interests resides in what I call *fragmentation*. Let us briefly look at it. I could fit the profile of any given artist, typically I just could be Iker Bengoetxea⁴ oil painter of landscapes and possibly be a successful artist and make a living. That would form a solid unity of a paradigmatic artist, one that would fit any preconception and consequently, would not confuse anyone. I would be what we call an *artist* in a proper sense and most people would assume with little effort how my activity looks. For example, I paint some landscapes in my studio, I gather them, I make an exhibition and people attend. I introduce my art in general followed by the key lines of the latest projects, I hand out flyers and so on. Alternatively, I also could be regarded as a *contemporary artist*, a term that carries connotative weight but still would raise pretty common ideas of someone who creates strange artefacts and backs them up with a thoughtful speech inflated by a fancy vocabulary. Again, it would not be confusing for most people as it fits a stereotype. All of these sound too predictable to me and it seems like a pattern which contradicts the very nature of what the term *artist* means to me. The realm of art in my life is the space where I do as I please, limitless, where I am free to fulfil whatever pops into my mind. I do not want any pattern to constrain my movements. With time, in slow motion, I distanced myself from the conventional ways of *being* an artist. This attitude and the concepts behind my art has been forged into what now has taken the shape of a solid artistic proposition. This fragmentation I was trying to introduce is a consequence of not doing things by the book and has turned out to be a foundational strategy for being an elusive artist, and is best reflected in my use of pseudonyms.

The fragmentation broadly speaking would come in a *fragmented authorship*. With the pseudonym and, as we will see, with some additional active monikers it is a most recognizable feature of my work. *Fragmented style* and *fragmented means* are examples of this notion. As a brief overview of these concepts not going to be discussed in this dissertation, there are (1) the complete lack of formal or aesthetical unity, with a purposed stylistic disparity; and (2) a *fragmentation of means*, since I do not restrict my artistic activity to visual arts but I expand it to musical expression and the writing of lyrics with a wide stylistic intention. Even within the visual arts, I do not restrict myself to just one sole medium or technique.

The fact that I belong to the Printmaking Department and most of my artistic production connected to the doctoral studies falls within this field⁵ does not reflect my usual technical choices. It is rather a formalism. However, it is worth

⁴ In the Basque Country it is a very common name, equivalent to *John Smith* in English-speaking countries or the Polish *Jan Kowalski*.

⁵ I worked mostly with linocut and relief printmaking. It will be discussed in the 'Descriptions of Selected Artwork' chapter.

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noting that no one in the Academy during these three years ever expected me to limit my artistic activity and technical choices to only printmaking. It just made sense to focus in such technique to energize and obtain acceptable results. But in reality, I usually work with drawing in a variety of techniques, painting also in a variety of techniques and graphic art, within which printmaking is just one field and digital art another. I often work with both simultaneously.

Fragmentation is the main strategy to drive the confusion I seek and this incertitude together with the infused elusiveness of my artistic proposition is the main feature of my originality and the core interest in what this type of unusual artistic endeavour might bring forward. As we shall discuss in due course, I would like to stress the most evident manifestation of this fragmentation, namely, the employment of not one pseudonym but various pseudonyms, as I also operate under the name of *Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf* when dedicated to the artistic expression in the field of music and more recently in animation as *Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz*.

The second reference in the title, *In the Name of Pseudonym*, points out with a subliminal glimpse, my fascination for occult sciences⁶ and its inspirations in the construction of some of the notions behind pseudonym usage, as well as offering a distant view of my personal aesthetic.

Indeed, the importance of the external appearance of the elements I use in my art is symbolically encapsulated by the word *pseudonym*. The external aspect of the elements in my art are meant to convey no meaning; let us say, metaphorically, that the message or content of my art is anonymous.

Another term, *absence*, is key to my conceptual proposition in conjunction with fragmentation. It is not merely, as the name suggests, a blank space left unconsidered in say, a catalogue description or the anonymity of the author. It is rather the opposite. In musical composition the lack of a note is as important as the note played. Those omissions among the notes are intrinsic parts of the resulting melody. These absences explicate my rejection of artist statements, descriptions or verbal explanations of my art⁷ and the consequential lack of context in which the art piece usually is inserted. This idea must be understood by

⁶ "The occult philosophy holds that the universe is articulated by a network of correspondences (...). Springing out of the occult philosophy are the 'occult sciences' that include astrology, alchemy, magic and divination." Joscelyn Godwin, *Music and the Occult: French Musical Philosophies*, University of Rochester, 1995, p. 3.

⁷ "(...) writing has taken on an increasingly substantial role in the visual arts. Genres such as the artist's talk, the exhibition proposal, the critique, the review, the exhibition statement, the graduating project statement, and, especially, the artist's statement have emerged as a complex rhetorical task that the artists must grapple with, whatever their personal inclinations toward the verbal." Garrett-Petts & Nash, para. 21.

the dual notion of *text-context*⁸ and how this absence actually suggests meaning, as the unplayed note of a melody in the overall outcome of my artistic proposition. This *meaning* would ultimately be an invitation to the viewer to make an interpretation in his individual terms. It would be unassisted by trying to understand (1) the attitude of the author, (2) the art piece in itself, (3) and/or the relationship between the two and the suggested attitude from the artist and its possible implications in the art piece. That absence can be found in the Ogrocadaver term. Now we know it to be a pseudonym and who is behind it but when assimilated as the name of the author, there is no description provided whatsoever. There is an absence of the author contributing to the absence of context. Since the term Ogrocadaver is unable to offer any details about the nature of the author it thus gives rise to the presence of the art piece, the only item left available.

I strive for no specific meaning in my art, no message, no fixed idea, nothing in particular I wish to communicate and, therefore, it can be interpreted as the result of another absence, the absence of the signified or overall meaning. Elements are displayed in the artwork establishing the composition, in a sequence of signs promoting a perceptible narrative. Those signs have been manipulated in accordance to their external appearance creating the aesthetic. Their supposed meaning has been ignored instead of invoked as the broadly preconceived idea about art expects where the public routinely receives all art with a fixed message attached to it. In contrast, the absence of the signified gives rise to the presence of the signifier, emancipating the form at the expense of the contents. This preoccupation for the look of the form drove me to neglect the contents and to end up completely eliminating it. The aesthetical supremacy of the signifier soars over other considerations, and we shall understand the particular aesthetic of the signifier, at the expense of the annihilated significance of my art pieces -prints, painting, songs etc. This is directly related to pseudonyms and metaphorically meaning an isomorphic transaction between *pseudonym vs. anonymity* correlated to *signifier vs. signified*, or *external form vs. meaning*.

It must be stressed that ultimately all this theory is reflected in my artwork. It will be described with the intentions, origins, procedures and also interpretation I make of them in the *Interpretation | Description of Selected Artwork* chapter.

⁸ A *text* is an assemblage of signs, such as words, images, sounds and/or gestures, so it is not only text in its linguistic sense but as well the *artwork*. Then *context* is whatever added to the text, as its prefix *con* – with, joint, together- distinguishes. Therefore, *text/context* refers to the art piece per se and the additional verbal extensions such as artist statements, artist talks, catalogue descriptions, exhibition statements, reviews, interview or lectures accompanying it. Garrett-Petts & Nash, para. 8-12-24. See also; Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners* (website), Modality and Representation, 12 September 2020, <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem02.html> [Accessed, January 20, 2021]. Also; M. Bal and N. Bryson, *Semiotics and Art History*, the Art bulletin, Vol. 73, N° 2, (June 1991), College Art Association, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3045790>

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Finally, it should also be mentioned that my doctoral candidacy is supported on two axes that complement each other, namely, this dissertation and the art work. Both corpuses comprise my doctoral proposition, indivisibly.

Chapter 1

IN THE NAME OF THE PSEUDONYMS

*For, obviously, the public places the artist above the work; it is the name that works the magic*⁹

The author and not artwork, seems to be the master key to decipher the artwork. The later cannot reliably tell about the former, whereas it is self-evident that the author can presumably decrypt his creation. However, the term *artwork* as used in the last word of the opening clause is not exactly identical as its preceding homonym in the very same line. *Author* and *artwork* are two binomial elements where one cannot exist without the other. The artwork to be deciphered is, therefore, the *art* as a whole of a particular artist, that corpus which consolidates the author and the artwork in a unity. The artist can expound his creation and this creation may loosely tell us something about him; only their summation can constitute the general artwork, the art. We are not interested in the author without an oeuvre because he would not be an author, just an individual. However, we might be interested in the artwork without the artist. At least I am; and my wish as artist is to offer this recipe.

To fully understand the scope of someone's *art* it is vital to consider the dimension of the artwork, which is sensed, and the dimension of the author, which is acknowledged and eminently formed of sociological and psychological vicissitudes.¹⁰ It is not of my interest to share the later with the public so I extirpate it from the flesh and leave only what is sensed. Thus, my art as a whole is fragmented in a positive *present* element, the artwork, and in a second negative *absent* element, the authorship.

-Fragmentation & Absence

How to eliminate the author? As a constituting part of a binomial relationship it is not possible. But I can transform it in a visible/invisible or day/night type of

⁹ Rudolf Wittkower, *Genius: Individualism in Art and Artists*, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 2, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003, p. 304.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 297.

duality. Both speak of my art, but the artwork, as visible-day, is the façade onstage whereas the author, as invisible-night, wanders backstage. The solution is the absence as counterpart to the contrast of opposites¹¹ *presence/absence*, which is materialized by pseudonym usage and assisted by fragmentation. I intentionally shroud myself under several pseudonyms with various functions that break down the notion of author.

Fragmentation, obviously, is a crack in unity, a fissure in the mass whose resulted fragments co-exist in a dispersed space. It is a distinctive feature in my artistic work in general. For instance, in the specific realm of style fragmentation might be considered a superficial trait, not as a synonym of *anecdote* but the earliest perceptible information emanating from my artistic production. By avoiding repetition, my prints and paintings look dissimilar. Chronological evidence shows a diverging stylistic amplitude, which is often regarded as neglecting personal style and somehow denigrating the credibility of an artist, although I always felt comfortable with it, never sounded offensive; how can I then regard my style in relation to the principle of fragmentation? It is non-existent. Neither personal nor impersonal. I am an artist with no style. It is *fragmentation* that makes style vaporize because style by itself does not offer clear, traceable, significantly repeated traits to resolve that we are dealing with the art work that I have created.

In the wake of pseudonyms the fragmentation is confirmed and the strategy of confusion consummated. I operate under three main pseudonyms, *The Ogrocadaver*, *Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf* and *Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz*, sometimes concealing my identity by employing even two pseudonyms to different activities in the very same project. Thus, the notion of fragmentation explicates diversity of style, as well as of medium and authorship, while it opens the way to the absence. There is, naturally, an author backstage but the audience only grasp his presence by contrast to absence and by logical thinking: perforce there must be someone behind all this.¹² Though little is shared, no information about the author beyond vague names. No biography or social life, nor social media activity, the author is diluted behind curtains of personas.

The fractures of fragmentation produce gaps, absences which inevitably prompt presences. Like a silence in a tense conversation that speaks volumes or a mute

¹¹ “thus wisdom is illuminated by the relation with foolishness, knowledge by comparison with ignorance, which is merely imperfection and wanting, life by death, light by the opposition of the shadows, worthy things by the lack of praise for them; and, to be brief, all virtues not only win praise [by comparison with] the opposite vices but without this comparison they would not be worthy of praise”. John Scotus Eriugena {cited by} Umberto Eco, *On Beauty: A History of a Western Idea*, Seeker & Warburg, London, UK, 2004, p. 85.

¹² “The author of a work of art is surely someone we can indeed point to, a living (or once living), flesh-and-blood personage with a palpable presence in the world, as solid and undeniable as any individual bearing a proper name”, M. Bal and N. Bryson, p. 180.

note to a melody. Absences reveal something which is not there, be it ideas around the artist or implied connotations of objects in the artwork.

Such spoliation helps to place the denuded piece of art in the epicentre of my proposition and tries to erase or minimize all the peripheral elements relating to it, including the authorship. For instance, I do not offer biographical accounts in an exhibition because it is an unessential appendage for the art work itself. The use of a pseudonym follows the same stratagem. As I mentioned it in the introduction, I do not have an obsessive subterfuge to hide my real identity and I do not emulate the likes of Banksy. As a matter of fact, I accept interviews or other propositions if they appear to be fairly interested in promoting the artwork. But I do not hold a nihilistic prospect against all orders of the art ecosystem, denying legitimacies in a quixotic crusade and combating the tentacles of certain opaque interests behind some institutions and predatory contests which I believe exist and definitely detest. It is just a consequence, an interesting, gratifying and even diverting decision to conduct my own career as desired and in accordance with delineated guidelines: conceal authorship, refuse statements, put focus on the artwork.

-Pseudonym | ...of Monarchs, Writers, Celluloid and Ghosts

A pseudonym is basically an alternative name to the real legal name or proper noun of an artist and its basic purpose is to conceal the artist. In fact, it is a very common practice, not only for artists; most people use pseudonyms one way or another in the form of nicknames or aliases when inhabiting the virtual world of the internet, for instance on social platforms like Facebook or discussion forums. There are slight differences in the terms because with their use not only anonymity is sought. Popes and monarchs assumed pseudonyms and ordinary people often bear life-long nicknames that supersede their proper names, sometimes spontaneously given by others, other times self-adopting a nickname, with no concealing intention. It is a curious phenomenon because it appears to be reminiscent of ancient superstitious beliefs when individuals sometimes chose their own super or additional names as if properties of the newly adopted word would spontaneously be transferred to them, especially knights and warriors who symbolically opted for nicknames inspired on esteemed totemic animals such as wolf, bear or eagle as their *nom de guerre*.¹³ Such types of names were also given in antiquity by families to offspring because they did not distinguish between

¹³ According to Umberto Eco, knights sought concealing their identities; Eco is not referring to pseudonyms but to outfit. However it is quite revealing, especially in this context of pseudonyms and nicknames. U. Eco, p. 123.

designation and description,¹⁴ thus expecting a word like *Oak*,¹⁵ a venerated tree with positive symbolism, would eventually describe virtues in the individual, instead of simply being a name.¹⁶ It is quite easy nowadays to trace the etymology of certain surnames in different languages and figure out some ground for ancestor's appellations, such as *Wilk* in Polish, *Ochoa* in Basque, *Wolff* in German or *Lopez* in Spanish, all derived from wolf.

Regarding art, pseudonym is very common; only it is called *pen name* or *nom de plume* in literature, or *stage name* in the cases of actors/actresses or musicians. There are not substantial differences in terms, the basic conceptions of *pseudonym* prevail. We can presume litterateurs wish to conceal their real identity when writing something controversial or uncomfortable.¹⁷ However, it does not entirely explain why the French philosopher *Voltaire* used 173 pseudonyms, especially when the name *Voltaire* is in itself a pseudonym.¹⁸ Similarly, the Spanish cult director of B-movies Jesus Franco used nearly 70 pseudonyms, apparently recommended to avoid saturation and help the flow of commercial release due to his prolific production. In the case of *Voltaire*, the pseudonym does not resemble a real person's name nor an object, neither artificial nor natural, its meaning is only speculated. Jesus Franco on the other hand used during his career his own real name along with pseudonyms, which sounded in most cases like they were proper names. Moreover, he used, real names of dead jazz musicians and even pseudonyms he did not know about assigned by others.

These are interesting implications to analyse. What was sought with these pseudonyms? If Franco looked for commercial success it sounds puzzling that he changed the name every couple of movies. Perhaps they were terrible and did not want to be associated to, but then why was able to hire Christopher Lee or Klaus Kinski? I personally am claiming to create confusion with a handful of pseudonyms and the rejection of the art market rules but Jesus Franco hoped for commercial success with dozens of aliases and movies? Anyway, I feel the point

¹⁴ "Unable to discriminate clearly between words and things, the savage commonly fancies that the link between a name and the person or thing denominated by it is not a mere arbitrary and ideal association, but a real and substantial bond which unites the two in such a way that magic may be wrought on a man just as easily through his name as through his hair, his nails, or any other material part of his person."

James Frazier, *the Golden Bough*, Temple of the Earth Publishing, Online PDF, 2005, p. 221b.

¹⁵ *Aritz* (in modern orthography), means *oak* in Basque language; it is a very common male name in the Basque Country. It is considered a name of archaic origin, parented to divinity. Nowadays it is a tree of high estimation, respect and symbolism in the region. Luis Michelena, *Apellidos Vascos*, Biblioteca Vasca Amigos del País, SS, Spain, (1953) pp. 15, 44.

¹⁶ Carl Gustav Jung, *El Hombre y sus Símbolos*, Paidós, Barcelona, Spain, (1995), pp. 18-104.

¹⁷ "One reason may be a wish to avoid censorship. When a writer has something important to say, whether as fact or fiction, and when it may be difficult to say it under his real name, either because of his own standing or because it is controversial or even unlawful or hostile to authority, the adoption of a pseudonym may be the only solution. In the past many anticlerical or generally antiestablishment writers have sought refuge in an assumed name". Adrian Room, *Dictionary of Pseudonyms*, McFarland & Company Inc. Publishers, 1998, North Carolina, USA, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 22-55-384.

of a pseudonym as a second name implicates that one identifies with it and somehow expects that the charm of the word will infuse its magnetism over him or her. By adopting names of dead musicians, Franco did not usurp or supplant an identity but to some degree fantasied in the manner of medieval warriors, existing at certain plane of reality with a new identity. The cathartic warrior empowered in battle with the furore of a wild beast¹⁹, the artist Franco, under the influence of a cognomen in the realm of creation. One day being disguised as a woman (*Rosa Maria Almirall*), next time as some German director like *Wolfgang Frank* or maybe even French like *Raymond Dubois*, which eventually permits him to establish interconnections (Franco in Spanish means *frank* but like in English etymologically means *French*) and question identity issues in regard to those sociological and psychological vicissitudes of the author and his oeuvre, previously discussed.

These can be internal preoccupations, namely, how the bearer feels with the pseudonym, especially when *in action*. Or they can be external, how others see the pseudonym and the owner's perception of public reactions. It is remarkable that unlike Wolfgang Frank, which is a Germanic name and therefore it might imply specific connotations, it also invites one to extract other types of meanings from Wolfgang (animal) and Frank (ethnicity). The sobriquet Voltaire does not tell us anything about the man behind²⁰ the name. It is a paradox because being the prestigious and renowned historical figure that he is, a speculative fact sort of vanishes inadvertently. It would had remained an enigma if, like Junius,²¹ we only had for posterity nothing else but the oeuvre and the main pseudonym to examine. Who was Voltaire? Was it a man of refined education or a housemaid? From Nantes or Marseille? Maybe not even French? Perhaps not even just one person? Historians, scholars and researchers would then have had immersed themselves to hermeneutically decipher every Gallic micron contained in the papers, the style, the language, thought etc. But then again, did not we agree how the isolated text or artwork shall deceive us when it comes to revealing legitimate answers about the author?²² The word *Voltaire* does not indicate or denote anything beyond its façade and therefore the real identity of the writer would have remained a mystery, making way for speculations whether for wayward reasons or by reasonable precautions that led the phantom Voltaire to

¹⁹ Not only by moniker, warrior armours and helmets were often intricately embellished with figures of lions, bears or legendary beasts to ornament on the one hand, and to motivate and propel themselves as well as terrorize enemies on the other.

²⁰ It is proposed though not widely accepted that Voltaire is an anagram formed with his real name. A. Room, p. 35. However, it only could be proposed after his name was known.

²¹ 18th century author of 70 public letters who conspired revealing scandals against the British royalty, remains the most famous uncracked pseudonym despite of much ingenious detective work. A. Room, p. 58.

²² It seems like author's attitude is rather a feature spotted in the author himself, in his social life or by statements or descriptions, while in the art product it is only vaguely signalled, a secondary allusion: "*Common sense insists that every work of art bears the personal stamp of its maker. Nonetheless, it would be absurd to postulate that a fierce brush reveals an unruly temperament or that 'tame' painters or writers have gentle characters, are morally healthy, law-abiding, and pleasant to deal with*". R. Wittkower, p. 310.

keep it secret, scarcely revealing any minutiae about his or her attitude. Moreover, I wonder how experts discovered texts among 173 identified pseudonyms. Did he admit to them all or are there somewhere more manuscripts sepulchred under forgotten dissociated pseudonyms? Is Voltaire's soul somewhere out there laughing about us fools for not realizing those are actually his writings under unidentified non de plumes²³ or is he frightened someone will unearth repudiated stuff? After all, if he used 173 different pseudonyms how can we make sure they were not 174 or 250?

One might wonder why it is important to know this. We can assume that both the dimensions of an artwork and the authorship are necessary to understand someone's art as a totalized whole; not only it is vital to try to amass all possible production, but because knowing the motivations of an author to proliferate identities might help us to comprehend and interpret plausible content, suspended in the artwork. Voltaire himself never made clear the origin and meaning of his pseudonym. It was arguably a personal and private matter. The use of so many aliases, often being fraudulent descriptions like *Alexis, arch-bishop of Novgorod* or *Doctor Akakia, physician to the Pope*²⁴ are indicative of a pseudonym not being just a device to safeguard the reputation of a renowned author. These aliases could also be used to tabulate names of genres and styles, or to harvest delusions. Uncovering the reasons could help to know whether Voltaire was protecting something or conversely hoaxing and amusing. Equally so with Franco. Thus, we would understand their attitude better because using the same strategy, namely, the use of pseudonyms, Franco pursued commercial outcomes and Voltaire to dodge incarceration²⁵. The object is not to sort out loose ends around these authors, rather to study the affordances of my particular use of pseudonyms by comparison.

To sign with an alternative name might shelter a reputation, retiring into a timely anonymous parapet dedicated to an exclusive production. Goethe could have prevented himself looking like a bigot if had he used a pseudonym when attacking Newton regarding light and colour theory.²⁶ Newton wisely did not publish his alchemical inquiries not even under the pseudonyms that he used to improvise as a pastime. At his death in 1727, these papers were considered to be borderline scandalous²⁷ and by not publishing them he was triumphant in the end.

²³ In the hypothetical case we are analysing, it would probably be likely. According to Room many writings were *satirical* and regard Voltaire as *outspoken thinker* and *polemicist*. A. Room, p. 384.

²⁴ A. Room, p. 385.

²⁵ Voltaire decided his pseudonym after his release from the Bastille prison in 1718. A. Room, p. 22.

²⁶ E. Haller, pp. 282-285. See also: "*The most famous example, of course, is Goethe, with his anti-Newtonian theory of color*". J. Godwin, p. 50.

²⁷ William R. Newman, (September 6, 2005), *Magic or Mainstream Science? An interview on Newton's alchemy with historian Bill Newman*, (website) Susan K. Lewis, NOVA, November 2005, *Revealed Wisdom for a Chosen Few* section, para. 6, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/newton/alch-newman.html> [Accessed: April 21, 2021].

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Ghost-writing occurs when an author anonymously writes for another individual who shamelessly arrogates to himself the credit for the original product. Even though authorship obscurity is sought, a pseudonym is not employed and theoretically the authentic writer is not involved in questions around identity, preservation of artistic and personal dignity or the establishment of a commercial industry. Sophisticated crossovers of ghost-writing and creation using pseudonyms reach a culmination with *Nicholaus Arson*, guitarist of the Swedish rock band *The Hives*. Arson, a pseudonym or stage name itself of *Niklas Almqvist*. Along with the rest of the band members he asserts that a person named *Randy Fitzsimmons*, who has never been spotted, caught or recorded but is regarded as *band member*, writes all the material for the band. They insist he discovered the band and worked as manager/promoter, but it was revealed that Randy Fitzsimmons is a legally registered name of Almqvist. Consequently, it is either to devise a mystique around the band or amuse at the expense of the public, with a fictional character. Niklas Almqvist, or *Nicholaus Arson*, is the ghost writer in a pseudonym sustained by various individuals known as *Randy Fitzsimmons*.

Now, everybody knows Voltaire was a French thinker; some may know who François Marie Arouet was. Hence the pseudonym was established in the place of the real identity. But rather than gaining a reputation, it seems that the French eminence wanted to cultivate an intimate sanctuary in his identity. For arguably beyond the main pseudonym other aliases could have resulted in a contoured separation between topics, style and literary forms but it is not the case. With such an exaggerate number of names he still did not clearly attach a particular alias to correlate to a specific type of text, thought or publication in his articles, pamphlets, criticisms, verse and prose.

Franco on the other hand did not assign names to specific cinematographic genres because all his movies are an awkward mixture of terror and sex, so he didn't look to associate what his artistic concerns were to sets of pseudonyms and their correspondent in-screen manifestation. Why bother with a pseudonym then? Voltaire and Franco did not look for anonymity and if they did, I believe they failed. They did not separate genres or create an evocative commercial brand. Although Franco might be considered to have been close, it cannot be thought that he employed his pseudonyms for ghost writing. This does not plausibly explain the dozens and dozens of signatures for their releases. It was not only occasional for both artists used pseudonyms during their early years and also after achieving recognition. Therefore, in my opinion, their use of pseudonyms is an internally and intimately played fantasy.

Some authors of literature surely seek more earthbound motives. Anonymity can be used to test the real artistic potential of cautious authors who are either eager to verify if they succeeded for a fortuitous planetary alignment, or possibly to uncover an alleged prejudice against them. Or simply because they surreptitiously

execute their activity, like the bricklayer whose hobby is to write romantic poems but prefers to keep it in a personal domain. Anonymity is useful when authors feel the urge to treat questionable subjects or taboos but they do not want to be involved in controversies.

-Music | the Evocative Name of Princes and Dukes

A Pseudonym as an evocative brand, as a name of magnetism opposed to a supposedly less interesting proper noun can imply a long-term contract. An artist who does not look for anonymity but feels his name is too common will choose a new name to stand out from other individuals with identical or similar names such as the Spanish name *Juan Garcia* or the English name *John Smith*. Equally, some feel stranded in their own name whence they try to break out with a catchy pseudonym. Brand names reasonably appear as a tool, trying to set up a permanence most often with commercial motivations. So-called stage names are typical of this type of pseudonym. One recurrent feature is that they look and/or sound appropriate for the type of artistic activity they intend to display. Hip-Hop musicians like *Chuck D*, *Jay Z*, *Eazy-E*, *KRS One*, *D.M.C.*, *Notorious B.I.G.*, *Big Pun*, *Heavy D*, *Ice T* or *Ice Cube*, all picked nicknames that sound like Hip-Hop. They do not call themselves *Necrobutcher*, *Hellhammer*, *Mortiis*, *Tormentor*, or *Infernus*, which are pseudonyms of Black Metal musicians. These words, follow some sort of code specific to that particular culture or social group, and tell us something immediately upon hearing or seeing them.²⁸ Unlike Voltaire, which literally conveys nothing, these pseudonyms have connotations that inform us they are indeed Black Metal and therefore, instantly prompt stereotypical assumptions about their attitude as authors and their art. As for brand pseudonyms, the movie *Boogie Nights* (dir. Paul Thomas Anderson, 1997) offers an eloquent instance of the generalised idea about a brand pseudonym intended to be catchy commercially and to sound familiar to a particular culture, in this case the audience of the porn industry. In a free adaptation of real events, the movie also depicts the choosing of a stage name. The film shows the rise and fall of a boy in the heyday of the adult oriented American film industry of the 1970s and 80s. The scene shows how the protagonist, an emerging novel star Eddie Adams (played by Mark Walberg) is relaxing in a jacuzzi with the charismatic know-the-business director Jack Horner (played by Burt Reynolds) and other fellow actors and they are discussing

²⁸ It would be interesting to consider *stage name* as a figured concept and not just a literal term. Since its external coded appearance functions to address a particular culture or social group, it must be stressed that it is also fashion outside the entertainment and popular culture industry where stages have nothing to do, e.g. Religious names or king/ruler names. Like hip-hop or Black Metal pseudonyms, each in its context, Papal names give the impression of having a recognizable structure: a Latinised appellation plus a Roman numeral, enabling any Christian to immediately identify a Pope, even without ever having heard of; *Clement IV* or *John Paul XII* (both made up) sound like Popes; hip-hop nicknames like *Terminator X* or *Lil Nas X* do not even sound like a parody or alluding to Popes. They just exist naturally in their particular environment under particular codes, making the later sound so Hip-Hop and the former so Pope-like. Nevertheless, the *stage* seems to be some sort of archetype behind evocative brand pseudonyms, allowing multitudes to sense the conventions of a name consistent to the terms of the group.

a nickname. First, when Eddie introduces the idea of a *name*, we notice that nobody shows any surprise, it is taken as granted, just a normal thing to do: pick a stage name. Most Hollywood actors have one. Just make it sound convincing. Only it has to appeal to a specific audience, who has to recognize it as belonging. It is the connotation of a strong name that will somehow be descriptive, not just designating. When the character of Mark Walberg, Eddie, finally reveals the pseudonym (Dirk Diggler), it is enthusiastically celebrated by the others. It hits the nail on the head.

Stage names are a type of pseudonym whose principal function is not concealing but evoking and hopefully favour commercial success. But not only. Let us briefly analyse a handful of famous stage names in popular music to spot other functions.

By definition, pop musicians are commercially successful. However, certain nuances are observable in the following instances. The late *Prince*, which is in fact not a pseudonym but his real name (*Prince Roger Nelson*), used a pseudonym for a while during his career in the 90s.²⁹ It had a remarkable feature: it was visually assimilable but had no phoneme attached, no known sonic properties. In other words, it was not possible to pronounce it, only could be seen or sensed by sight. Thus, when verbally making reference to it, it required the use of euphemisms such as *the symbol* or *the artist formerly known as Prince*, as the media thereafter referred to him. Euphemisms technically eclipse words; *passed away* or *gone to heaven* are euphemisms to avoid saying *dead*. Paradoxically this case of Prince did not have power to circumvent any word because it was exclusively a visual pseudonym which did not require the use of a euphemism when channelled in visual media, including written language. It was sufficient to write (or draw) the symbol to signify the artist without invoking euphemistic formulas. As a pseudonym it hardly can be said that it was brilliant for it was never meant to provide anonymity, Prince was already a celebrity. It was a stage name, a brand pseudonym, and as such obtained results that are dubious. Did it stand out? Yes, it was unique and imaginative but restrictive for it negated the audio channel, disabling its *calling* quality. In a way, instead of the pseudonym serving the author to gain notoriety or anonymity, the pseudonym itself, in a weird twist, made the very pseudonym sonically anonymous. However, these are some nefarious considerations regarding the external aspect of a stage name and its supposed function as an evocative pseudonym. Internally the cognomen orchestrates a completely different role.

-Personas

All four members of the rock band *Kiss* had stage names when they started early in 1973. It was not an anomaly, *Elton John* or *Bob Dylan* were stage names. The

²⁹ A. Room, p. 297.

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difference was they did not try to sound catchier with pseudonyms that sounded sort of enhanced proper names, like *Reginal Dwight* and *Robert Zimmerman* respectively did. The novelty was they created personas. It must be said Kiss did not strictly invent personas in the entertainment industry but were among the first who took it to a pinnacle. *David Bowie* was already grandiosely commanding that ship, while *Arthur Brown* and *Alice Cooper* explored earlier the theatrical approach of musicians in make-up. Even *the Beatles*, albeit in a semi-conceptual album like *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), experienced the idea of a fictional character, *Sergeant Pepper*, and construed some sort of alter-ego or personas in themselves as players in the imaginary Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Under the stage names of *The Demon*, *The Starchild*, *The Spaceman* and *The Cat*, all four members of Kiss, *Gene Simmons*, *Paul Stanley*, *Ace Frehley* and *Peter Criss* remained anonymous for nearly a decade, finally revealing, upon fandom hysteria, their true identities on a special TV show. These musicians are a case of study regarding nicknames, pseudonyms and proper names. *Gene Klein* is the legal name of *Gene Simmons*, which is a stage name for the original name of *Chaim Witz*, a name of Israeli origin changed during immigration to the USA. Once Kiss was formed and the make-up plus costumes idea decided, Simmons adopted the complementary stage name of *The Demon*, which is a persona, in turn a sophisticated mode of pseudonym. It was assigned a thoroughly crafted image, a character in disguise with specific behaviour to be performed in public. It sought anonymity and impact as a brand. *Paul Stanley* is also a stage name in itself, originally being *Stanley Bert Eisen*. Again, he bore a supplementary persona on top of the salient stage name, *the Starchild*, with equal artistic and commercial aspirations which were sought by all four members of Kiss. *Ace Frehley* falls in another category: the common lifelong acquired nickname. *Paul Frehley* is the authentic name while *Ace* was his nickname which gave rise to the stage name. On top of that he adopted the persona of *the Spaceman*. Finally, *Peter Criss*, born *George Peter Criscuola*, who modified his name a bit by shortening it and thus making it catchy and very typical of stage names in the music and film industries. Then in Kiss his persona was *the Cat*. All four members acted according to their personas and had a charismatic make-up, which contributed greatly to mask their faces and thus their real identities.

Another example is the French electronic duo *Daft-Punk*. In contrast to Kiss, who meticulously designed the entire idea, *Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo* and *Thomas Bangalter* never occulted their proper names. They machinated their robotic personas unpremeditatedly on the go. It is remarkable how these names could hardly be considered memorable. Likewise, the nonexistence of any stage names is noteworthy. Therefore, technically speaking, they do not employ pseudonyms whatsoever. Yet they managed to handle an entire career of extreme commercial success and popularity keeping their anonymity largely intact. Their personas happen to be graspable only visually, without a clear name, with no sound attached to them, similarly to the case of *Prince* and his unpronounceable

symbol. The chief difference is that Prince's symbol graphically, and graphically only, mediated for the real person/artist whereas the futuristic helmeted duo, also by virtue of image, stand for fictional even *science-fictional* personalities and fabricated personas that supersede the normal down-to-earth individuals. In theory, even when performing in full-regalia, playing their role and shifting away from their real anonymous identities, they could still answer to *Guy-Manuel* and *Thomas*, their authentic proper nouns.³⁰ I am possibly walking on thin ice by saying it could be considered a severe case of dissociative syndrome³¹ or a double personality. Because when we speculate about having an apparently regular sane individual who responds as the real individual he is, with all his peculiar implications at hand (childhood memories, old friends, family, hometown, personal history, etc.) and who with exactly the same name, responds as an over-the-top machinelike futuristic gleaming character with a genuine naturalness and quotidian semblance, we realize how disquieting it actually is. For example, *Tommy* shows up in a grocery as *Tommy*, grabs some cheese and *adieu*, he smiles; later *Tommy* shows up disguised as a robot with a full headpiece in a glowing suit asking for some more cheese. This *Jekyllian* paradox can only be maintained in a separated plane of reality, that of art. Such behaviour could not be digested in daily reality without prompting alarm and stigmatization in the social proximity of the doer.

It is apparent that pseudonyms and personas play a similar role, a persona being a fully developed manifestation of a pseudonym. Daft Punk's model is atypical; immaculately defined counterparts, queer personas neatly distanced from their antithetical anonymous individuality. Yet refusing to baptize their extravagant artistic elongations with a different appellation than their ordinary *Guy-Manuel* and *Thomas*. Sharing the same proper names show how these personas function as visual pseudonyms that propitiate similar mechanisms. For at least in the substratum of sound (the name) those two divided spheres exist united; without procuring an orthodox pseudonym (a *power-word* evoking acoustic and visual information which would convey ideas about their art/music, about their artistic personality, about the way it sounds, the aesthetic it pursues etc. something like for example *Daft Glow Tommy & Punk Guy Chrome*³²) they nonetheless achieved

³⁰ "They (robots) are us, called myself, my name and Manuel's name". Piers Martin, *Daft Punk: The Birth of the Robots*, Website, The Face Magazine/Vice/Thumb, November 24, 2000, https://web.archive.org/web/20131207002338/http://thump.vice.com/en_uk/words/daft-punk-birth-of-robots Accessed: April 24, 2021.

³¹ Carol S. North, "The Classification of Hysteria and Related Disorders: Historical and Phenomenological Considerations." *Behavioural sciences* (Basel, Switzerland) vol. 5, 6 Nov. 2015, doi: 10.3390/bs5040496, pp. 496-517.

³² I totally made-up these silly hypothetic stage names/pseudonyms to show how such names could give some extra touch and help delineating a neater division between the real person and the artistic persona. It must be said that the Spanish entry of Wikipedia accounts for stage names or pseudonyms for both artists, but only noted in the margins with no other further information at all. Both French and English entries do not even mention them. *Guy-Man* and *Guy-Manuel* together with *T-Bang* are suggested to be pseudonyms for side projects away from Daft Punk or referred to in interviews. These main Wikipedia

results typically expected from it. Helmets could have pushed a button that transformed their mood and got them into a higher state before stomping onstage. But for them persona and costume do not seem to conjure up a full dive into new identities.

According to Bangalter “We want the focus to be on the music”;³³ “we want to put the music upfront”.³⁴ Admittedly, this statement sounds like my own. Focus the attention on the artwork and avoid other parameters as less relevant, using masks, literally like Daft Punk, or like my use of pseudonyms. Confusion as derived from the fragmentation of authorship and by implementation of a strategy to confer on the artistic by-product a central position, is my main goal.

However I would like to go a little deeper to the core of what is to me an important function of pseudonym, briefly suggested in previous pages; its ability to provide alternative planes of reality where one can be the benefactor and the beneficiary of self-generated fantastic tales. That fascinating soliloquy would be the internal function of a pseudonym whereas in the above analysed instances, the typical assumptions of these stage names, nom de plumes, etc., would be external functions.

-A Lad Insane

Now, he did not hide behind over a hundred false names like Voltaire or Stendhal, but the champion of pseudonyms and personas, because of his tremendous mainstream success and popularity in the public eye, which annuls its concealing purpose, and because it illustrates the adverse effects of laxly circumscribed division of personas, incurring in self-delusions instead of being mere artistic experimentations or even means of expression to disconcert, indeed that master of masquerades is the late *David Bowie*. Admittedly, Bowie created a lot of confusion by seldom offering what the public expected, especially in his early years. Not in vain was he nicknamed the *Chameleon*.³⁵ Indeed, David Bowie was a stage name of *David Robert Hayward Jones*.³⁶ David Jones sounded too ordinary but the adoption of a stage name came so he would not be confused with another famous musician at the time, *Davy Jones of The Monkees* (1966). Apparently Bowie picked the name from the bowie knife;³⁷ so, following the

entries always introduce the musician’s real names illustrated by a portrait with helmets on, keeping their authentic identities in anonymity, as well as media.

³³ Kieran Grant, *Who are those masked men?* (website) Canoe Jam Music, April 12 1997, Archive.Today, 29 June, 2012.

https://archive.is/20120629032508/http://jam.canoe.ca/Music/Artists/D/Daft_Punk/1997/04/12/744419.html, [Accessed 23 April, 2021].

³⁴ P. Martin, Loc.cit.

³⁵ His innumerable characterizations, his early hit song *Changes* and his 1979 album *Chameleon* earned him such alias.

³⁶ A. Room, p. 102.

³⁷ “...with his new name allegedly for the bowie knife”, Ibid.

scheme proposed by *Adrian Room* in his *Dictionary of Pseudonyms*, the first conclusions upon the reasons for him to get himself a pseudonym lead us to think that (1) David Jones seems to be a name too ordinary, (2) he wanted to avoid confusion with another artist of the same name, (3) he chose a name of an object and thus connotations susceptible to be derived from it³⁸ and (4) it was an evocative brand name hoping to endow some commercial success to the owner. I insist in the idea of pseudonyms functioning internally and externally. Here, these four points acquire a higher importance as external elements refracted from internal intentions, namely, how the public absorbed the information expelled by the words rather than the role they played toward Bowie himself. It seems self-evident that he did not look for anonymity because it was a stage name and as such, it calls instead of conceals. It was more relevant the reaction in the public than his personal feelings around the meaning of a new name and the secondary prospect of gaining himself a new identity. But soon a shift was to come. The development of personas had an external impact on the public and supplied Bowie a great commercial success, but above all it earned him a reputation as a real artist. Similarly, to Prince, although the later gained that status without further employment of pseudonyms and personas he just used *the symbol*. But both within their intimate domain had a different interaction with the names they created than what was projected outside. Bowie went into developing supplementary personas on top of this first phase of pseudonym acquisition. After all, a persona is a sophisticated version of a pseudonym where a general and superficial new identity suggested by a new denomination, evolves to mature fictional or fantastical accounts about specifics i.e. biographical details, outlining supposed origins or claiming illusory abilities;

*Among the most famous were the doomed bisexual rock envoy from space, Ziggy Stardust; Aladdin Sane (the name is a play on "a lad insane"); Bowie's plastic soul persona, the Thin White Duke; Thomas Jerome Newton, the alienated alien from Nicholas Roeg's 1976 sci-fi cult classic 'The Man Who Fell to Earth'; the lonely, lost Pierrot of the Ashes to Ashes video and the anti-hero Halloween Jack from Diamond Dogs*³⁹

Bowie created all these personas partly because he could fantasize and experience their lives to artistically explore the otherwise inaccessible enclaves of the psyche, awake dormant issues, walk abysmal precipices or dig entrenched terrain. Prince quoted by Room over assuming the unpronounceable visual symbol;

³⁸ Bowie Knife was named after its creator, Jim Bowie. Wikipedia contributors. *Bowie knife*. (website) Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. April 12, 2021, 14:23, UTC, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bowie_knife&oldid=1017392081. [Accessed April 24, 2021].

³⁹ Susan Bell, *The life and death of David Bowie, rock's crafty chameleon*, (website) USC University of Southern California, January 14, 2016 < <https://news.usc.edu/90856/the-life-and-death-of-david-bowie-rocks-greatest-chameleon/> > [Accessed April 22, 2021].

*Changing my name's made perfect sense to me. I'm not Nel's son, Nelson, that's a slave name. I was ridiculed for that, but they did the same to Muhammad Ali and Malcom X*⁴⁰

How could the public ever know that behind a glamorous and sensual musician, capriciously changing his name to a provocative unspeakable pseudonym, was in fact a matter of dealing with one's roots and fantasizing with the emulation of personal heroes? This internal function of pseudonyms and personas is paradigmatic in the case of Prince because the anonymity implied in them is rendering a double game with questions around nameless ancestors, the anonymity of Negroes during slavery and proper names assigned from masters. Externally this can be regarded as a commercial failure after a questionable mute stage name transaction. But inversely it can be a sign of a consummated artist at the peak of his creativity. Internally it can be said to be working out a fairly smart interaction with a personal dialectics about anonymity, pseudonyms, nicknames or real descriptive names connected with identity. In parallel he was playing out a fantasy of being a racial and national hero like Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X by proceeding like them, especially the latter, by taking a political position in picking a new byname that signalled anonymity and incognito concerns. Prince was murmuring his psychic regressions and fantasies: *like my forefathers I have no name; call me as you will.*⁴¹

The internal/external duality can be grasped too in the words of Daft Punk's Thomas Bangalter; *"But then it became exciting from the audience's point of view. It's the idea of being an average guy with some kind of superpower."*⁴² Initially the French duo did not conceive of the whole thing as a fantasy, they were internally concerned about anonymity. But externally the feedback pointed out a different assimilation from the public and the pair behind it evolved toward a fantastical experience of, so to speak, *having superpowers*. We can also observe the features of persona described above, such as invented origins;

*There was an accident in our studio. We were working on our sampler, and at exactly 9:09 a.m. on September 9, 1999, it exploded. When we regained consciousness, we discovered that we had become robots*⁴³

Nonetheless, as we have seen, Daft Punk's kind of unique approach foremost aims at maintaining a prevailing anonymity over fantasies of embodying exogenous

⁴⁰ A. Room, p. 297.

⁴¹ "...*What should you call me? My wife just says, 'Hey'. If she said, 'Prince, get me a cup of tea', I'd probably drop the cup*", {Prince quoted by}, A. Room, p. 297.

⁴² Suzanne Ely, *Return of the Cybermen*, (website) Mixmag, July 2006, p. 98. Through Daft Punk Anthology, <http://www.daftpunk-anthology.com/dpa/mag-articles/mixmag-2006-07> [Accessed: 23 April, 2021].

⁴³ Ibid, p. 97.

existences: "It's not about having inhibitions. It's more like an advanced version of glam, where it's definitely not you. We couldn't be like Ziggy Stardust putting make-up on."⁴⁴ Definitely, it's not David Bowie but Ziggy Stardust with make up on: the antonomasia of persona, the quintessential personage who incarnated all of Bowie's daydreams. Bisexuality and androgyny, messianism and other-worldly, rock-stardom and emulation of idols; all blended together in a cocktail served to drench the thirst of the masses, which internally inebriated the author. Prince fantasized with the idea of living the lives of admired figures of social background. Jesus Franco, also a trained musician and composer influenced by Jazz, fantasized with the idea of living the lives of admired figures of musical background.⁴⁵ David Jones fantasized with the idea of becoming David Bowie but eventually ended up being Ziggy Stardust, living the lives of admired artsy figures of musical and theatrical background but also the lives of complex imaginary entities, closer to an avant-garde mythology than to reality.

Indeed, one of the main purposes of pseudonyms and personas is its overlooked internal function, in contrast with its overrated external features. That is, to fabricate a framework of artistic purposes wherein one can loosen and characterize his personality to act and produce reflecting this alter ego similarly to Pessoa who anticipated shaping different pseudonyms/personas to write as if they were writers of diverse styles and preoccupations.⁴⁶ Internally familiarity is sought, externally anonymity, although this familiarity can be stretched to reach out even in the most extremist cases to explore truthfully eccentric and flamboyant self-expressions, like Bowie did.

Living lives is an attempt to describe the experience of coining, developing and performing a pseudonym with an artistic determination in its sense of internal function. In a way, it is one of the main objects of every artist despite of the use of pseudonyms or personas, that is, to set in motion reflective sensations. Then,

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 98.

⁴⁵ According to him, Franco fantasized releasing movies credited with names of dead Jazz musicians, picking a different instrumentalist (pianist, drummer etc.) with every other movie, imagining he was putting together a trio or a quintet, hence having the illusion of living lives of his dreams, despite of being a successful director. In this interview he confesses that initially he felt his real name was not appropriate and decided to slightly modify it. Later pseudonyms were suggested by producers who also felt hesitant about the reputation of his name (namesake of Francisco Franco, at the time dictator of a totalitarian regime in Spain) so different countries received work from Jesus Franco with various names. Only when he saw how his name was dilapidated, decided to fantasize with the idea of Jazz musicians as homages. *JESUS FRANCO MANERA documental dirigido por Kike Mesa*, (online video), MANIAC TALES The Movie, 7 April 2016, {interview in Spanish}, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9EPOY_gLow, [Accessed 15 April, 2021].

⁴⁶ "A special case is that of the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), who created four distinctive poetic personas: the fictional Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, and Alvaro de Campos, and the real Fernando Pessoa, whose own name happens to be the Portuguese word for "person," itself significantly deriving from Latin *persona*, "mask." He called these his heteronyms ("other names"), and altogether created a total 72 such names, although the three mentioned here were different. He is said to have originally invented them in connection with the literary magazine *Orpheu* that he and others founded in 1914." A. Room, p. 21.

pseudonyms and personas permit one to concentrate in manifestations of the self, liberating them from the ostracism of daily social life and letting them run free in the perimeter and the vast dominion of artistic expression. Art lets these fantasies grow to sublime magnitudes and, as long as they do not interfere with penetrating one's social ground, their service may be regarded as a cognitive activity. It might be disputable to call *social ground* the daily life of a superstar like Bowie when comparing it to our ordinary lives, but the artistic performance of Ziggy Stardust or the Thin White Duke eventually got out of hand and had a negative impact on David the man. These personas ended up devouring the artist because they were not restricted to live gigs, press conferences or in public apparitions. Bowie was in character perpetually and even though he made distinctions among his personas, often very palpable distinctions, he did not remove his real self from the artistic performance, the internal/external function and the intimate/public realms. This resulted in deviations, daze and delirium in the Glam period (note the anagram of Aladdin Sane – a lad insane) and scandals after fascistic incursions as the Thin White Duke. The extensive use of drugs catalysed the destructive effects of fame but also the overgrowth of fantasies that flooded the compartments of the merely artistic. Bowie himself defined it "*schizophrenic*"⁴⁷ and blamed the "*emotionless Aryan superman*" for being in character and which was caused by a psychotic cocaine abuse.⁴⁸

-Identity Crisis | Poetry & Prophecy

*My name is Legion, for we are many*⁴⁹

The associations between art and insanity are long chronicled. From Plato, who considered poetry and music the highest rank of *artistry* due to divine inspiration or possession that drove the poet, to the disciplines of 20th century psychoanalysis;

*The Greeks included music together with poetry in the sphere of inspiration. First, there was psychological affinity between the two arts; both were comprehended as acoustic productions, and both were supposed to have a 'manic' character, i.e., to be the source of rapture*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ David Bowie- The Story of Ziggy Stardust- BBC 4 Documentary- Narrated by Jarvis Cocker, (online video), Tanaferry, 23 August 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czdED4WiwVM> [Accessed 24 April, 2021].

⁴⁸ Amanda Borschel-Dan, *From 'Heil Hitler' to 'Shalom, Tel Aviv,' the many incarnations of David Bowie*, (website) The Times of Israel, January 11 2016, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160112132620/http://www.timesofisrael.com/from-heil-hitler-to-shalom-tel-aviv-the-many-incarnations-of-david-bowie/> [Accessed April 25, 2021].

⁴⁹ Mark 5:1-20.

⁵⁰ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Classification of the Arts*, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 1, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003, p. 457.

There could be an objection here around music and poetry not being arts for the Greeks but it is not really applicable since they were already bundled together before the end of antiquity.⁵¹ (*)⁵² In the Middle Ages poetry is again considered "a kind of philosophy or prophecy, or prayer or confession, and by no means an art"⁵³ denoting its kinship to religion, but then again neither painting nor sculpture were listed as arts either.⁵⁴ This was due to the mutable canons of human activity over the centuries, who classified without definitive consensus music, rhetoric, architecture and also logic, astronomy or even political eloquence or painting either as sciences, handicrafts or arts. Music and rhetoric, arguably close to the trances of poetry, were considered "according to our understanding, sciences, not arts"⁵⁵ due to their underlying structure and logic and, therefore, a kind of knowledge. With the Renaissance the appreciation of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, theatre, dance and poetry changed greatly and their integration in a system of fine arts had been promoted by 15th century.

We can see how science was traditionally entangled with religion and art. This is shocking because from antiquity up to Middle Ages Plato's *mania* and Aristotle's *melancholy*, though mostly forgotten, were undisputed features of poets and bards. Also, painters were thought to experience "inspiration and ecstasy"⁵⁶ even the Stoics as well as authors like Philostratus (c. AD 170-245) and Pausanias (late 2nd century AD) believed this. We should handle such terms with care in our analysis about alleged overlaps of art and insanity, for the meaning of terms may vary dramatically with time. To safeguard ourselves from falling into embarrassing traps, further attention shall be put on specific terms. *Inspiration*, for example, is a divine stimulation, an enthusiasm. *Melancholy*⁵⁷ must be understood in the current meaning as depressive temperament, tormented, solitary, eccentric and obsessed, or by the synonym in vogue during Renaissance, saturnine. Thus, artists of this epoch like Piero de Cosimo (1461-1521) were thought to be "rather mad",⁵⁸ or Jacopo Pontormo (1494-1556) "solitary beyond belief"⁵⁹ and an "almost insane hypochondriac".⁶⁰ Michelangelo regarded himself as an old mad man in a letter to a friend stating "there is no better way of keeping sane and free from anxiety

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² My intention in the text is not to discuss the classification of arts throughout history, civilizations, thinkers or cultures but to label the visual arts, filmmaking, poetry and music as *art* in general, as nowadays it is overall considered, and as I understand it, to give an account of the ambivalent implications of art and insanity.

⁵³ W. Tatarkiewicz, p. 459.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ R. Wittkower, p. 299.

⁵⁷ "It was Aristotle who first postulated a connection between the melancholic humour and outstanding talent in the arts and sciences". Rudolf and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn: the Character and Conduct of Artists; A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution*, Random House, NY, 1963, p. 102.

⁵⁸ R. Wittkower, p. 302.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

than being mad."⁶¹ Needless to say, his reputation, his *terribilitá*, served to define both his impetuous tormented character and the sublimity of his art. Wittkower reports that the "*Renaissance artist appropriated to themselves this condition of inspired frenzy, for it gave their art the aura Plato had conceded to poetry.*"⁶² Also stresses that the epithet *divino artista*, the divine artist, the *divus*, or the contemporary *diva*, an adjective employed when referring female popstars in English, while in Spanish *divo* is typically used to designate *glamorous* acts like Bowie or Prince, rarely was utilized before 16th century.⁶³

Romanticism counts in its annals many well-known artists such as Goya, who impressively expressed his haunted obsessions in the *Black Paintings* and the printed series *Disasters of War* and *Caprichos*, with its famous dictum *the sleep of reason produces monsters*. William Blake wrote "*What has reasoning to do with the Art of Painting? One power alone makes a poet: imagination, the Divine Vision (sic).*"⁶⁴ German criticism in the 18th century preoccupied with art and genius attached to it a "*higher power, divine infusion*" and frequently used the term *imagination*, eloquent enough in its original German form: *phantasie*.⁶⁵ Diderot resolved: "*When in a frenzy he (the artist) is everything he desires to be in the art that dominates him.*"⁶⁶ In the 19th century proto-Freudian ideas flourished, which conceived of literature as a "*disguised wish-fulfilment*";⁶⁷ while a school of professional psychologists (J.J. Moreau de Tours, C. Lombroso, P.J. Moebius) correlated "*psychosis and artistic activity.*"⁶⁸ At the beginning of 20th century, the literary critic William Empson argues that "*fantasy gratifications and a protective attitude towards one's inner life are in some degree essential for the production of poetry*";⁶⁹ which in my opinion not only decodes some traits of the overall activity of the poet but indirectly defines *pseudonymism* (sic). The stereotypical notion of the mad artist nowadays implies "*a mythical picture of the creative man: inspired, rebellious, dedicated, obsessive, alienated, as well as neurotic*";⁷⁰ while psychoanalysis pointed out with newer terminology, the "*heightened bisexuality and super-ego.*"⁷¹

Notions of inspiration, enthusiasm, catharsis, prophecy, intuition, possession, trance, ecstasy, flame etc. seem to have gone the way of the sands of time. These notions interlace the realms of epistemology and ontology sometimes incarnating sciences and religion or art at other times, turning them vague, obscure or even

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² R. & M. Wittkower, p. 105.

⁶³ R. Wittkower, p. 308.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 306.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 307.

⁶⁶ Diderot {cited by} R. Wittkower, p. 310.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ R. & M. Wittkower, p. 99.

⁶⁹ W. Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, Chato and Windus, London, UK, second edition, 1949, p. 21.

⁷⁰ R. Wittkower, p. 309.

⁷¹ R. & M. Wittkower, p. 99.

deformed, leaving the enterprise of this analysis with reservations. Even though the terminology has varied greatly, it is legitimate to speak about inspiration, creativity and genius in our contemporary sense in the correlation to neurotics, obsession or egomania. When Michelangelo 500 years ago spoke of defeating anxiety, an invisible thread can be pulled to tie Bowie, who in an interview in 2002 declared;

*The trousers may change, but the actual words and subjects I've always chosen to write with are things to do with isolation, abandonment, fear and anxiety – all of the high points of one's life*⁷²

Exactly like Aristotle 2400 years before when in the words of Wittkower he linked genius and melancholy as a precarious gift for "*it may produce depression, epilepsy, palsy, lethargy and what we would nowadays call anxiety complexes.*"⁷³ The description of inspiration may have changed but the associations have remained the same.

I would decidedly argue that equivalents to Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo in our times are genius musicians rather than visual artists. Picasso, Warhol, Dalí or Pollock were arguably the last of their kind. They were artists who were regarded as genius and were widely celebrated by the general public. Today, contemporary artists are dispersed and the public is suspicious about the so-called contemporary art which is confined to reinventing itself in a context of rapidly changing technologies and has been wounded by incidents and fiascos like Maurizio Cattelan's controversial banana-tape installation of 2020. Perhaps David Hockney is the last great visual artist alive with an earned reputation, albeit younger generations have hardly heard of him. In contrast, major music stars like Paul McCartney and John Lennon, Michael Jackson, Freddy Mercury, Prince, Brian Wilson and David Bowie arguably are immortal geniuses of our time, extensively and broadly known for both their production and the personage, the *artwork* and the *authorship*. Especially Bowie, whose lightning-bolt painted aesthetic of Ziggy Stardust and Aladdin Sane was a global cultural phenomenon. The great English artist was able to raise himself to the altars of timeless masters by a majestic swan song in an unforgettable ode to art, sensitivity and introspection around his own forthcoming demise.

When we speak of *artistry* and *insanity* it does not imply that we are polarizing and ignoring all the infinitely possible stages and relationships, although these terms definitely seem to be two sides of the same coin. On the contrary, this summary is intended to illustrate terms and ideas predominant in different eras. It refers to analogous principles of subtlety and lack of dissection in the frontier of artists and mental disorders, genius and madness. These concepts disguise

⁷² A. Borschel-Dan. Para. 5.

⁷³ R. & M. Wittkower, p. 102.

quite successfully evidence of the complexity of the human psyche, whose manifestations matched the vision and understanding of reality through science, art and religion. Bowie himself is the proof of this ambiguity. For example, his experience in addressing his phobias (abandonment or fear) with different degrees of success in terms of the outcome, sometimes an artistic product with a high cost that for diverse reasons entered critical situations when not managed adequately. Yet, Bowie was not insane. He was a self-made charismatic man and artist, meticulous, well-read, articulated, classy and educated, for whom insanity happened to be a temporary state of mind which had to do with imagination, obsession, inspiration and art but also with self-scrutiny, eccentricity, egomania, or fantasies, all sources of great artistic emanations.

With certain reservations in the context of this discussion, Michel Foucault's *function-author* may add a supplementary vision through a different prism. The conclusions of the French philosopher were restricted to writers in a narrower sense of *creators*, and were inserted into a separate framework preoccupied with the instrumentalization of authors and their attachment to circulating discourses. In his 'What is an Author' (1969) he spoke of *plurality of egos*, the *second-self* and the *division and distance of the two* with slightly different qualities and nuances compared to descriptions we have posited here. However I want to cite a specific paragraph because it supports the understanding of our terms of discussion;

in a novel narrated in the first person, neither the first person pronoun, the present indicative tense, nor, for that matter, its signs of localizations refer directly to the writer, either to the time when he wrote, or to the specific act of writing; rather they stand for a 'second self' ⁷⁴

It means that when a novel writer types, *I am sitting on the beach*, he is not actually on the sand but rather in front of a desk in a room, and not actually talking about himself but some character split in a second self. This happens by means of imagination, a driving force of potentially endless limits. *Sitting on a beach*, splits the writer into a second half, and for instance refers to a detective who reflectively tries to solve a problem and somehow sees himself in just such guise. But imagination as fantasy is also able to provide the highly fantastic sentence *I am flying around the rings of Saturn and beyond*, writing in the very same room and desk, a far more outrageous insight. There are vast artistic possibilities for this sort of device known as imagination in our terminology, but perhaps ecstasy or catharsis in the words of the ancients. Foucault focuses the debate to a different end, with conclusions about creativity laying in even antithetic grounds in contrast to those proposed here. But the accounts about the author able to transcend his own self to be inserted in pre-existing streams is what

⁷⁴ M. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice-Selected Essays and Interviews*, Cornell University Press, NY, 1977, pp. 129-130.

Foucault supposes in *circulating discourses*, it is basically footing on the same principle.

The creative writer does not necessarily write in a second self, and could write using observation for a more objective aim, similarly to a painter when painting an imitative piece such as a still-life, which also requires observation. Description, observation, imitation, repetition etc. are also valid ammunition for the artist to trigger reflection and introspection, which are the basis for many artists. But imaginary departures begin to be a versatile device when they enter the gates of fantasy which is the motivation or interest of artists like myself. The second self in this regard is a fantastic tool to venture forward without necessarily investing in fantastic stories about mythical beasts or space. It can figuratively modify reality, like writing a story about being *Ernest Wilde*, the apocryphal cousin of Oscar Wilde and make up a historical fiction. But when I say *write* it does not mean a published book, it means I can make up the story in my mind and *live* that story in imagination. Fantasize. Thus art, in any of its forms, visual, literature, music, theatre etc., is an appropriate vehicle of expression and pseudonyms an optimal means or device to cultivate it.⁷⁵ The problem is when one is not able to comprehend the difference between fantasies in the realm of reality and fantasies on the stage of art. There is the threat of precipitating into the void of madness and *living* trapped, instead of liberated in artistic expression. Experiencing a cathartic flame, a drug induced euphoria or in-action execution of art may be considered a temporary lapse of state of mind or plane of reality. Pollock's dictum echoes: "*When I'm in my painting, I'm not aware of what I am doing.*"⁷⁶

We have collected accounts of this untamed relationship of art and madness and the problem of the semantic glitch for periods of hundreds and hundreds of years while figuring out how primitive civilizations conceived of this ambivalence. The primitive man had trouble discerning name and personality, reality and divinity, superstition and religion. Shamans, priests and spiritual leaders performed frantic dances and utterances, experienced spiritual possession with religious and transcendental experiences and went on spiritual journeys. These activities may be translated into terms of the prophecies of ancient Greek poetry or the ecstasies of Middle Age saints and witches. I find it inevitable to observe the striking similarity of the ethnographic vocabulary in the work of James Frazier and his 'Golden Bough' (1890). With its subtitle 'Study of Magic and Religion' James Frazier places postulates, premises and theories in the field of Anthropology, a priori away from the Art and Philosophy discussed here. But Jan Białostocki might be right when he asserts that "*The origins of art are closely connected with*

⁷⁵ Obviously, theatre and cinema offer better vehicles to canalize fantasies, as well as music because the performance happens through the medium of authors themselves, actors/actresses or live music performers, whereas in literature and visual art the medium is an object.

⁷⁶ R. Wittkower, {cited by} p. 304

religion and myth."⁷⁷ Frazier's descriptions of rituals in primitive societies attest to these rites being closely related to traditional accounts of artists and their personality and behaviour: "*The belief in temporary incarnation or inspiration is world-wide. Certain persons are supposed to be possessed from time to time by a spirit or deity*",⁷⁸ or "*supposed to be inspired for short periods by a divine spirit, and thus temporarily to enjoy the knowledge and power of the indwelling deity*".⁷⁹ Note the word *inspiration* in the first sentence; in the second, it is *inspired by divinity*, gaining *knowledge*. The choice of these two sentences is quasi random, the entire book is inundated with similar descriptions. It totally resonates with all the instances reproduced in our essay, integrated as it were with Greek poetry as 'inspiration', 'mania', 'rapture', 'ecstasy', Medieval 'prophecy', 'prayer', Renaissance 'inspired frenzy', Romantic 'Divine vision', 'higher power'. The difference with Frazier is he is not referring by any means to art nor its expressions, but to religion, superstition and beliefs of primitive societies. In this respect, the echoes of magic blend with the blurry borders of religion and the connection to art and madness. "*The artist's special position in society cannot be dissociated from the fact that (...) he has always had the power to enchant and bewitch an audience, whether it be primitive or sophisticated.*"⁸⁰

This statement illustrates the notion that the audience of a particular society, either modern Western, less advanced societies in Asia or Africa or savage tribes, may be both primitive and sophisticated. Wittkower, in contrast is referring to society in general and to *higher civilizations* like the Hellenistic and Renaissance in particular, hence we should not dismiss Frazier's appreciations as merely belonging to archaic modes of culture, but instead as indicative of a certain sort of layer or substratum wherein the influences of magic thought, religious belief and artistic introspection, even sciences or proto-sciences, are interconnected, permeating each other. The statement "*The maker of idols endows his artifacts with magic life*"⁸¹ shows the proximity of religious concepts (idols) with superstition and magic. Frazier recalls that "*Ancient magic was the very foundation of religion*"⁸² when "*At an earlier stage the functions of priest and sorcerer were often combined or, to speak perhaps more correctly, were not yet differentiated from each other.*"⁸³ Yet, the maker of idols would be considered a mere *techne* or skill-worker by Plato, for idols in our modern conception are sculpted figures or paintings, therefore, activities which required the toil of hands, a criteria which lowers its status, denying its correlation to poetry or priesthood. If the idol did not gain fabled status by virtue of time as a surviving item from the past, only priests, seers, oracles or sibyls could endow power to the object and upgrade it to the

⁷⁷ Jan Bialostocki, *Iconography, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 2*, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003 p. 524.

⁷⁸ J. Frazier, p. 91a.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 93a.

⁸⁰ R. & M. Wittkower, p. 1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² J. Frazier, p. 55b.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

category of talisman or sacred object. But then again, the ancients were not able to discern the object from the conceptual abstraction⁸⁴ or the idol from the divinity. This fuelled theological debates around idolatry and led to iconoclasm in the 8th century Byzantium. So how did the craftsman produce a cult or idol without falling into worshipful sin? Inversely, if it was the sorcerer who produced the idols, or to be precise, icons or sculpted wood, ivory or gold figures, was he or she not to be regarded as a craftsman? These reflections evidence a historical confusion, or at least semantical transformation and blend of all these terms,⁸⁵ disciplines and activities. This invites me to meticulously select the right concepts and terms to define my particular vision of art and the inclusion of my own artistic propositions in that idea of art. I try to do this without discriminating nor censoring any option, including what could be doomed as *esoteric ideas* which may possibly fit the conceptualizing mechanisms and procedures I have observed.

-Demonic Music

Because of considerations about magic, the reader might feel tempted to question the credibility of my claims. All these outdated terms like prophecy, insanity or divinity appear mixed up in the context of art apparently leading nowhere. Many contemporary studies reject such terms and ideas. However let us for a moment take an article by Reinhold Hammerstein titled *Music as Demonic Art*.⁸⁶ It takes us on a journey through primitive peoples, civilized cultures, Christian Middle Ages and the post-medieval period up to modern times. It is prose, infested with already familiar dusty terms such as *narcotic ecstasy*, *demonically inspired* or statements like "At all events, music and dance play an altogether central part in all activities of magic and witchcraft" or "music as a divine or demonic art respectively survives particularly in the circle of German Protestant musicians of the 17th to 18th centuries." The conclusion being that

In the post-baroque period the preconditions of the old metaphysical ideas disappear everywhere, including Germany. Music is henceforth based solely on this-worldly principles, its origin lies in the human heart or within itself. It is the expression of human feelings or cherished for its own sake, a purely aesthetic phenomenon. The idea of music as a demonic

⁸⁴ Irene Bald Romano, in her essay about Greek cult says that "it is doubtful that any Greek, no matter how fervent were his religious beliefs, held that an idol was the actual god or goddess" to immediately after assert that "when there was an idol, it was toward this image, as the substitute of the deity, the sacrificial acts were directed." and "Bathing, clothing and feeding idols are also attested" which sound contradictory in regard of Greeks neatly discerning reality, objects and deities. Irene Bald Romano, *Early Greek Idols*, (website) Expedition Magazine 24.3 (1982): n. pag. Expedition Magazine. Penn Museum, 1982 Web. 28 Apr 2021 <http://www.penn.museum/sites/expedition/?p=5195> [Accessed 28 April, 2021].

⁸⁵ "Even if it is true that in high civilizations such as the Hellenistic and the Renaissance some of the primitive's awe of the magic object is transferred to the artist-magician, it still remains a mystery why in widely separate periods artists seem to have had so much in common." R. & M. Wittkower, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Reinhold Hammerstein, *Music as Demonic Art*, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 3, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003, pp. 264-267.

art now becomes an empty form, at best a metaphor in which, no one any longer believes ⁸⁷

I believe this to be true not only to music but to all orders of reality thanks to the triumph and preponderance of scientific views. But that said, what does it mean *no one any longer believes*? In other words, what is *that* which no one any longer believes? Hammerstein refers to the demonic possession of music, those *ecstasies*, *inspirations* or *manias* of our predecessors, and even to the angelic or positive possessions in music and dance, in composers, interpreters and performers, and yet the audience. Scientific formulas and evidences have completely expatriated such ideas, and by extension other esoteric assumptions like devilish possessions or hysteria in medical fields of psychology-psychiatry. Thus, the *inspiration* idea in art and creativity fields, today, is semantically reduced to a predisposition for productivity and efficacy. However, I find this quite disputable. Who is *no one*? Scientists? Psychiatrist? Psychologists? Scholars? Academics? Intellectuals? There is no questioning here. This is what Wittkower called the *sophisticated audience* but what about the primitive audience, the rank and file, ordinary, plain people?

For years, even today, there was a debate whether or not the band Kiss were devil worshipers and the name was an acronym of *Knights in Satan's Service*. Such a futile idea around a band whose lyrics only speak about girls, parties and rock'n'roll, was incredibly the object of discussion on TV, with guests intransigently holding that it was satanic music. Maybe their painted faces or spitfire spectacle drove them to draw such conclusions, who knows. Broadly speaking, there was a current during the 80s that considered Heavy Metal music in general satanic music and potentially dangerous for kids. However before this, Led Zeppelin was said to have included satanic messages in their landmark song *Stairway to Heaven* (1971), only it was needed to play it backwards to supposedly hear the singer Robert Plant murmur in reverse a creeping *here's for my sweet Satan*. The so-called Manson family perpetrated their infamous crimes because the sect leader Charles Manson heard apocalyptic messages in the Beatles' song *Helter Skelter* (1968), leaving it written in the victim's blood on the walls of the crime scene. Even a band like the Eagles were accused of devil worshiping with one of the biggest selling albums of all times, *Hotel California* (1976). Needless to say, the Black Metal acts of the early 90s and their satanic associations and paraphernalia, have gone too far beyond the limits of music and artistic expression with some of the genre's foundering members implicated in murders, suicides and ecclesial arsons. All this happened in pre-internet Europe and North America, in times when particular modes of thought, despite of their triviality, could not virally spread around and become trends. The peak of these associations between music and evil messages came in the absurd and delirious *Judas Priest Trial* in 1990 in Reno, Nevada, USA. The British band was accused of being responsible for alleged subliminal messages hidden in the Heavy Metal

⁸⁷ Ibid.

music from their album, *Stained Glass* (1978) that led two teenagers to attempt suicide, which resulted in a death and a severely injured survivor. To be fair and clear, the case was not about *music and satanic possessions* in the first place, it was principally about a legal disquisition around whether or not subliminal messages were free speech and thus protected by the First Amendment.⁸⁸ I suspect the reputation of Heavy Metal music, which had already experienced attempts at censorship in USA, had a sinister role to play. This trial is equally relevant in our discussion despite of its false appearance of being an esoteric matter around music and demonology. The central question, *can a subliminal message induce someone to commit suicide*, already creates esoteric ideas. Is it a message, no matter the channel and considering the common imperative forms of speech, powerful enough to influence someone? The answer, according to Timothy E. Moore, member of the defensive team and psychologist in law, justice and crime expertise, is no.⁸⁹ I agree.

Now, let us examine some details. James Vance, who survived shooting himself, later stated “*We got a message. It told us just Do It... It [the record] was giving us the message to just Do It*”.⁹⁰ A first observation indicates that two individuals born and raised in developed Western democracies, despite sociological conditions, were in 1985, not in 13th century, influenced by music and/or lyrics to do something, whatever it was. Second, in words of Prof. Moore “*By denying summary Judgment, Justice Whitehead (the Judge) assumed the validity of the plaintiffs' central claim—namely, that subliminal messages can influence human motivation*.”⁹¹ A subliminal message is by definition invisible and inaudible, but supposedly unconsciously perceived. Then *perceived*, in case it happened, does not imply compliance, as Prof. Moore in his article demonstrates. But my point is not to question this extreme and open a door to assume that music can be demonic because by means of magic it instigates the listener to perpetrate despicable acts. It quite obvious does not. The point is that even a highly educated and capable member of a national institution in an advanced and powerful democratic country like Judge Whitehead, did actually rule that it is conceivable that there is the existence of instigating messages of compliance in an art form like music. How? The authors are not even physically present with the subjects and they do not know each other. Not live but tape-recorded music has the power to influence or impulse listeners. Listeners are conscious or unconscious of the actuation? Listeners are familiar and joyful with the music or are they discomforted or even completely unaware of the intrusion? Is it the lyrics? The poetry in the words empowered by melody, harmony, sound or perhaps noise? Or maybe a “*coincidental convergence of a guitar chord with an exhalation pattern*”;

⁸⁸ Bill of Rights to the United States of America Constitution.

⁸⁹ Timothy E. Moore, *Scientific Consensus and Expert Testimony: Lessons from the Judas Priest Trial*, *Skeptical Inquirer*, Volume 20, No. 6 November / December 1996, pp. 32-38.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 37.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 38.

like Judge Whitehead reported in the summary?⁹² The invisible and inaudible messages are unequivocally unable to trigger such effects but those audible and visible, according to the Judge's decision to admit the trial, definitely were. Whether or not those messages would be protected by free speech laws is another story.⁹³ Then, who was Hammerstein referring to previously when concluding *no one any longer believes*? In academic and scientific spheres these are obvious questions but according to these instances, the kids, their parents, their lawyers and even judges it was not so clear. By the end of the 20th century, portions of the audiences of Kiss, Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, The Eagles and Black Metal, represent quite diverse a sample when considering the connection to the music of these bands with demonic, satanic, devilish or evil deeds. Under a precarious nomenclature, the matter of demonic music or ecstasies in its most esoteric and magical sense, comprises cases from not only our but from all civilizations and societies. It would be an ethnocentric bias to consider only these fore-mentioned instances because they included only Western societies in North America and Europe. Thus, taken for granted the assumption that Western societies are ranked at the top of cultural, technological, economical and scientific progress, other societies, arguably less developed are still having to face total eradication of sortilege, divination arts, religious fundamentalism or affection to obsolete local, traditional and folkloric practices. It is plausible to expect those societies, events and situations experienced by preceding phases of our civilization and in ethnographic accounts of those of like Frazier, to be significantly larger than in Western societies. Thus, *no one any longer believes* seems to me not accurate, even untrue.

We have discussed how terminology and vocabulary for similar phenomena have changed in time while the basic account persisted. For example, *wit* was replaced by *genius* in 17th century but they designated the same concept.⁹⁴ *Possessed by demons, devilish, grotesque, tuneless howls, contemptuous chants* or similar phrases were the terminology in the past to refer terrible music, which did not make sense to the listener who was tutored by church authorities. Nowadays such expressions lack credibility for their connotations with darker ages; but music is still today emotionally sensed, *lived*, and like Hammerstein said, "*its origin lies in the human heart or within itself*" and thus, when certain music does not make sense, we blame it on the musician instead of supernatural diabolical entities, on the individual, who faces the foibles of justice.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Another similar trial with Ozzy Osbourne's song *Suicide Solution* was ruled favourable to the artist because subliminal messages were not found and consequently Osbourne's words were protected by free speech laws.

⁹⁴ "*In the course of the seventeenth century the use of the term genius increased and gradually supplanted 'wit'*", Wittkower, p. 305.

-the Spell of Magic

Magic, not as a form to transmute matter but as a way to interconnect ideas and infuse certain human impulses, has endured a similar process of evolution as demonic music. The term 'Magic' is often rejected because of its pejorative associations and other terms have been substituted for it because of a better adequacy to specific needs that emerge in the present. *Symbolization* sounds to me like a term which conveys similar processes, appearing fresh and up to date. Symbolization uses symbols to activate a process whereby a mental abstraction a sign approximates a reference that splits into at least two possible meanings. One is directly denoted by the symbol itself but the second is more arbitrary. The appearance and likeness of the symbol versus its reference and literal meanings are somewhat irrelevant for their chief premise is not external similarity. It is a highly conceptualized process and the connections are often established by accidental qualities which are to be found in both items. Magic operates by similarity and contiguity which is somehow an analogous process.

Thus, ecstasies, prophecies, inspirations, flames etc. are some sort of symbolic events historically accounted for under ever-changing names in the contexts of religion, art and science, each discipline gaining a higher or lower status depending on technological progress and sociocultural tendencies in time and space.⁹⁵ Science nowadays prevails as the discipline or world view that can provide the most reliable registration of truth and knowledge. But it would be convenient to remind one that a mere art form like music, in its general sense and in all its permutations from angelic to demonic, from active (*musica activa*) to speculative (*musica speculativa*), was at different points in history from the Greeks to the Middle Ages regarded as one of the highest modes or art. It was a science of knowledge,⁹⁶ a way to understand and explain reality in line with the contributions of astronomy, arithmetic or geometry.⁹⁷ But then again, the anxious, depressed, choleric *homo melancholicus* of the Renaissance is responsible for a genius manifested in art that together with its related psychic malfunctions are associated with *ars geometrica*, geometry, and the fate of the studiosus.⁹⁸ Moreover alchemy, being popularly considered as black magic, because of its bizarre symbolic language, takes into account figures like Isaac Newton himself, considered the father of modern science, who used unintelligible terminology such

⁹⁵ For instance, this particular example of a subdivision of music theory (harmony of cosmos) in 12th century, shows the fluctuation of disciplines over time: "*the structural particulars and epistemological assumptions of this basic premise were continually retuned to harmonize with competing astronomical models and changing intellectual environments*". Andrew Hicks, '*Musica Speculativa*' in the *Cambridge Commentary on Martianus Capella's 'De Nuptiis*, (website) *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, vol. 18, 2008, p. 301. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/45020108 [Accessed 1 May 2021].

⁹⁶ "*Since the Pythagoreans found the mathematical laws of acoustic harmony, music has been considered as a branch of knowledge as well as an art*". W. Tatarkiewicz, Vol. 1, p. 457.

⁹⁷ Andrew Hicks, '*Musica Speculativa*' in the *Cambridge Commentary on Martianus Capella's 'De Nuptiis*.' (website) *The Journal of Medieval Latin*, vol. 18, 2008, *JSTOR*, p. 293, www.jstor.org/stable/45020108 [Accessed 8 May 2021].

⁹⁸ Umberto Eco, p. 226.

as *the green dragon or menstrual blood of sordid whore* in his writings. The historian William Newman considers the language of alchemy “almost a form of poetry”⁹⁹ but also that “Alchemy really encompassed all chemical technology—everything ranging from the manufacture of pigments for paint to making artificial precious stones.”¹⁰⁰ The manufacturing of pigments for paint is the domain of painters-artists, which was done by guilds in Middle Age workshops, in 18th century Germany by alchemists who discovered *Prussian blue* and modern chemists who recently discovered the new pigment of *YInMn blue*. So, alchemy is at the same time considered a practice of magic, a poetry of symbolic language, a sort of art, chemistry, physics and even mysticism with its relation to religion. Yet, we must remind ourselves how “many 20th century artists also regard their work as cognitive, similar to science, or even science itself.”¹⁰¹

The matters of art, religion and sciences were regarded by Immanuel Kant as the three major human activities, namely, the aesthetic, the moral and the cognitive respectively.¹⁰² They are interchangeable because they are manifestations of the human psyche, a subject that permits many trajectories of inquiry and observation. As Noam Chomsky cleverly put it: “the arts may offer appreciation of the heavens to which astrophysics does not aspire.”¹⁰³

In this light, Frazier’s data and descriptions about savages of primitive societies in the retired confines of the world, in vestiges of pre-industrial rural Europe, and other recollected data from the annals of history, customs, folk medicine, tales, legends and myths are valid interpretations that somehow *offer appreciation* on why a teenager in Reno who hears ‘do it, do it’ in a musical piece was *inspired* to such suicidal extent. Frazier observed that in primitive societies the belief and practice of magic was universal,¹⁰⁴ that everybody was at some degree a magician.¹⁰⁵ Equally, 20th century psycho-analyst D. Schneider notes that

*The lives of talented men and women famously abound in episodes of inhibition, despair, moodiness, irritability, restlessness—alternating with episodes of productivity... These disequilibria have been assumed to be intrinsic to genius; of course they are not specific to the artist—they exist in baseball players and truck drivers and pillars of society*¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ William R. Newman, *Section Code and Riddles*, para. 4.

¹⁰⁰ William R. Newman, *Section A Legitimate Pursuit*, para. 5.

¹⁰¹ W. Tatarkiewicz, Vol. 1, p. 461.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. 460.

¹⁰³ Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind*, Cambridge University Press, NY, 2000, p. 77.

¹⁰⁴ J. Frazier, pp. 57b, 91a, 92b, 94b.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 57b.

¹⁰⁶ R. & M. Wittkower, p. 100.

-Universal Creator

We assume that there is a particular premise which indicates the universality of artistry or genius, that creativity is installed in each member of humankind. This is most true, only the criteria of the artistic spectrum fluctuates to regard the creativeness of most people as average or standard. As a result, a minority achieve superior rates of artistry, inventiveness and ingenuity while just a few chosen ones rise to genius as masters. Though everyone is capable of artistic production. All children draw, paint and imbue themselves in manual crafts and activities, even the narrowest adult minds can sing or dance. Each one of us sings in the shower, but we are not particularly delighted by our neighbour's tunes whereas our admiration for the likes of Freddy Mercury is uncontested, for his art is rated as supreme. There is a misconception around genius as something unique, a *rara avis*, hard to find, some sort of mythic messianic advent. But what is unique is the grade, the proficiency or expertise of great artists who display their capacity overwhelming to others. But no one doubts that madness and faith are susceptible to everybody. Meanwhile, science not only requires observation, like the artist or the religious devotion to contemplation. This not only demands rigor, perspicacity, discipline and critical thinking, it also requires creativity to establish necessary and accurate frameworks, and to trace the right association of ideas to prompt new theories and hypotheses. Magic, as Frazier describes it, is also about the association of ideas, only the wrong associations result in magic whereas the right association produces science;¹⁰⁷

*In both of them a succession of events is assumed to be perfectly regular and certain, being determined by immutable laws, the operation of which can be foreseen and calculated precisely; the elements of caprice, of chance, and of accident are banished from the course of nature. Both of them open up a seemingly boundless vista of possibilities to him who knows the causes of things and can touch the secret springs that set in motion the vast and intricate mechanism of the world. Hence the strong attraction which magic and science alike have exercised on the human mind; hence the powerful stimulus that both have given to the pursuit of knowledge*¹⁰⁸

The elucidation of Newton as being either a scientist, a symbolic poet or a magician, or Bowie as a man of science because of his musicianship, an artist or a victim of mental disruptive disorders of dissociative syndromes, can only be determined by an adopted point of view, the terminology employed and the

¹⁰⁷ J. Frazier, pp. 52a-54b.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 52b.

space/time circumstance.¹⁰⁹ The complexity of the human mind and its activities in the *pursuit of knowledge* (Wittkower calls it *levels of self-realization*¹¹⁰) are interdisciplinary among science, art, religion and magic and the common denominator is creativity, given in different degrees thanks to a possession true to all humans: language.

Language is by far the most extraordinary exhibition of creative power. Humans are able to instantly produce new sentences and convey ideas, taking pre-existing words and combining them in new ways, incessantly linking never before heard utterances. New words are also effortlessly created on the daily basis; sometimes by mistake or mere chance, inadvertently a new word arises in an informal conversation, other times coining new terms is vital to the elaboration of complex philosophical treatises or the accomplishment of superlative poetry. All "*with 24 little characters*", as Galileo put it.¹¹¹

Language proceeds by symbolization, for letters and words are symbols¹¹² which by convention denote, signify or, better said, symbolize "*by virtue of a law, an association of general ideas.*"¹¹³ This symbolization occurs in the minds of both the emitter and the receiver, meanings, images, sounds and other sensitive perceptions are conveyed. In short, by magic;¹¹⁴ a word (a sound and/or an image) creates something that travels connecting the stimuli to conceptions of objects somehow existent in an ethereal mesh. Many of these objects exist as particular individual items in the tangible physical world which, prodigiously, are not present at the exact moment of the occurrence. Whether we prefer to call it magic, mystery, symbolization, signification or semiosis depends on specific cultural groups, their codes and the nuances involved. Creativity then, an inherent property of the mechanism of language which provides infinite use, not only is available, but it is default to all humans since language is naturally determined by biological endowment.¹¹⁵ Called by Chomsky *universal grammar*¹¹⁶ in its initial infant state and later *generative grammar* (because it *generates*), language is a faculty, a

¹⁰⁹ "Dissociative phenomena have been a recognized part of human history for a very long time. (...) Egypt described cases of spirit possession, which in retrospect have been interpreted as dissociative phenomena. Evidence of dissociation was also recorded in Christian scripture. Biblical passages in Mark 5:1-20 describe a man possessed with unclean spirits (...). When Jesus asked his name, the man said: 'My name is Legion, for we are many'". Carol S. North, p. 497.

¹¹⁰ "If psycho-analysis has taught us anything, it is the infinite complexity of man's personality and the many levels of self-realization", R. & M. Wittkower, p. 292.

¹¹¹ Galileo Galilei {cited by} N. Chomsky, p. 4.

¹¹² Charles Peirce: "All words, sentences, books and other conventional signs are symbols" {cited by} Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners* (website), Signs, 12 September 2020, <http://visual-memory.co.uk/daniel/Documents/S4B/sem02.html> [Accessed, January 20, 2021].

¹¹³ C. Peirce {cited by} *ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Arbitrariness* is the preferred technical term: "The process which selects one particular sound-sequence to correspond to one particular idea is completely arbitrary". *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ N. Chomsky. p. 4; "human language can be regarded as a natural object", p. 76; "For each individual, the language faculty has an initial state, determined by biological endowment." p. 77.

¹¹⁶ "The theory of the initial state is sometimes called 'Universal Grammar' (UG)" Also, it is called *Language Acquisition Device* (LAD). N. Chomsky, p. 81.

"*language organ*",¹¹⁷ situated in the brain and somewhat, I assume, relative to the psyche. Given its inescapability, language with its abstraction and symbolization is in a constant palpitation, operating ceaseless at both conscious and unconscious levels, creating thoughts and images which manifest themselves in different states of mind.¹¹⁸ Roughly speaking, the daily conscious state is the *normal* state, whereas the unconscious state is the sleep tenure, wherein dreams constitute generated language in a different state of mind. Inspiration might be defined to be an increase of creative activity and arguably an altered state of mind too, potentially resulting in the creativity and production of the artist or the ecstasy of a religious individual. This production of content is guided by the internal structure of the language faculty, enabling us to construct complex branching and potentially infinite phrasal forms that do not necessarily make sense in terms of semantic meaning, but are nonetheless grammatically correct. They somehow explain, beyond the obvious sensible conscious display of word and thought, the free associations of intuitive artistic procedures, the odd nature of dreams or misleading mental activities. Chomsky provided in his *Syntactic Structures* (1957) the following instance that transcended to become a classic of grammatical discussions: *Colourless green ideas sleep furiously*. It shows that a construction can be flawless but convey nonsense. However, it is evident the phrase is *wrong* in a context of linguistics, grammar or daily basis communication but it is perfectly valid for poetic or artistic purposes, as Surrealism, Metaphysical painting, Symbolism, automatic writing, or the Theatre of the Absurd attest. Moreover, being right or wrong does not prevent such phrases -and potential implications- to arise in the minds of individuals, be them artists, linguists, abbots or plumbers.

We can conclude that (1) Chomsky needed to be fairly creative to make such phrase and therefore it is evident that the realm of science also requires such ability; (2) it confirms that creativity is necessary for science, as well as religion and magic, apart from the obvious arts and poetry. These are all human activities in the quest of knowledge; (3) creativity is inseparable from language (generative grammar); (4) language is an innate biological faculty of humans predisposed to function optimally; (5) humans create language and by language they create ideas, signified in words (speech) or objects (scripts, pictures, or other tangible matter).

When primitive humans cannot help confusing objects and words, they associate those ideas wrongly and produce magic. When humans signify words and objects optimally, they produce science. When humans signify objects optimally, they produce art. When humans signify words optimally, they produce philosophy and poetry. When humans signify words wrongly, they produce religion, myth and

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 4.

¹¹⁸ "(...) *men go on symbolizing when there is no practical need just because they cannot stop*" Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art-An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., USA, 1968, p. 257.

mental disorders. This is a very basic scheme because each compartment never becomes juxtaposed but becomes superposed. This could be the reason why history regards inspiration sometimes as witchcraft or at other times a quality of genius.

This suggests that consciousness and unconsciousness are two poles of a seamless continuum upon which those compartments interact and where intermediary hues of the spectrum categorize the states of mind where activity arises infused by one or various compartments. This is evident in the rare experience of consciousness in the middle of a dream, when we realize and acknowledge it as such, or when we fall asleep watching TV but yet we do not completely miss the dialogue. These states of mind or altered realms of reality give people alternate ways of diving into their intimate profundities, say dream based or perhaps an induced substance or experience that could ultimately lead to suggest a theorem like the periodic table to Mendeleev, or a style literature in the case of Bukowski. When there is no satisfactory productivity, a personality could be fractured, leading to mental disorders of dissociative character that historically has been labelled as hysteria, divine and demonic possessions and witchcraft, or as melancholy. Similar symptoms¹¹⁹ associated with genius in art and science, offering a glimpse into why Bowie was considered borderline insane while experiencing a copious artistic production. Or even why it pushed a teenager to be spurred to action after having heard 'Do It' in music. For whatever reason they handled the situation in antagonistic ways, but basically, they fashioned those ideas themselves, either by the excessive creativity of language, particular lapses of states of mind, or limited by it.

-Words & Worlds

Words, as the most immediate medium of language, let ideas associate. This includes ideas about the self. Pseudonyms are words that can load a wide range of ideas about the self. The universality of language and its indivisible power of creation not only propels words representing our own image but also words representing victorious, ideal images of ourselves. Sometimes we are conscious of this phenomenon and we elaborate on it, but sometimes we are not. At other times it oscillates between the two. Elaborated on, pseudonyms are likely to be manifested in artistic compartments, and this results in pseudonyms and personas like those of Pessoa, whose alter egos comprised ideal versions of himself as a writer. Among many more, *Ricardo Reis* was a swarthy skinned doctor who wrote in classical style whereas the blonde *Alberto Caeiro's* distinctive style was naïve.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ It has been discussed melancholy and some of its typical descriptions like anxious and depressive, which are listed as also symptoms of "*dissociative reactions*" for "*psychoneurotic disorders*" in a manual of *American Psychiatric Association* of 1952. Though the terminology varied, they were still listed in similar publications of 1993 (North *et. al.*) and regarded "*under the common label of hysteria for nearly four millennia-until the late 20th century*". Carol S. North, pp. 501-505-507.

¹²⁰ A. Room, p. 21.

Or Bowie, giving way to the existence of larger fantastical and impossible entities. When the individual fantasises with a split personality, it may be due to a reasonably temporal state of mind like when drunk or inhibited, conversely, it can be a more serious disorder. A group of psychiatrists listed the symptoms of dissociative mental disorders in a 1993 publication titled *Multiple Personalities, Multiple Disorders: Psychiatric Classification and Media Influence* as: “psychotic, depressive, manic, anxious, phobic, eating, substance use, antisocial and hyperactivity disorders.”¹²¹ Maybe with the exception of eating, they virtually comprise all the symptomatology and descriptions we have discussed about artists previously. According to this list, and with certain license and reservation, there is just one additional step to link mental disorders with artists, and with Plato’s *manic*, referring to the poet and the prophet. *Depressive* and *phobic* with melancholic accounts of the Renaissance like the hypochondriac Pontorno and the anxious Michelangelo, can be projected to Bowie, whom in turn takes us back to *substance use*¹²² and even to *eating*. The delirious tragicomedy of his infamous diet of milk, peppers and cocaine is legendary.¹²³ However melancholic man, in spite of a clinical diagnosis of multiple personality, was able to gain the status of a man of science, due to the study of geometry and the accomplishment of superior knowledge. By possession of a deity, Frazier notes, primitive man gained not only miraculous powers but a temporal superior knowledge attributed to the divinity, an indwelling that might turn out to be permanent.¹²⁴

Furthermore, nomenclature issues that we also have discussed in our essay, emerge here; I do not really see myself reflected in such symptomatology, but in a different conceptualization from the 21st century. Psychological dissociations include “*dissociative amnesia, depersonalization, derealisation, identity confusion, identity fragmentation, out-of-body experiences, altered time perception, loss of control, and mental absorption*”.¹²⁵ Not the majority but a number of these appeal to my personal experience and probably many artists would also feel this way. *Altered time perception* and *mental absorption* seem to be somehow correlated from the point of view of the artist. Like Leonardo five centuries before, who, according to an eye-witness report;

often stayed on the scaffolding from dawn to dusk without putting down his brush, forgetting to eat and drink, painting all the time. Then, for two, three or four days he would not touch his work and yet he would stay there,

¹²¹ Carol S. North, {cited in} p. 506.

¹²² It is public and known the substance use of those mentioned Bowie or Bukowski but also avant-garde artists of early 20th century and absinth, or like Pollock, Francis Bacon or Basquiat, even men of science like Freud.

¹²³ The Thin White Duke was a persona of sinister despotic traits but also a description of Bowie’s physical appearance, as well as a metaphoric personification of cocaine. Bowie allegedly subsisted between 1974 and 1976 on a diet of milk, peppers and cocaine. David Bowie’s Plastic Soul | 1974-1976, (online video), CM Films, 24 July, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTpvHzAkMS4> [Accessed 2 May, 2021].

¹²⁴ J. Frazier, pp. 92b-93a.

¹²⁵ Carol S. North, p. 505.

sometimes an hour, sometimes two hours a day wrapped in contemplation

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Or similarly Pontorno himself who "would set out to work in the morning and return in the evening 'without having done anything all day but stand lost in thought'."¹²⁷ This reveals behaviour very familiar to me. Innumerable times have I lost myself all sense of time in a voracious maelstrom of artistic production, either painting, drawing or writing music, completely minding my own business, absorbed, rapt and inspired.

Finally, the list cites *identity confusion* and *identity fragmentation*. I independently have elaborated similar terms and concepts, but this consciousness and careful elaboration of *fragmentation* and *confusion*, differentiates an artist from a patient. Art and madness revolve like a vertical mill wheel driving one out to the surface while submerging the counterpart. As above, so below.

It is language, like blood circulating in our veins, that runs its course (or *curse*) and due to its creative passion lets there be words to reflect what we are and what we believe in, even sometimes assigning ambivalent meanings. So, the question arises: what are we, as humans, creatives or creators? A pseudonym is a power word that amputates factions from our own discourse, where words incarnate us. The primitive man described by Frazier, in that oscillation between the conscious and the unconscious, had often a secondary name too,¹²⁸ to protect and procure himself sanctuary from malign necromancers who could crawl under the skin through his real name. Words had an enormous influence on them and still have influence on us.

Everyone experiences internally the fantasy of being someone else or a different version of the self. From the superculture of Popes and religious ministers that assume a new appellation to secure a new spiritual rebirth and reject their former worldly life, to the mundane initiation rites in the subculture of prostitutes,¹²⁹ all the way through eminent scientists like Newton, who in his intimacy dared to baptize Isaac as *Jehovah Sanctus Unus*, that is, *Jehovah the Holy One*.¹³⁰ This mystification is catalysed by the creativity of language and that is the reason why word, our mouthpiece of the first cause, contains such power to drive the experience of fantasizing under a pseudonym. We artists arrogate ourselves the license of using pseudonyms to split and develop our personalities not to fuel conflicts. Often disregarded but in communion, we envision different versions of ourselves in the guise of an admired hero, a refined clone of our real self, a recondite galactic being or a spectre from the infra-world, even a divinity. This can

¹²⁶ R. Wittkower, Vol. 2, p. 301.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ J. Frazier, pp. 221b-225b.

¹²⁹ A. Room, pp. 30-31.

¹³⁰ William R. Newman, Section *Revealed Wisdom for a Chosen Few*, para. 3.

Chapter 1

inspire an introspection and a gained knowledge that reveals a supplementary appreciation of the heavens, unreachable to astrophysics. It is a symbolical apparition of fantasy, reverie and fiction that illuminates us, sometimes stuns us and often gives us a hint of phantasmagorical insanity or clairvoyance. It is internally *lived*, privately, by the spell of a word. Externally, publicly, a pseudonym is also a word, a name that works the magic.

Chapter 2

PSEUDONYMS | Making a name for

*'authorship' is an elaborate work of framing, something we elaborately produce*¹³¹

Like context. Pseudonym's first achievement is to provision anonymity to the author but it does not eradicate the concept of authorship. Negating to facilitate descriptions of my artwork, the meaning and concepts I work with, and my personal biography do not prevent me to formulate an author, whether it is authentic or impostor. So when I avoid to have a context, I am somehow elaborating a context. I usually provide, attached to the artwork, a name, a technique, dimensions of the artwork and a title for it, all of them unnecessary appendages to the artwork. However, it must be stressed that this context is in fact largely unavoidable because it constitutes a redundant information. Indeed, the technique of an artwork is an intrinsic part of the artwork. It is not necessary to call it *oil on canvas* when it is an oil painting on a canvas, a self-evident circumstance. The same goes for the size of a print, e.g. *100 x 70 cm*; so after all this is not context, but artwork itself, inherent to it. Title and authorship on the other hand are context. Artist statements, descriptions, signatures, titles or author's name are linguistic intrusions that adulterate the essence of the artwork.

I refuse all of them except the latter two. The question is why; title, although a conventionalism as well as contextual information, can be used closer to the spirit of the artwork than to the contextual goal of clarification and supplementation for it. I do not take advantage of the hierarchy *text vs image*, where the title epitomizes in words, in the nutriment of reasoning, what is first given in images or sound, what is served supposedly to be feast for emotions and senses. Rather I use it as an obscure elongated part of the artwork, without that vertical conception or hierarchy, displaying the title in a horizontal axis with the remaining elements of the artwork, not subordinated to it. These elements are visual signs, typically forms or shapes, expressions or representations. The intention is to

¹³¹ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 180.

maintain the title equal to that visual quality, even though I very often use linguistic signs (words, texts, phrases) inserted in my visual art. As a matter of fact, it is this very circumstance which makes the title be integrated within the artwork rather than in the context attached to the artwork. For instance, a recent linocut print titled *Breslaughter* (see *Interpretation | Description of Selected Artwork* chapter) ends up functioning exactly as the redundant *oil on canvas* type of information: inside the boundaries of the composition, it is depicted a decapitated skull in grey, red and dark blue colours topped by a word heading the print; it identically says *Breslaughter*, whose aim is the exterior design and the blood-dripping aspect of it, integrated in and as a visual experience, not privileged a higher status for its linguistic nature. Then, the acoustic part of the word has a separated function but the title itself is not adding anything new to what the artwork itself is offering. The title is already an integral part, *repeated*. Another linocut is titled *The Cheater* (see *Interpretation | Description of Selected Artwork* chapter) and it is again captured within the print, as a part of it. The fact that it is written in the print in Russian language and Cyrillic characters, does not make any difference for it will depend on the ability of the interpreter to understand those particular languages and alphabets, as much as to be competent enough to identify a particular technique as *oil on canvas*, but the information is nevertheless already part of the artwork, not a juxtaposed component. That is how I tend to use such item of what could be regarded as pertaining to context, and make it exist somehow detached from it, contributing to the lack of context and its consequential confusing program. Perhaps this, the title, and the previously discussed technical protocol could be considered *paratext* instead of context per se.¹³²

However, as said, context is unavoidable because there is always going to be an author associated to the artwork and again because as long as authorship is an elaborated construction, it will cast a context, besides of the obvious fact that whenever and wherever the artwork is placed, it will each time get a new context (website, magazine, catalogue etc.). The fragmentation of authorship I propose is consciously worked out to break some of the notions of context and also to contribute to preserve the focus in the artwork by neutralizing the cited counterpart as much as possible, containing minimally dispersed information. If we take technical descriptions and titles as paratexts, we may consider *authorship* the only element present in my text-context, artwork-context ecosystem.

¹³² Titles, book covers or prefaces are regarded as *paratext* by the French literary theorist Gerard Genette in his analysis of texts, what he calls hypertexts. I find it plausible to establish certain parallelisms between the literary text and the artwork to expand the description of what *context* might be. Another example, among others, would be the *foretext* which refers to drafts and preparatory writings that would correspond to sketches or studies in fine arts. The foreword to the book by Gerald Prince provides examples making comparisons with painting. Gerard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1997.

In this sense, pseudonym is just a form of authorship that preserves the identity of the proper name but nonetheless constructs a fabricated identity projected on the wall of context, the external public façade concerned with unity of the concept and its legal and monetary operation.¹³³ Authorship also seeks unity of work alongside pinning narratives and discourses, from the point of view of the historian, auction houses or museums¹³⁴ but also from those authors themselves who internally like to ascribe to particular styles or genres, as we have discussed earlier.

These are some of the reasons to craft an authorship in general, beyond the misleading idea of only pseudonym users preoccupied in fabricating it. Some of these reasons occur overlapped since pseudonym is a committed elaboration of authorship, while others (anonymity, fantasizing) do not significantly proceed in the cases of artists or musicians operating under their proper names. But it cannot be discarded the same level of elaboration of an author without a pseudonym or a stage name. In my case there is a conscientious elaboration of the authorship, articulating its function in the context as the most prominent element available, as the public external manifestation of my authorship. Solitary ambassador of a blank context. In other words, the claimed absence of context is scarcely filled with authorship, therefore *there is* certain context, but I timely designed authorship to be fragmented and thus sabotage a *proper* context, virtually having it deserted.

In such light, the manufacture of my particular authorship underwent deeper sophistication down amusing rabbit holes with pseudonyms first and personas after, that played an internal role as to fantasize but also to break the unity in the eyes of the external agents; the public, as receiver, to busy themselves with the artwork and not with a vaguely defined author,¹³⁵ and fracture the economic matrix, as for I never liked to see myself as a reified saleable product. These considerations emerge as paradoxes and contradictions. First, it appears dumb to create an obstruction to the prosperity of one's profession and it certainly aches with chronic dilemmas. Second, the break of the unity of the authorship strangely gains the unity of a particular pseudonym to a correlate medium, for The Ogrocadaver only takes credit for the fine arts production while Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf signs for the music.

¹³³ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 181.

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp. 181-182. These authors treat the question of authorship from the point of view of Semiotics and the external outsider *access* to it of interpreters such as historians, scholars or even the public. They are not concerned and do not discuss authorship from the internal point of the authors -described as painters, sculptors, photographers and so forth- as it is my intention, but many of their observations are valid and match my own experience and thoughts in the understanding of authorship and its connections with pseudonym.

¹³⁵ The construction of authorship is not only in the hand of the author himself, like I claim describing my own experience, neither by agents leading the interpretation of history or art but also by the public itself, like the semiotician Daniel Chandler underscores. "*Readers, in any case, construct authors*" he says. He is referring to literature readers but the concept of *text* is generally and clearly extended to the visual and sonic as well "*Semioticians often refer to 'reading' film or television*". D. Chandler, sections *Intertextuality; codes* and *Introduction*.

Now, let us proceed to exclusively describe each pseudonym and its affordances.

-The Ogrocadaver

A pseudonym that secures anonymity. This would be probably anyone's first interpretation after this appellation is read on a label adhered to my artwork at an exhibition or a catalogue. Likewise, I envision it this way when I imagine no one could associate the art piece to my person, which is personally interesting to observe as an experiment: the art piece isolated and abandoned in both its virtues and defects, a fate tested by its survival capacities and somehow, roughly indicating the validity of my work. But the anonymity argument is naïve; I am de facto an anonymous artist for the 99% of the public where I am artistically active and, with or without pseudonym, unknown for the totality of the potential public. Hence, the anonymity trait, albeit true, is not playing any practical role in my case. It gives me sanctuary and makes me feel protected and in control, being thus some kind of light fantasy of my imagination, a perception. It would as well acquire its concealing power if visibility eventually occurred. But anonymity is just the earliest affordance of this pseudonym, as much as it is virtually sterile in regard of the suppression of my real identity. Other functions, like allowing me to fantasize (in addition to that light fantasy of feeling in control) are much more interesting. All functions and affordances together with that initial timid anonymity or protect-identity aptitude, ultimately make sense when connected to the dominant function; namely, the elusiveness of my artistic proposition. Integrated in it, pseudonyms with their internal and external functions at work. Internally the chief function is to fantasize. Externally to support the artistic strategy, in my case the confusion program.

Thus, The Ogrocadaver is similar to Voltaire's case, as examined before. We cannot tell about the individual like we cannot say anything about Banksy beyond his or her artistic intentions and aesthetic. This pseudonym does not reveal my gender or my age, no one can tell either I am black or blonde, tall or obese, Catholic, Muslim or atheist and therefore it does little to contribute to raising prejudices, stereotypes and clichés about me and my art. The mystery around the author can bring forward speculation but only as an initial impulse, which soon vanishes. On the other hand, it decidedly invites one to focus on the artwork with basically no intellectual and cultural baggage besides that of the receiver's untransferable ownership.

Every name of an author (a painter, a sculptor, a photographer etc.) oscillates between designation and description,¹³⁶ and we have seen how pseudonyms and nicknames, as secondary names of authors, feature this property –from the

¹³⁶ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 180.

complete confusion between the two in primitive societies and the link magician-artist, to the stage names in Hip-Hop or Black Metal that describe or give clues about their artistic affiliation. Indeed, Eazy-E gives the prejudice, in a positive sense, of being Hip-Hop; Necrobutcher tells us it probably is Black Metal; and Bob Dylan or Andy Warhol do not tell us (a priori) about their artistic activity but indicate they are white males of western civilizations and charge prejudices with potential implications. The Ogrocadaver, sharing some traits with these instances is, consequently, closer to the evocative and calling brand type of pseudonym, aspiring commercial outcome. However is not functioning opposed to concealment, as we typically would expect. So what does it describe, as an evocative brand name? Banksy evokes a particular street art aesthetic and a political activism, nothing else. Voltaire eventually became the *real* name and evokes his works and though without further mystery. Both gained this descriptive feature of theoretically non-descriptive and concealing names by virtue of repetition.¹³⁷ But I do not repeat, but break; fragmentation in the style, medium and authorship in conjunction with absence of context, circumvent repetition and ultimately meaning. Thus, the initial naïve anonymity acquires a more solid dimension because lack of fixed meaning keeps it confusing and not really identifiable. Anonymity is not only a matter of identity but a matter of discourses. It is hard to determine what philosophical, political or religious ideas my art promote, or what truths if any. Even aesthetical.

It is arguable that Voltaire is a brand name, in its evocative principle. But only after repetition. Initially was unable to describe anything about the individual and its activity. As such, The Ogrocadaver is a calling name too. However, unlike Voltaire, it faintly does describe something. Banksy, from *bank* probably, facilitates some interpretation, either misleading or not. Bowie, from the *bowie knife*, also was thought to have associations although we are not sure if Bowie himself had a plan for this trait for, to my knowledge, it was never exploited. But again this knife can lead to interpret something, erroneously or not, by virtue of its nature and potential connotations transferable to the artist. In this sense The Ogrocadaver is this type of name, which takes us to radically different considerations regarding its functions.

Theoretically this word does not mean anything but, as its guise somehow suggests, is actually assembled by two words. *Ogro* and *Cadaver*. *Ogro* is Spanish for *ogre* and *cadaver* means the same in both English and Spanish. The addition of the definite article *the* is important here. It warns and prevents to

¹³⁷ Both names Banksy and Voltaire mean something specific, they can describe something about not their person but their production. It is the function of the signature, the authorship shaped by what Jacques Derrida considered needed it be repeatable, iterable, imitable form. Jacques Derrida, *Signature Event Context-Limited Inc*, Northwestern University Press, Illinois, USA, 1988. Jonathan Culler expanded: “Something can be a signifying sequence only if it is iterable, only if it can be repeated in various serious and nonserious contexts, cited, and parodied.” Jonathan Culler, *Convention and Meaning: Derrida and Austin*, (website) JSTOR, New Literary History, vol. 13, no. 1, 1981, p. 22, www.jstor.org/stable/468640. [Accessed 12 May 2021].

consider a neologism in Spanish. It raises confusion because even if written (i.e. visually) looks the same everywhere, it is not clear how to pronounce it, thus creating tension between the visual and the phonic; a tension with a side effect in meaning, no longer clear. If read in English, the word is nonsense. If read in Spanish, *the* is an invalid component. It was a conscious selection of words in both languages that written look similar and bear identical meanings (a grotesque mythical humanoid¹³⁸ and corpse¹³⁹) where potential majorities of speakers could grasp it but would grow unsure how to say it, pointing out issues around two channels of information languages operates upon, namely, the acoustic, phonic, sound which is sensed by hearing, and its visual counterpart, which is sensed by sight. This is a chief conceptual element of my art, although never explained as a consequence of the confusing strategy and my disinterest in doing so. Context, armed to the teeth with its artist statements, descriptions, critiques, overviews, rhetoric or discourses, is routinely conjoined to the art piece (the text) contributing the *understanding* of such concepts managed by artists, but I denied them. Roughly, the point is that I do not claim messages and fixed meanings in my art, so consequently interpretation of receivers are welcome and valid. Thus, the denuded artwork is overt to infinite plausible interpretations, which I stealthily observe in the distance making out of people's interpretations my own conclusions. This is a reason to deny the viewers context, to avoid infecting their hopefully purest interpretation of an art piece by influencing them with, say, a name or directly guiding them how to look at it. It is not the same to be a Middle Eastern woman or a European white man when it comes to connotations and biases, so the anonymity of pseudonym should be understood in this global and complex manner rather than a simple cover for an artist who is de facto anonymous.

As a compound word The Ogrocadaver means nothing and is open to interpretation. It will depend completely on the absence of all context while it appeals to the knowledge, cultural background and experience of the receiver. That is, the receiver's own context. Eventually, this my main pseudonym is a metaphor of my art in general, a synecdoche, the microcosmos of a macrocosmos. Meaningless sets of signs congregated with purely aesthetical preoccupations.

-Obscured Logocentrism

I consider my art work, music included, a display of signs that can be seen, uttered and heard. Dripping blood, skulls, eyes, teeth depicted in *Breslaughter* or fortresses, towers, domes, hills, chains etc. in *The Cheater*, are all representations

¹³⁸ **Ogre** (noun) \ 'ō-gər \: (1) a hideous giant of fairy tales and folklore that feeds on human beings: MONSTER; (2) a dreaded person or object. "Ogre." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, (website) Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ogre>. [Accessed 17 May. 2021].

¹³⁹ **Cadaver** (noun) \ kə-'da-vər \: a dead body, *especially*: one intended for dissection. "Cadaver." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, (website) Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cadaver>. [Accessed 17 May. 2021].

reducible to the idea of motif, whereby a corollary might be deemed as just signs. These, in the artwork, are primarily *seen*. They also can be described, obviously, by a word or a phrase, so in a last end they can be uttered and heard. Music cannot be seen¹⁴⁰ although I have projects where the same idea has been materialized in music and visual art, with songs exploring particular sensations of an idea, with particular instruments and sounds, particular structure and particular lyrics which are, in turn, visualizable, utterable and audible; meanwhile that very idea has at the same time a counterpart (not an illustration or complementary image but a *counterpart*) in visual media.¹⁴¹ These visible signs are semiotic signs. Lyrics and words are linguistic signs. One fundamental characteristic of my visual art is the inclusion of linguistic signs and the co-existence with (quite predictably) semiotic signs. So, when I speak of a *display of signs* I am referring to these types of semiotic and linguistic signs all together. In other words, what I mean is that my prints and paintings accommodate words and images all in one package. Motifs like a bird or a skull inhabit the same compositional space with words and phrases. But I stress the nature of all these elements –signs.¹⁴²

Signs are constituted by a signifier, the external appearance or form, and signified, the meaning or concept.¹⁴³ Signification is the chief procedure and principal activity of language,¹⁴⁴ creating meaning and transferring concepts, crucial for communication. Signs in language are heavily reliant on conventions, “*a collective contract which one must accept in its entirety if one wishes to communicate*”.¹⁴⁵

Semiotics signs on the contrary are superficially subject to conventions, disabled to efficaciously establish meaning. The word face is instantly understood by any English speaker; the image (e.g. a photograph) of a face is assimilated but the meaning is unstable. Is it a particular person, a relative, a celebrity or just a face? A woman, a man? And so forth. Likewise, non-English speakers would encounter just the same series of uncertainties over the photo, but not in the word face for they would not understand its meaning and further scan of its appearance was probably unlikely to occur. Inversely, eyes, nose, ears, hair etc. begin to pop from the photograph which in turn prompt new concepts and meanings, whereas the linguistic word face does not spark much attention beyond the F, the A, C and E.

¹⁴⁰ Technically speaking, the wave forms of sound can be seen but that opens a window to another discussion out of our scope.

¹⁴¹ See project n° 3 *Foundation of Cheops Aeons Before Civilization* in Descriptions of Selected Artwork chapter.

¹⁴² “(...) *when we confront works of art, we enter the field of the sign and of semiosis.*” M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 184.

¹⁴³ “*The distinction between signifier and signified has sometimes been equated to the familiar dualism of ‘form and content’.* Within such a framework the signifier is seen as the form of the sign and the signified as the content.” D. Chandler, *Signs* entry.

¹⁴⁴ “*Language is the semiotic system per excellence; it cannot but signify, and exist only through signification.*” Claude Lévi-Strauss {cited by} D. Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners* entry.

¹⁴⁵ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, Hill and Wang, NY, USA (1968), p. 3.

This happens because the face picture is the form, the signifier of a semiotic sign whose structural elements are also signs in themselves (eyes, mouth etc.) who compete with each other, whereas the integral signs of a linguistic sign like face (the letters, f, a, c, e) are combinative. Henceforth, they pull attention toward the warranted unity, namely, the signified, the meaning; but semiotic signs, unable to attain consensus around it due to its cavorting conduct (in contrast to the waltz in linguistic sign) gather certain warranted unity at the outer form, thus provoking the opacity of the sign. It is conventionality that provides transparency to signs, naturalizing them. We access to the meaning without noticing we have trespassed the threshold of the external form; *face* or **FACE** almost make no difference unless we are determined to scrutinize the appearance.

Not depending primarily on the signifying agent, the signifier or external form is more noticeable in semiotic signs, being perceived by the human sensorial apparatus in a divergent procedure other than the rationale of linguistic signs. Claude Lévi-Strauss speaks of the unconscious symbolical function of forms, not of contents.¹⁴⁶ Art appeals to feelings and emotions, to intuition and senses but its images and visual contents are not as reliable as language to transmit concrete contents. Thus, when there is a transmediation or intermediation, that is, two or more mediums operating together, like words, sound, music plus images in films or text and image in posters or illustrated books, there is a presumption to take linguistic signs as vehicles of the meaning whereas semiotic signs function as subordinated images to complement the message conveyed in words.

*Where there is a visual substance, (...), the meaning is confirmed by being duplicated in a linguistic message (which happens in the case of the cinema, advertising, comic strips, press photography, etc.) so that at least a part of the iconic message is, in terms of structural relationship, either redundant or taken up by the linguistic system*¹⁴⁷

I have observed that since my artwork contains very often signs of both disciplines (and everything in between like symbols, numbers or other categories of signs¹⁴⁸) it is taken for granted that those words have a function and need to be read in order to catch the imagery. It is fine, as I said earlier any interpretation is valid. But it is too simplistic and not my intention at all.

¹⁴⁶ {According to} R. Barthes, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ R. Barthes, p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ Along with the Peircean symbol, the icon and the index but also e.g. monograms or alphabets (albeit these are included somewhere in the very classification by Charles Peirce). M. Bal & N. Bryson, pp. 188-191. See also: D. Chandler, *Signs* entry.

Now let us consider the following sentence:

(1) A number of successive modifications may lead to fulfil desired vocal intonations.

Consider the next:

(2) A chain of changes can charge chased chants.

A priori, we account a couple of regular sentences with a common denominator in both. The meaning is undoubtedly similar, they roughly convey an idea; certain adjustments to apply in a supposed canticle would probably improve its output. But what is identical is actually that both are semantical and grammatically ordinary, normally constructed sentences using words in English language. However, in (1) we did not notice anything in the words themselves while in (2) something about them obstructed regular flow and access to signification. (1) is transparent, and we read through it engaging right away with its meaning, not bothered at all with e.g. repetitions of « c » and « s » in *successive* or the symmetry of the double triad « f » + « vowel » + « l » in *fulfil*. Barthes gives an account on how languages organize; "(...) the link between signifier and signified is contractual in its principle, but that this contract is collective, inscribed in a long temporality, and that consequently it is, as it were, naturalised."¹⁴⁹

In the last 30 years a novel field of inquiry has emerged, so-called *intermedial studies*. Sequel of Post-structuralism and preoccupied with technology and new media, discusses any medium, anything that mediates. Currently self-proclaimed to be in a postmediatic age, it goes beyond the technological intermediatic debate and deeply immerses in philosophical terrains that include art and language, where intermedial phenomena are said to date back for tens of millennia, with arts as the oldest media and the invention of the alphabet.¹⁵⁰ In their book *Media Do Not Exist* (2019), Jean-Marc Larrue and Marcello Vitali-Rosati speak of technology becoming a naturalized medium after social acceptance, that is, after it is conventionalised. Like language, which is likewise mediated by words, by the signs of the alphabet. "*Naturalization renders the mediation transparent to the user of the medium.*"¹⁵¹ We, as daily users of the linguistic medium, experience it in sentence (1) to be completely unnoticed, transparent and naturalized. But in case (2), the unusual sequence of letter groups, repetitive string

¹⁴⁹ R. Barthes, p. 16.

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Marc Larrue, Marcello Vitali-Rosati, *Media Do Not Exist: Performativity and Mediating Conjectures*, Theory on Demand #31, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2019), p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p. 68.

and overall similitude of the form of words redirects the attention onto the signifiers, who secrete an opaque veil. As a result, the meaning recedes and steadily sets in a blurry horizon while the raw appearance of the sentence, structure of words, and disposition of letters, approximate and knock us, acknowledging the apparition and reclaiming their presence. Drawing on the art historian Philippe Junod, Larrue and Vitali-Rosati remark about transparency vs opacity and recalled it as a phenomenon occurring in art, particularly in painting, where the classic mimetic approach deemed the artifice of the paint, its materiality, attenuate. After being a dominating practice for nearly two thousand years, opacity or the foregrounding of the materials is currently displacing the former and informs modern art.

*The theme of the value of artifice as a specific characteristic of art, which was picked up by romanticism and passed on to symbolism and then Russian formalism, was present throughout the [19th] century and its development led to the theories of theatricality [...], literarity [...], pictoriality [...]*¹⁵²

Denaturalization is the procedure I implement to convert those linguistic signs introduced in my visual art into semiotic signs, so their materiality, their form is the exclusive value I operate upon. By opacifying signs I store all artistic preoccupations on the signifiers, evacuating their signifieds (concepts, meaning) and divorcing them, leaving a vacancy. What once was a pristine unnoticed screen is turned a murky grained layer, provoking a blackout behind. The *Ogrocadaver* is treated with the same remedy. As a pseudonym (the microcosmos) impedes circulation to the man beyond the façade and tangles up attention in its acoustic and visual formal properties. Then again it is an integral part of the conceptual framework of *words plus visual signs* I have developed for years (the macrocosmos). In it, the word *The Ogrocadaver* frequently appears inscribed in harmony with representation figures, geometric and organic motifs and ornaments, symbols, icons, and so on. Also in company of other words and phrases. These initially linguistic signs are subject of a denaturalization process to evacuate their meaning and reduce them to mere semiotic signs, distilled down to the plain form. All these texts suffer a procedure akin to that of the sentence (2), as well as mixing up different languages to assault the obvious meaning, employing cognates or similar looking graphemes, or even speculating with the meaning itself by aligning absurd and ambiguous connections, which also vitiate it.

This implies, as I have insisted so far, the absence of meaning. At least the lack of conscious messages in my art and for sure no intention to use my art to deliver

¹⁵² Philippe Junod {cited by} J.M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 20.

thoughts or transmit discourses. Partially, due to a particular artistic strategy driven by elusiveness and confusion. But also because the logic of this proposition pursues mere aesthetical goals of forms, annulling rational conclusions. Henceforth, the refusal to give artistic statements is as well reinforced by the logical result of the general conception I hold about my art. I just don't have opinions, thoughts or convictions worth to declare, likewise any beliefs in art for such ends. I regret a painting that *requires an explanation* because there is not such explanation, art is only a personal subjective experience for every individual. Thus, I developed my activity focused in the forms and annihilating their useless meaning. Then, all the verbiage exhausting statements, critiques, museum guides etc. is an invader text, an intruder language in a mission known as the context. I take the additive invader text and include it subjugated in the artwork (*artwork-text*) invigorating its weakened *pictorial* (sic), written-drawn side of it.¹⁵³ The rational words contiguous to the artwork are absorbed within it and converted into its image and likeness.

The usage of those strategies of denaturalization underlined above, turn out convenient to craft the illusion of image-like words surrounded by images per se; in such a logic the word *The Ogrocadaver* is perfect. It has both visual and phonic values ambiguous enough to claim its particular unique aesthetic: not intelligibly readable (for it is opaque by language admixture and cognatic descent¹⁵⁴) whilst visually quite adequately integrable. Graspable in many languages but essentially meaningless and adaptable to different alphabets while keeping its oddity for English and Spanish, languages understood pretty much everywhere.

Although meaning is a factor I marginalize, I never claimed it is liquidated. It is rather reduced to the minimum. In such sense, the suggestion of *ogre* and *cadaver*, in terms of meaning, aesthetically fit my art like a glove, yet aggregate maintains that uncanny quality. It works as a wild card, interchangeable, a variable element that spares me looking for words when I feel the composition needs text characters. For instance, in senseless clauses like *The Original Ogrocadaver* or *The Smoke of The Ogrocadaver*, perfectly fulfils its duty. While visually potent, it loosely can suggest absurd connections, strange associations of ideas that ultimately lead to narratives.

The aesthetical question is primordial -to the pseudonym as to my art in general; the Form, the Formalism, combination of the abstract idea of form as equivalent to disposition or arrangement (composition) and as the concrete perception of what is directly given to the senses (the signifier, opposite of contents¹⁵⁵).

¹⁵³ "(...) *the first attempt at writing was nothing but a simple painting.*" J. Derrida, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ *Ogre – Cadavre* in French; *Orco – Cadavere* in Italian; *Oger – Kadaver* in Dutch and German; *Ogr – Zwłoki* in Polish; few examples of the same origin in different languages that besides English and Spanish may stimulate similar and related ideas, but permeated with suggestions of specific cultural peculiarities.

¹⁵⁵ W. Tatarkiewicz, *Form in the History of Aesthetics*, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 2, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003, p. 216.

Thereafter, whatever meaning might be clipped to my artwork is out of my reach. Under the strict criteria of formal considerations, namely, the government by principles of rhythm, shape connections, colour rhymes, lines, gestures, textures, harmonies, contrasts, similarities, proximities, displacements etc., composition is devised, which by the incruited elements typically propitiates associations of ideas and narratives; a narrative only to be construed (or constructed) by the interpreter and his or her own confidential ways.

The neglect of meaning of words is complicated, its eradication impossible. Thus, e.g. *proximities* or *displacements* are traits I handle in the dimension of contents too, but secondarily. Especially these linguistic signs may carry strong fixed ideas so I deal with them aware of potential repercussions, knowing that possible meaning might be invoked and even attributed to me.

These narratives emerge spontaneously in the course of the creative process which engage and motivate me, fuelling fantasizing forces and personal interpretations of my own work in terms of meaning. Indeed, I interpret my own motifs and signs before, during and after the process, assembling the contents and the narratives on the go. I even look back at my own pieces and make totally valid brand new interpretations of them, with no substitutional prospect, adding them, without conflicts, to my former vision of the piece. This metalepsis or chronological reversal¹⁵⁶ defaces an idea of a linear order of events where I infuse a particular project unalterable ideas and concepts, when in fact it is a non-linear intertwined process.¹⁵⁷ Due to the prevalence of formal aspects of my artwork and their low significative weight, they appear to be vacant anytime waiting for meaning, where I am glad to retroactively invoke. I do not share it, because like Homer I regret *required explanations*, but certainly at a fairly intuitional level sometimes, and at a conscious level others, I do it. For instance, either during the creative process or after, I may well be granting a vague idea of *fate* to some bird figure but for whatever reason, I might later feel like it calls maybe for *fuzziness* or *angst*, bestowing it hands down.

-Portrait of a Sacred Interface

In this operative way I create the persona of The Ogrocadaver, injecting new and complementary features, improvising earlier unknown aspects to it. This is the internal function, that is, my personal, intimate, untransferable relationship with it, a separate prescription from those external deals around conceptual and philosophical questions of art. Just like Ziggy Stardust served Bowie to embody

¹⁵⁶ "Suppose one feels a pain. This causes one to look for a cause and spying, perhaps, a pin, one links and reverses the perceptual or phenomenal order, pain...pin, to produce a causal sequence, pin...pain."

Friedrich Nietzsche {cited by} M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 178.

¹⁵⁷ "Therefore, the conditions of conveying an idea participate entirely in its invention, even if it means integrating it, in reverse, into a tradition, that is, retroactively associating it with a meaning that it has perhaps not (yet) entirely had – or, in certain cases, that it did not have at all." Servanne Monjour {cited by} J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 60.

fictional bizarre beings while the public simply celebrated the rise and fall of a rock star. Like Prince's regressions to wonder about innominate ancestors of his lineage, while just releasing music under a strange title. Or Daft Punk, who felt the possession of superpowers that shook dancefloors around the world. Deep down inside we all are bound to fantasize. I have insisted on it. In contrast to conceptual and philosophical questions of art, psychological realization is paramount. Prudent artists conceive feasible triumphs, others unleash euphoric daydreams and imaginative fictions. Pseudonyms escort the endeavour. Personas are the result of sophistication, evolution and stabilization of cognomens. The word, with its creative faculty, vitalizes these processes and works the magic performed by it (the pseudonym), symbolically metamorphosing the artist into that imagined being, the persona inspiring him.

The Ogrocadaver summons in me its persona, enabling me to fantasize under its name. Persona but not a person, for The Ogrocadaver is something of a diffuse entity or unfigured being. I never conceive its birth or childhood, nothing about its biography or gender, hence the possessive adjective *its* instead of *his* or *her*. This word catapults my imagination high to open the gates of transcendence, to break seals of mythological orders or to surpass cosmic portals. Ignoring the empirical logic of terrestrial life it possesses the shapelessness of whatever necessary at a given moment of introspection. It faces taboos or fears, expatriate ideas, alienation or other issues, assuming the guilt of handling such fragile matters.

The Ogrocadaver is credited as the author of the visual artwork I create, so if a certain figure, sign or trait offends or disgusts someone, I can always blame on it. This way pseudonym can be used as a shield, yielding a protective function.

So The Ogrocadaver is a word with the ability to take any particular form in my conceptual imagination as well as other corporeal forms within the physical artwork in the guise of a wild card, surrounded by other words or other figures. But in such framework, whenever the word Ogrocadaver is literally written, that is, inside the art piece itself, it is inevitably functioning as signature too, assumed the statement *is credited as the author*. I have asserted my aversion to signature, tending to avoid its inclusion. Most times it is nothing but a conventional (in its worst sense) formula to acknowledge an economic value. In the art piece it is a parasite, a contextual intruder with strict impositions; in a painting, it will demand its site. An enclave at a lower corner is reserved for it, so such area cannot be artistically developed, must remain neutral not to bother the VIP, who has to steal the show. Sacrifices for the signature, an inscription often already ornamented, ritually posit the employment of contrasting colours, while its span egocentrically wrestles to grow incommensurate. Thus, these are compositional elements of an external element that I refuse to obligatorily include in my compositions. It impacts negatively onto the rest of the elements, figures and such, with fixed qualities. The same happens with prints. Unlike paintings or drawing, which include the signature inside, prints have a different but still equally totalitarian

conventionalism; signatures reign at the lower margins. But what if I want it with bleed –which I do? I have to guillotine these margins.

When The Ogrocadaver appears in the art piece (painting, drawing, print) paradoxically is also a signature, but acts differently. First, because it breaks all those conventionalisms by being situated anywhere, often as an exaggerate king size heading. However, notably different because of its performative function. The father of performative studies and speech act theory John Austin¹⁵⁸ introduced the idea whereby language *does* things, including written language. Signature is a form of speech, and so believes Derrida too;¹⁵⁹ the inscription works for the absent one, the author, delegating his or her tasks, among them evocative and descriptive features of the name. In the terminology of Austin performative is the counterpart of constative but like Derrida observes, all utterances are virtually performative.¹⁶⁰ In my opinion, though it is true that the notion of signature nurses the implications of authorship, it is rather constative because principally it verifies such authorship, the validation of that particular piece created by this or that author, conferring a value. The Ogrocadaver's performative function is not identical to signature as conceived by Austin or Derrida. Although it might be, as I hold, constative for its prominent attributive feature confirms my authorship as true, it performs a function due to both its compositional and wild card status, even when allegedly reduced to a form in an artwork space¹⁶¹. Compositional because by denaturalization it is reduced to a mere sign, a formal element, therefore, it performs its formal functions relating to other figures in the composition, say, colour, line etc. Likewise, a wild card can be used to supplement the absent element, but instead of recalling for the author, its situation *out of place* (from the lower margins or corners) annuls the understanding of it to be a signature, thus acquiring other values, other meanings, in the pure context of the artistic composition of the piece. Here, compositional and wild card functions are somehow overlapped.

Regarding my personal private relationship with the power of the word Ogrocadaver, and the creative faculty of language involved in historical scientific, artistic or philosophical events discussed above, speech act and performativity seem to be similar to notions described in them. In the previous chapter, part of the analysis was to see how this phenomenon was addressed in various historical times in changing circumstances, how it was either magic or inspiration, ecstasy,

¹⁵⁸ "J.L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*, a seminal text in the development of performance studies." J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 50.

¹⁵⁹ J. Culler, pp. 15-30.

¹⁶⁰ "(...) Derrida insisted on the impossibility of determining exactly which speech-acts are performed." M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 191. In his own words "(...) it can be said that a constative utterance also effectuates something and always transforms a situation." J. Derrida, p. 13.

¹⁶¹ Culler shows how also in the framework of language/linguistic, words may be opacized without denaturalizing them; *used* and *mentioned* accomplish the effect "'Boston is populous' uses the word or expression Boston while 'Boston is disyllabic' does not use the expression but mentions it." Indeed, this way Boston gains in the second instance opacity and *formal* status. Culler. p. 29.

prophecy, furore or mania, genius or poetry, art or madness. Almost each coined its term and adhered nuances to it. Psychology and art call it symbolization – “*Art is not practical but playful or compulsive. Dogs bark because they are canine, men symbolize because they are human.*”¹⁶² Semiotics call it semiosis – “*‘Semiosis’, a term (...) to designate the process by which a culture produces signs and/or attributes meanings to signs.*”¹⁶³ Linguistics calls it signification – “*The signification can be conceived as a process; it is the act which binds the signifier and the signified, an act whose product is the sign.*”¹⁶⁴ In debt with these latter disciplines and Austin’s theory, it is called *performativity* by intermedial studies – “*(...) according to the performative paradigm, writing must be considered as an act producing the real. (...) not a case of representing a reality, but of constructing it.*”¹⁶⁵

Literature and poetry use words. Art uses objects; white marble or oil on canvas are the medium of artist’s thought. Postmediatic intermedial studies regard *mediation* preponderant over *media* (medium) because the former implies an action, not just an in-between agency, which defines the two poles involved, that is, the creator and the receiver. The creator then (the artist) produces that which is mediating, namely, the art piece event; the receiver in turn also acts *creating* it by interpretation – “*meaning is not ‘transmitted’ to us; we actively create it.*”¹⁶⁶ The key factor is called action. The artwork’s composition is made of signs, but the artwork itself is a sign of a greater structure which is subject to semiotic rules. Therein movement is capital too;

meaning arose exactly from the movement from one sign or signifier to the next, in a ‘perpetuum mobile’ where there could be found neither a starting point for semiosis, nor a concluding moment in which semiosis terminated and the meanings of sign fully ‘arrived’ ¹⁶⁷

Performativity, force of mediation, is a property of action, an undetermined moment, the crucial interval, “*what happens in the moment: it is the creative instant of action*”¹⁶⁸ but is as well perpetual. Umberto Eco spoke of *unlimited semiosis* that potentially creates *ad infinitum*.¹⁶⁹ Bal and Bryson argue that “*when*

¹⁶² N. Goodman, p. 257. See also page 4: “*What I am considering here is pictorial representation, or depiction, and the comparable representation that may occur in other arts. Natural objects may represent in the same way: witness the man in the moon and the sheep-dog in the clouds. Some writers use ‘representation’ as the general term for all varieties of what I call symbolization or reference.*”

¹⁶³ D. Chandler, *Semiotic for Beginners* entry.

¹⁶⁴ R. Barthes, p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 86.

¹⁶⁶ D. Chandler, *Semiotics for Beginners* entry.

¹⁶⁷ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 177.

¹⁶⁸ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 51.

¹⁶⁹ {According to} D. Chandler, *Signs* entry.

we confront works of art, we enter the field of sign and semiosis, of potentially infinite regressions and expansions."¹⁷⁰

Thought and language also conform a similar binary system of that of the sign, indivisible in the saussurean sense of *recto* and *verso*, the two sides of a paper sheet, although not necessarily confrontational.¹⁷¹ They would correspond to signified and signifier respectively, and likewise correspond to additional terms and concepts employed in semiotic studies, such as thought as *code*, language as *message*; thought as *structure*, language as *event*; or thought as *system*, language as *usage*.

Closely related in the mind, thought and language influence each other, thought produces language but language determines a lot our thought.¹⁷² It is a symbiosis, like the web of a spider which is produced by the movement of the spider but it marches determined by the architecture of the web. Thought and language thus oscillate and occur together, and the biological creativity between the two, or better said, within the two, stems signs and words, in a sequence analogous to semiosis, signification and symbolization, equivalent of the intermedial notion *performativity*. Utterances are performative when they 'do' an action,¹⁷³ they create things by that fugacious act, incessantly, contributing to the construct of the continuum of reality postulated by social semiotics – "*truth is a construct of semiosis*"¹⁷⁴ and recently by postmediatic intermedial theories.

For the latter, the endless exhale of meaning, the eternal creation that ultimately defines the binary system (creator and user) occupies neither a locus nor a non-locus, but some *undecided zone*.¹⁷⁵ Some forty years before, Edmund Leach, in his analysis of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, postulates similar conclusions and calls it the *sacred zone*, which takes us back to the old terminological debate;

In any binary pair of the type 'A' / 'not-A', the boundary layer which is neither the one nor the other but both at once, 'both A and not-A', is especially 'interesting' because it is 'repressed'. This is where the theory of structuralism ties not only with psychoanalysis but also with anthropological theories about magic and primitive religion. The boundary,

¹⁷⁰ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 184.

¹⁷¹ "*In any opposition – writing/speech, language/thought, culture/nature, expression/content – one term is hierarchically superior to the other because it is nearer to present reality.*" Raymond Monelle, *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music*, Contemporary Music Studies, Vol. 5, Harwood Academic Publisher, Chur, Switzerland, 1992, p. 306.

¹⁷² "*It is normal to say that the sign is a sign of the thought, but equally, the thought is a sign of the sign.*" Ibid. p. 305.

¹⁷³ J. Austin {according to} J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 50.

¹⁷⁴ G. Krees and T. Van Leeuwen {cited by} D. Chandler, *Modality and Representation* entry.

¹⁷⁵ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 51.

*the interface layer which separates categories of time and space, is the zone of the sacred, the forbidden, that which is taboo; God when seen from one side of the fence, Sin when seen from the other*¹⁷⁶

It is haunting to see similarities of modern theories with older ones, needless to say the interconnection of fields of study. It looks like we are talking about the same thing (art) watched from different points of the fence (science), but also madness, maybe religion. It is evident that contemporary theoreticians like Larrue and Vitali-Rosati are heavily influenced by these ideas, eager to update challenging matters that are insufficiently explained, like e.g. the escalation of technology. Leach talks about interface pretty much in the same vein the authors of *Media Do Not Exist* do it,¹⁷⁷ even though in his times computers barely existed. Moreover, Larrue and Vitali-Rosati actively use postulates of Aristotle or Plato, with terms like *exaiphnes* that approximate the notion of interface, as the *instant*, the "*inter-space where opposites coexist*."¹⁷⁸ Leach, for his part, ties magic and primitive religion with that fugacious acquisition of meaning, semiosis. If we look into occult sciences, where such terms as magic and primitive religion could comfortably nestle, we can see analogous queries;

*The equivalent in man of the demiurgic, world-creating urge of the outer stars is the creative capacity of the imagination, which Paracelsus calls 'the inner star'. Imagination is not to be confused with fantasy. The former is seen as a solar, structuring force aimed at the eida, the paradigmatic forms in the 'real world', the latter as a lunatic delusion related to the eidola, the shadowy likenesses of the 'apparent world'*¹⁷⁹

This extract from *Alchemy & Mysticism* (Alexander Roob, 2001) encapsulates many terms and ideas discussed so far, an eerie sensation given the current heretic consideration of such notions. First off, it discusses ideas of Paracelsus who is regarded as one of the most important ancestors of modern medicine and who is credited to be the first medic (former terms *alchemist/astrologer*) who clearly described in 1646 a case of syndrome of alternate personalities, discussed in precedent chapters.¹⁸⁰ It establishes a binary system (imagination vs fantasy) which very much resembles thought and language. Imagination (which implies images) is aligned, according to the quotation, with concepts such as *structuring force* and *paradigmatic forms*. It would be, it seems, equivalent to thought and,

¹⁷⁶ Edmund Leach {cited by} M. Bal & N. Bryson.

¹⁷⁷ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, *Interface* section pp. 39-40.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 33.

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Roob, *Alchemy & Mysticism*, Taschen, Koln, Germany, 2001, p. 20.

¹⁸⁰ Carol S. North, pp. 497-498.

therefore, sharing concepts described earlier as *signified*, *structure*, *system* or *code*. Certainly the parallelism is patent. For a moment we should keep in mind that terms come and go, that at the time in 1646 that mental disorder case was referred as *hysteria*, terminologically different but phenomenologically identical to contemporary cases.¹⁸¹

Then, imagination's counterpart is fantasy and, if this analysis is correct, should correspond to *signifier*, *message*, *event*, and *usage*. Well, the signifier is broadly considered the perceived forms of the physical world,¹⁸² so at least in this respect it does fit. Since it is equalled to language, message also fits. Only event and usage are problematic. Yet not so distant to action and performativity. Then fantasy is even believed to be a *lunatic delusion*, whereby the context of the paragraph lunatic is all the more related to the moon but timely, and calculatedly, linked to delusion and eidola. It is striking the *inner star*, *creative capacity of imagination*, which sounds like Chomsky's creative capacity of the universal grammar of the language faculty, albeit it comes reversed, for imagination is equivalent to thought and not language.¹⁸³ However, it appears to be rather a matter of a better tracking or adjustment of the general conceptualization,¹⁸⁴ comparable to a number of modern postulates of structuralism-poststructuralism, semiotics, language theory or postmediatic intermedial studies. As we have seen, the later rescues by the hand of Larrue and Vitali-Rosati old terms and ideas from Plato, whose *shadow* is also cast upon the citation. For Paracelsus the Demiurge is the *world-creator* but mysticism (or philosophy) considered it in different periods as *artist* or *craftsman*¹⁸⁵ and Plato as a *poet*,¹⁸⁶ in his creation myth Dialogue of Timaeus. The figure of the *inner alchemist* was symbol of such urge, like Paracelsus put it, for what man thinks "*is what he is, and a thing is as he thinks it.*"¹⁸⁷ While Larrue and Vitali-Rosati remark some four centuries later that "As Austin

¹⁸¹ "The current classification of these disorders has evolved over centuries from common historical roots in a syndrome previously known as hysteria that has been linked in some periods with spiritual maladies." Ibid.

¹⁸² "The signifier is now commonly interpreted as the material (or physical) form of the sign - it is something which can be seen, heard, touched, smelt and tasted." D. Chandler, *Signs* entry.

¹⁸³ "The 'imaginatio' is to be understood here as the real and literal power to create images ('*Einbildungskraft*' = imagination) - the classical use of the word in contrast to 'phantasia', which means a mere 'conceit' in the sense of insubstantial thought. In the '*Satyricon*' this connotation is more pointed still: 'phantasia' means something ridiculous. 'Imaginatio' is the active evocation of (inner) images '*secundum naturam*', an authentic feat of thought or ideation, which does not spin aimless and groundless fantasies 'into the blue' - does not, that is to say, just play with its objects, but tries to grasp the inner facts and portray them in images true to their nature." C. Jung, para. 219.

¹⁸⁴ Perhaps the best example of the instability of content, the manifestation of their mobilism. Nonetheless, somehow fits Foucault's notion of 'rediscovery', "*the effects of analogy or isomorphism with current forms of knowledge that allow the perception of forgotten or obscured figures.*" Foucault's instance to illustrate it is, precisely, the case of Chomsky in his book of Cartesian Linguistics (1966), who *rediscovered* a form of knowledge (generative grammar, universality, thought-language structure) that "*had been in use from Cordemoy to Humbolt.*" M. Foucault, p. 134.

¹⁸⁵ A. Roob, p. 18.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 20.

*demonstrated, language does more than convey messages; it 'does' things in the world and, in a way, creates reality."*¹⁸⁸

In this respect, the ideas of motion, incessant semiosis and perpetual mediation postulated by semioticians and intermedial theorists are also conceived and expressed in preceding times. Albrecht Dürer rather sceptically but eloquently observed that

*If someone really possessed these inner ideas of which Plato speaks, then he could draw his whole life from them and create artwork after artwork without ever reaching an end*¹⁸⁹

Well thought out, this is what it is. One never ceases to create content, ideas, words and the artist really can go indefinitely onto producing brand new artwork. With respect to it, the champion premise/term in *Media Do Not Exist* is the slippery and complex *mediating conjunctures*, around which arguments are structured. Roughly put, it is the irremediable succession of creative dynamics incessantly redefining both creator and user, for mediating conjunctures are simultaneously both, the context and the outcome of the actions of the elements involved, affecting each other to emanate a plural reality. Simplified, the mediating creative instant which unremittingly defines two interdependent poles.

Again, what persists is the awe before the similitude with old notions and in some cases even the actual terms. These are the mystical, occultist views of an antiquated cognizance, the cursed antagonist of sciences, solemnly condemned to wander its gravel margins;

*There was no strict division between the organic and inorganic study of matter (...) all life lay in the movement resulted between the two polar forces, love and conflict. In the 'Opus Magnum' (...) the climax is the moment of 'conjunction', the conjunction of the male and female principle in the marriage of heaven and earth (...). The interpenetration of the two results in diverse reverberations of individual events, all of which, taken as a whole, (...) occur in a state of relative simultaneity*¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 67

¹⁸⁹ A. Roob, p. 20.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 23; 25.

What we are discussing here is the terminological aberration, the dance macabre of names, fluctuation of words that endorse legitimacy to ideas current at their time, and how we situate our position to understand them, whether at this side of the fence where God illuminates us (science, art, philosophy) or at the other side, where the sinful damnation represses us (magic, superstition, madness).

The multi-layered structures of poems by William Blake or the formulation of Newton's physical laws, both illustrious mystical and alchemical figures, were founded against the prevailing idea of a simple location of events in the absolutes of linear time and space.¹⁹¹ The visual facet of language, writing, imposes a string to follow, whether a left to right/right to left horizontal line of western and Arabic scripts, whether the Asian vertically oriented calligraphy lines. In the field of visual art this can be a tendency but never a constraint. The mathematical model is different to that of natural languages; indeed, thought is not expressed in a string line. The mathematical subject has a starting point whence its field of expression derives in constellations and ramifications, occupying the space ubiquitously.¹⁹² Then again, fundamental rhetorical tropes of language operate in two axis: the horizontal of metonymy, where words are linked by adjacency (like a melody in music), and the vertical substitution of one element for another by metaphor (like harmony).¹⁹³

The Ogrocadaver was conceived to facilitate and catalyse fantasies; mutually affected, these fantasies enrich my artistic activity of reflection, introspection and acquisition of knowledge, inhabiting a mental network where those preoccupations and mysteries do not teleologically merge down a linear finality. Instead they cyclically recede and advance influencing each other, elaborating constant subjects, renaming resident topics, producing advents or recalling confined motifs, all resulting in periodical reconceptualizations of the Ogrocadaver itself. The guiding star of my artistic activity created it while at the same time it creates, inspires, imagines my visual art, inducing that activity (although calling it visual art is an arbitrary segmentation, product of a conscious devise of what is, in fact, a seamless artistic activity embracing both the visual and the musical). In some state of mind or plane of reality, I create The Ogrocadaver and the Ogrocadaver, symbolically, creates me, contributes to shape what I am, for in the long run the artistic activity stimulates and transforms. Thus, the transmuting power of the word should not be underestimated; insight and introspection, yet retrospection and hindsight, even sublimation, conjuration or mirage are also owned signifieds of *Ogrocadaver*, while its signifier, in an erratic association of ideas, is to be conjectured the catachresis of *Abracadabra*.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 25-26.

¹⁹² "The extent of the gap between the recording of scientific concepts and the fixing of purely verbal speech can be appreciated when one considers the fact that mathematical, chemical, and other formulas have departed from the linear basis of left-to-right-reading text records and make free use of all directions of the writing surface for their expression." Adrian Frutiger, *Signs and Symbols: Their Design and Meaning*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY, USA, 1989, p. 222.

¹⁹³ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 183.

-Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf

To segment this pseudonym from The Ogrocadaver is to fracture a continuum. It is essentially pointless to the fulfilment of aesthetical objectives, purports the confusing program. The Ogrocadaver was conceived around twenty years ago, evolving to what it nowadays is. In the early days it was just a sporadic pseudonym to cover my artistic activity. In 2012 Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf appeared spontaneously, as a partition from the main pseudonym. It aimed at nothing; it was just a name. Soon after, I started to machinate the confusing program as the name began to suggest dream-like fantasies. The Ogrocadaver had the right sonority and so had the recent cognomen. It was visually potent, so these formal properties little by little invoked visions of a persona; the partition struck the apparition. A second advent.

It helped to shape both pseudonyms and inaugurated the confusing strategy as it runs today. I segregated visual art and music, assigning a medium to a pseudonym, establishing the fundamentals of fragmentation. Medium and authorship acquired a new unforeseen dimension, while the idea of elusiveness started to materialize. Following my suspiciousness around descriptions and explanations of my art, I intensified concealment identifying and increasingly delimiting context, to sabotage it. In the wake of a yearlong grant for a project,¹⁹⁴ I settled the basic cornerstones for the confusing program whilst taking a leap toward art purism and formalism. The project was a huge and complex linocut titled *Victor the Victim (Pict. 1, p. 123)*, with the ghost of the Ogrocadaver hovering it (at the time I still used my name). By the end of the grant, a catalogue with all participants was going to be released complementing an exhibition, as is custom. Its purpose was, not surprisingly, to contextualize each artist. In my crusade against impurity, I sought slaying the context, but the question was how. Pseudonym or nickname practice is somehow accepted but institutions mistrust certain movements. I met the director and explained him it was not my intention to infringe a nihilistic or gratuitous assail against the institution nor the procedures, but a conventional context was not possible to be applied to my proposition. He understood I was not biting the feeding hand and got partial permission to avoid the model. Classic; every entry displayed pictures of projects realized in the Centre accompanied by the name, biography and descriptions/statements. In this case, the text was split in three columns corresponding to translations in Basque, Spanish and English languages.

My take was to confiscate that space and make an extension of the artwork in there, breaking the conventional text/context unity draining the context and leaving a text/text (artwork/artwork) formula. In essence, the artwork dealt with signs, language, communication and art. It was a series of two variations of a linocut piece hanging face to face, displaying different categories of signs,

¹⁹⁴ Fundación Bilbaoarte, *Collaboration* grant as assistant of the Etching & Screen-printing studio + realization of projects; Bilbao, Basque Country, Spain, 2012.

questioning the realms of what is visual and what linguistic; the composition contained, from a realistic portrait of an actor to a stylized portrait of a mythological figure, all the way through signs like crosses (+), swastikas and alchemy symbols (⚗), as well as letters, words, alphabets (Latin and Cyrillic) and languages, producing a narrative –like all my projects do. The idea of having a catalogue with three different columns in three different languages to convey just one single thing (a fabricated context) was a bridge to link questions anticipated in the artwork, especially thanks to correlate linguistic forms within it. I disfigured each column with a completely different story in each, apparently with no connection at all. The fact that the three columns shared a page of a catalogue, having three unrelated tales in three languages, not translated, probably made it very confusing to the users, basically because it is expected that a catalogue makes it easier to understand it. But underneath there were tight connections. Each tale contained key words or ideas existing in the linocut, making potential associations possible, expanding the narrative and further developing some of the issues in question; for instance, the notions of authenticity and counterfeit.

That page in the catalogue was supposed to reveal some truth about the artwork and the author. Instead of revelations regarding the artwork, the user would find clearly fictitious tales, absurd at first sight. The deal with the director forced me to include a short bio. Anyway, the effect was achieved, I was not concealing identity yet. The main artwork depicted two portraits. One, the kraken, a fantastical figure of Greek mythology but portrayed after a famous incarnation in the silver screen, Ray Harryhausen's kraken in *Clash of the Titans* (1981). In other words, a clay figure, a false life who was *alive* thanks to the illusion of slow motion. Similarly, the second portrait followed the same string. Portrait of an actor, Boris Karloff, it interrogates about the jurisdiction of portraits.¹⁹⁵ Was it him or a character? Above the depiction, a clause read: *Victor the Victim*, also title of the piece, with the word Victor fitting the area of his portrait (Victim expands covering the area of the Kraken's portrait). Karloff made his most celebrated rendition turning into a star and horror icon in *Frankenstein* (1931), playing the role of the Monster who is rendered the victim of the story, instead of victimizer. Its creator was the scientist named Victor Frankenstein. These elements are thrown in a way to make associations of ideas and come up with narratives. Now, at the foot of his portrait, it is written *BHKTOP*, which reads *Victor* in Cyrillic.¹⁹⁶ The name is concealed to whoever does not understand Cyrillic but then, the name is false according to the person in the portrait for his name was Boris, not Victor. It knits

¹⁹⁵ Karloff's portrait was kind of realistic whereas the kraken's was heavily stylized with e.g. a thick contouring stroke or a strict symmetry, to emerge an evident tension between the two and signal, as Barthes and Goodman considered, that "*realism is entirely conventionalized.*" M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 195.

¹⁹⁶ The point is that those particular Cyrillic characters are likewise Latin characters, therefore susceptible to be assimilated without knowledge of that alphabet, after all Victor is not a Russian name but of Latin origin –however within this framework BHKTOP does not make any sense. It is made clear that characters are supposedly Cyrillic because they are in a sequence next to ЖЕПТВА –*victim* in Russian- which also have all the characters shared with the Latin alphabet, except for the first, giving the clue of being more than just a nonsensical disposition of Latin letters.

associations with the Slavic flavour of the name Boris Karloff, who in fact was an Englishman called *William Henry Pratt* and had nothing to do with Eastern European countries. Indeed, it was a stage name, a pseudonym.

The Spanish column in the catalogue related the biography of Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf, henceforth, unlike the Ogrocadaver, persona fully developed in the sense of *person*, a human. Obviously, the biography is completely false and fantastical, and the kinship with questions in the artwork is thus self-evident. There, big letters read: *The Original Ogrocadaver*, unfolding paradoxes about the artist, authorship and his names, about frauds and about what names (and words/signs in general) mean. The Ogrocadaver was supposed to be a moniker signalling me, but those portraits were not of me. In any case, to master a hypothetical total meaning of this particular piece one would need to know who I am, what the Ogrocadaver is, who is Boris Karloff and who is Harryhausen's kraken, who is Ray Harrihausen, what is a Kraken in Greek mythology, but then again, who is Victor 'the victim', and yet understand Russian, Latin, Spanish and English (at least) and be familiar with Latin and Cyrillic alphabets and a series of alchemy symbols -to notice that in fact I faked some of the symbols. Too many things to be able to interpret what is going on in this artwork. Thus, it makes no sense whatsoever to try to explain all these things in catalogues or descriptions, it is easier to leave all those elements free in the compositions, preoccupied with their external appearance, the purely aesthetic. This awareness of interpretation depending on too many factors to be acceptably understandable, pushed me to neglect the context entirely. It was capital to elaborate the most adequate set of descriptions, keywords and explanations to *contextualize* and have the viewers at best interested, at worst still completely ignoring my work in an overpopulated competing art world. Yet, one never would be able to circumscribe the scope of context since it always can be optimally extended.¹⁹⁷ And last but not least, a nasty feeling of paraphrasing myself, for what is told in the artwork is already told.

Nevertheless, my concern with the catalogue and the director was to make sure it wasn't faking it for the sake of faking it, a subtle cynical prospect. It was a fair conception of context and an attempt to artistically neutralize it, to spread the art piece as a result, drawing the focus onto it. To signal the questionable essence of context, both its falsifiable nature and its superfluous retrofit to the art piece, I had to somehow transform it in part of the piece, so that it was not a banner but an elongation. Those three tales tried, subject to my limitations as writer apprentice, to poetically express something else already floating in the art piece. The Basque tale isolated some sort of casual film scene, out of nowhere, of a helpless exodus. The English one, a vague episode of a passing delusion, contained some words already in the art piece and a third art piece, a screen print titled *German Butchery*, alongside lyrics of songs I released in succeeding years.

¹⁹⁷ "Any given context is always open to further description." J. Culler, p. 24.

My entry in the catalogue was thus a palimpsest, with a self-referential intertextual function.¹⁹⁸

The most important column was the Spanish one because it would reach more people. It played the role of intertextuality, as I said, connecting the linocut with the watered down context, endowing it a *textual* property to perform, but it aimed to make patent the false biography of the author, suggesting the debatable function of context. However, the internal, intimate operation of fantasizing was truly firing on all cylinders. The fake biography told:

'Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf, son of Alfons Leopold Ernst von Caliguratu the *Chthonic*. Born on a full moon in the seventh day of the seventh month of the year 1397 under the sign of Orion, at the northwest chamber of the family household at the feet of the bordering mountains of the kingdom of Odravia and Erlovagian lands, guarded by the heir of Caliguro dynasty, owner to the throne of Erlovaguro. Distinguished as a knight of honour, rode in the liberation of southern regions, annexing them to Erlovaguro, alongside the heiress of Zoria County, who was told possessed magic skills. In matrimony they spread the frontiers of the kingdom beyond Saxe uplands, south the hills of the Ogrocadaver. Led the marches known as Estatoics for the preservation of the three consecrated temples of Ophiuchus, constructed in times of Fritz Rotulo IV *the Sage*, at the sacred enclave of Zoria; devised and renovated civil and religious architectures after success preserving above mentioned temples (lasting specimens of organic architecture erected with timber from the woods of the Siamese wolf). Connoisseur of alchemy and music, was regarded as an excellent bard in Urd dialect, kindred to High Erlogavian. It was due to him that we keep three illuminated codices with relates on the *Exodus of Uberia*, the *Three Estatoic Marches of the Three Temples*, *Funeral Rites at the Aftermaths of the Wurddaxburg Plague* and the *Magpie of Zoria*, among others, written over two nights.'

We can see how the Ogrocadaver is here functioning as a wild card, for in such context has nothing to do with a personage nor an entity. It is just a toponymic, a place name. The most notable marks are that it did not pretend to be a real but instead a complete fake biography, whoever that Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf was, neutralizing the context in the catalogue and pulling threads to the artwork with direct citation and other connections with the columns in Basque and Spanish, which in turn were, as mentioned, intertextually tied to the linocut print.

¹⁹⁸ "Intertextuality (...) a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts." G. Genett, p. 2.

A second mark is that it is the best example of the fantasizing property of a pseudonym. I created the name ex nihilo and it suggested the rest. The word or name created a pipe dream, it settled, evolved and became a persona, fully developed but yet in a most differentiated way compared to the Ogrocadaver elaboration. It is a fictitious person but possible to be figured in flesh, living a fictitious territory, speaking inexistent languages in a remote but plausible historical epoch. Again, unlike its fellow pseudonym, Karl-Heinz owns a face. On the one hand, my real identity has been supplanted by it because in promotional pictures in support to published music I pose under the pseudonym, and in album physical releases I have been portrayed as him in the interior package artwork. It does not mean I disguised as some medieval Teutonic warlord, I just posed as myself. On the other hand, I usurped the image of Franz Liszt to represent this persona. It must be stressed that initially I did not assign my music activity to Karl-Heinz, I was active playing live with a band called Motorgrado with additional characterizations. Also on my own but without live performances, a time during which Karl-Heinz's image was represented by the Hungarian maestro. His choice was incidental, his physical look simply fitted that kind of medieval knight in my imagination. As a matter of fact I was unaware of who Liszt was. It was a happy accident to find out he was a classic musician, a virtuoso and a superstar in his lifetime. So I used him as a model to some of my artwork realized as the Ogrocadaver but figuring a new persona, till it permanently lasted.

As a curiosity, and also as a hint of my way of working, underscore that *Alfons Leopold Ernst von Caliguratu the Chthonic* is a mix of *Caligari* –from the silent film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920)-, *Caligula* –the Roman despot- and *Nosferatu* – another silent film of the era (1920), while chthonic¹⁹⁹ means infernal but also underground, the latter a metaphor of how I tie connections of words, symbols and other type of signs. It is a potential persona, same as *Fritz Rotulo IV the Sage*. Now, Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf is a brand type pseudonym. It does not conceal my identity and it is the author who signs my music. Issues around authorship in music differ from those consideration argued in regard of the authorship of the visual art. Although the artifice around authorship as context is irremediable,²⁰⁰ the signature does not disturb the artwork neither is integral part of it, that is, the song, for it is annotated in the credits. I have legally registered the name and it is subject to copyright, a completely different story from visual art.

Coming back to the columns in the catalogue, the English version contained a handful of words later converted to lyrics in a collection of songs released in 2017, again a good example of the self-referential hypertextuality and entangled continuum of my artistic activity. That context in the catalogue was totally transformed as site of the text itself, without the graft *con*, legitimate zone of the artwork, for it provides a source for alternate interpretations of songs contained

¹⁹⁹ **Chthonic**: of or relating to the underworld; infernal. “Chthonic”, Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary (website), <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chthonic>> [Accessed 29 May, 2012].

²⁰⁰ “*Authorship is not given but produced.*” M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 181.

in that album, beyond the album itself. It was titled *Songs of Siamese Limits*, a project held alongside a musical partner. Since I am not a trained musician but he is, we divided tasks. He was in charge for the recording, production, accompaniment and arrangement of the music, while artistic direction was my ministry. This fact of being a duo and the partition of tasks led me to reinforce the basic tenet and one of my favourite themes to explore; the dualist Manichean nature of things. We made a long album and divided it in two. One vinyl disc was stylistically experimental, gloomy, based on electronic and synth instruments and represented by the persona of *Lord Vituperator*, adopted by my counterpart who added his own nuances to his pseudonym; this was supposed to be the evil character. In contrast, disc two was mellow, classic rock oriented, interpreted with analogical instruments such as acoustic drums and guitars. Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf represented the good character. The project was called *Lord Vituperator & Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf meet the Hexed Sons of Cosmogony*, a deliberately long and complicated name for a band. It reflects some of those preoccupations described during the dissertation. For instance, a band name usually tends to seek simplicity and attention, as a brand, so that it results catchy and easy to remember. We wanted it complicated and difficult to pronounce, as well as opaque visually, difficult to catch any sensible meaning. Likewise, many titles in the album were ridiculously long and semi-parodic.²⁰¹

There are a couple of points here for my insistence in the description of this musical release which does not belong to my doctoral inquiry. One is a reflexion around language. When we think of it we tend to think in sonic phenomena, spoken and heard word. But the visual aspect of language is paramount. Not only in the fashion I have described in the previous section, namely, in the external, formal, unsignified opaque material perceived by sight, but in the fact that words like Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf virtually exist only in the realm of the visual. In an interview I was asked how should it be pronounced and to make a demonstration, but I responded I have no idea how to pronounce it and moreover, I never had spelled it before so it turned out it was probably the first time it was spoken out loud. I might be objected that this is a matter of speaking German and that no German speaker would find any difficulty in saying it. True. But being as it is a linguistic event, it is interesting to see how it co-existed with me and had a fairly big influence in the development of my art and, consequently, my thought whilst being just a visual item, sterile in what is supposed to be the domain of a linguistic sign –the auditory.

A second reflexion is how thoughts and ideas always find their artistic way out in different substances. The opening track of the album was titled *Wooden Kiss*. However, long before it was a silkscreen identically titled, featuring a male figure wounded with arrows (much as Saint Sebastian) and a hybrid of a female and a bird, a mythological figure (*Pict. 2, p. 124*). The words *Wooden Kiss* headed the

²⁰¹ For example *The Siamese Wolf and the Magnetic Side* (a) *Prologue: Lights in Orion* (b) *The Siamese Wolf* (c) *The Diphthong in Whip-Tongue* (d) *The Magnetic Side* is the title of one single track.

print with ornamental typography, being thus, beyond the reiterated title, integral part of the artwork; a *visual* artwork including semiotic images and linguistic words, endowing the piece already with both the visual and sonic dimensions. But later it found a different expression, complementing the (let us call it) visual, in the form of song, with lyrics in English and Latin, all together with a cascade of synth harmonies and strange vocals, ordaining a more sophisticated access to what overall *Wooden Kiss* is, a totalizing audio-visual experience. Likewise, words in the English column appear in other lyrics, thus connecting eminently visual projects and their timidly developed acoustic side (like *Victor the Victim*), and with eminently acoustic projects and their mildly developed visual side (like music in *Songs of Siamese Limits*). Precisely, this is the sense of this title: my artistic activity is seamless, embracing music and visual creation. They are materialized in separate objects, but somehow all are connected like cranium fused siamese twins, metaphorically sharing one mind.

The fragmentation strategy is just an abstraction of this flowing whole called artistic activity, tabulating the visual to a pseudonym and the auditory to another as a particular means of expression contained in the confusion program. Without it, fantasizing with personages like Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf or formless entities like *The Ogrocadaver* would occur the same, only with no obsessions on tracing the right boundaries at the perimeter around them. But if the confusion program was aborted, the difference resided in a more conventional artistic proposition, maybe with more visibility and exposure and probably with context friendly artist statements and descriptions, interesting for the users (receivers, the public) for it revealed sometimes stimulating concepts in my art. But I would feel domestication, both of me and the public. In the strictest sense, user interpretation for sure would still be unique and personal, as there is no other way, but since basic clues were deciphered, they would probably turn homogenous, with little room to be creative and adventurous, which probably sparked in me nothing more than a disposable indifference, regarding my observation of the public's reactions. The confusion program seeks uncertainties, rather than the insipid banquets of clarifying explanations in symposiums, abstracts, museum guides, talks, critiques, reviews etc. which feed the salivating appetite of the perpetual contextualization.

In parallel of this three year doctoral research a new musical project is being cooked; a sequel of *Songs of Siamese Limits*. Once again it will prove the interlacing character of my art, for ideas conceived before doctoral studies found their place here, whilst the product of that *parallel* project will see the light after finalizing PhD investigation, with total guarantee of being influenced by it. After all, including visual art projects (prints) in this dissertation is a formalism that selects what is more adequate for a particular framework, just as pseudonyms do by adhering a sticker with a name.

The confusion program reached the apotheosis in the *Opus Magnum* of Songs of Siamese Limits. It was the result of a team work, a curiosity given my individualist approach, but nonetheless fruitful. Despite its flaws, the project culminated embracing all my artistic concerns in the forms of music, words and images. I had the chance throughout nearly five years to create music and sound, lyrics and words, and images and pictures, all fused and transmuted into a personal transcendental matter. The Ogrocadaver and Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf worked together elbow to elbow, simultaneously creating a chord sequence and a melody, along words or drawings reflecting a particular motivation. In private. The final product was released and segmentation occurred dictated by the program. As it were different authors, the public is offered its summit; The Ogrocadaver realized the artwork, whereas most music was written and partially interpreted by Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf. No trace of Iker Bengoetxea Arruti.

-Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz

The confusion strategy was more recently expanded with this new pseudonym. In the past I have been using some more which I do not remember or are not relevant here, appellations as graffiti painter or other musical projects, stage names in bands structured in a more traditional way. Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf, despite of being a well-developed pseudonym/persona established in the field of music and, to be precise, greatly influenced by the classic conception of rock musician, is not a stage name. I never stepped onto a stage under that name, never played live with that cognomen. I did it with a couple of stage names at various times in my life, rather spontaneous and casually, but the Lord Vituperator & Karl Heinz Jürgenwolf project is focused in the creative side of music, not in its performance. We have no plans to play live and, therefore, Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf is not a stage name.

Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz is included here because unlike some other sporadic names and diverse activities, the name is thoroughly developed (which fuels imagination) and because it is active in the confusion program. In Songs of Siamese Limits the creation of visual content was not restricted, it was fully unchained and therefore, attributable to the Ogrocadaver. Conversely, in a recent audiovisual project²⁰² I created visual content constrained by script limits and director's vision of the artistic animation. I drew a great deal of material with competence to vary formal aspects of it, but not in a way to consider them *personal* and *visual art work*. In any other circumstances I could routinely sign with my real name or even stretch the notion of The Ogrocadaver, but since I was in charge for the composition of the soundtrack with complete freedom to head any direction, it set the breeding ground to introduce the confusion program in a wider territory. It was an artistic animation project realized by two people but in the end

²⁰² *Paradise Demons*, a cooperation project with *Limitless Property*, *Culture Online*, Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, November 2020.

credits it figured as three people; Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf and Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz made already two.

So the new cognomen contributes to fasten competencies, making The Ogrocadaver specialized to fully personal visual artistic projects. Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz is thus subject to a particular activity: other less personal projects which have to do with art, for instance, team projects or other media projects with installations of conceptual propositions.

This name possesses also a descriptive trait, obscure as usual. Klemens and Benedykt are associated to Catholicism, especially after several papal names i.e. pseudonyms. Christian paraphernalia is very present in my artwork. I wanted to reflect that. Also in a positive sense; Klemens is clement, placid or gentle. Benedykt is benediction, blessed. But the later has an interesting twist. Benediction is literary the opposite of malediction i.e. curse or execration. They share the suffix *diction*, from Latin *dictum*, 'to speak', while *bene* stands for good and *male* stands for evil. Therefore, as much as malediction, Benedykt has to do with the utterance of magic word, with the cast of spells. In this regard, there is a folklore myth I heard about, where the *seventh son of a seventh son* is said to be born cursed to be the werewolf, who should be named, to combat the curse, Benedict. Likewise, it can be spelled in dozens of different languages, and Klemens too.

On the other hand, Ząbkowicz is made up after the Polish town Ząbkowice Śląskie and the addition of the patronymic suffix *wicz* (typical Slavic for *son of*) and therefore mean, *son of Ząbkowice*. However, the exonym (name of a place in another language) in German is Frankenstein –the reason why I chose *son of* instead of *from*. Technically it is not an external name, Frankenstein was the endonym (internal place name) when the territory belonged to Germany before World War I. So the binary ambivalence between internal/external is exposed, a main topic in my art, as much connecting Frankenstein to the pseudonym.²⁰³ Hence, the name has the potential to fantasize with all the links between religion, magic, mythology and classic horror movies/novels,²⁰⁴ aligned with the search of related aesthetics.

²⁰³ Clemens Franckenstein (sic) was a 20th century German composer.

²⁰⁴ The Castle of Frankenstein believed to inspire Mary Shelley's novel is located in a different German Town.

Chapter 3

INTERPRETATION | DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED ARTWORK

*The roles of artist and audience are temporally reversed, and the question of who is who and what is what remains an open one*²⁰⁵

Three years is a suitable amount of time. The following description of projects comprises pretty much *all* the projects realized during this time, where others did not or could not progress beyond germinal states. As a matter of fact, one project presented here (Drug of My Archenemy) is not completely executed. The Covid-19 pandemic situation has complicated things to unpredictable levels, having to adapt to changing circumstances and improvisations in all social orders. Half of the *suitable time* turned to be inoperative for a printmaker in need of equipment and facilities to accomplish his projects. Unfortunately the fourth project, though almost there, only includes montages with the expected result, which will be executed in coming weeks and be part of the final doctoral exhibition.

Descriptions carry questions of interpretation. As the author I am supposed to be authorized to *describe* my work and not *interpret* it. Actually, I am supposed to *know* it. From the beginning. But no artist knows it from the beginning and even less a printmaker. At the creative and executive process I was certainly the protagonist and only witness to give accounts of it, but interpretation is not something that happens at the end but rather *during* all stages of the process. That can be the main difference with the receiver, who basically interprets the artwork without the same experience, starting in a point where the art piece is, so to speak, finished. But from that inaugurating point, the *day after*, the artwork may offer equally changing interpretive reasons. If some young art history student attends an exhibition with brand new artwork and later, at the demise of the artist, such artistic production acquires a notable status and becomes object of veneration, the once-young-student senior art historian would probably make radically different interpretations of those same old art pieces he encountered in the first fresh exhibition. As author I am executioner but also interpreter, and the interpretation is analogue to the senior art historian, it progresses and varies

²⁰⁵ Tom Tashiro, *Ambiguity as Aesthetic Principle*, Dictionary of History of Ideas Vol. 1, the Gale Group, Virginia University Library, 2003, p. 56.

sometimes subtly, sometimes more drastically, but it does nevertheless. His experience and my experience were antipodal, but circumstantial. So, in terms of description I provide a fair testimony. In terms of interpretation I provide a unique vision because I was the only one attending to the progress and growth of these six projects. I describe for instance what I was thinking that particular day and how I proceed to solve this other particular problem. And I interpret ideas or approaches I traditionally worked upon; gloomy atmospheres, moribund melancholies or the presence of symbolism of death, appeared on a new fresh light, thanks to some constants encountered in readings about the *Uncanny* by Sigmund Freud or ideas about analogies between architecture and music, which provided familiar yet fresh perspectives I do not feel at odds with.

This is enabled by the flowing continuum of thought, ideas or meaning, and the counterpart materialized in language. The mobility of signs, both signifier and signified, both linguistic and graphic, the related to image, is constant; Barthes considered that non-linguistic signs especially are open to interpretation for they constituted a "*floating chain of signifieds*."²⁰⁶ Signifiers also show such a manoeuvre;

*An 'empty' or 'floating signifier' is variously defined as a signifier with a vague, highly variable, unspecifiable or non-existent signified. Such signifiers mean different things to different people: they may stand for many or even 'any' signifieds; they may mean whatever their interpreters want them to mean*²⁰⁷

Since experience, as we have seen, is one factor involved for the interpretation, we face just one alternative: to leave it entirely at the expense of the interpreter, for experience is always all the more personal and untransferable to each;

*Meaning is the result of an interpretation on the part of the receiver. (...) a grid supplied by the receiver; a philosophical, aesthetic, or cultural grid which he applies to the text*²⁰⁸

But this experience is in turn a product of interpretation of signs perceived not only in literary texts, average documents or art works we encounter every now and then, but every instant of our everyday life, where we are exposed 24/7 to all type of signals, icons and symbols. Our natural inclination to create, the result of the symbiotic force of thought and language, produces the interpretation with the mental structure projected over those perceived signs, filling in, creatively, the empty gaps and making sense out of them, a quasi-confabulating act. Oscar Wilde put it neatly: "All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath

²⁰⁶ D. Chandler {about Roland Barthes}, *Modality and Representation* entry.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Pierre Guiraud {cited by} D. Chandler, *Codes* entry.

the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril. It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors."²⁰⁹ In 17th century a work of art was regarded like an open symbol "on which the interpreter might exercise the power of his ingenuity."²¹⁰ *Ingenuity* is cognate of *genius* and *ingenuous*, who share the Proto-Indo-European root *gene*²¹¹ (to give birth, beget, produce) with the verb *generate*. The generative grammar Chomsky proposes as biologically endowed, is tightly linked to the extensively discussed genius creation and the ingenious creativity of the receiver just proposed, but even to the ingenuous, being *creativity* thus supported by the etymological analysis of this words as a universal trait. The human force of mind, the motion between the binary thought/language occurs shook by its property; action. "Everything happens in and through action; all flows from it. This (...) makes performativity the basis of the creative dynamic, for both creator and user."²¹² Creator and user benefit from it because both are at once the same, for both possess the correspondent thought and language that operate like the spider and the web, actively determining each other. I am the creator and user at the particular moment of time in the art work's progress and construction. Once terminated and sealed, the art work takes a new life where it is not materially modified, but symbolically it constantly is. The interpreter then becomes creator and user symbolically - "*the moods of the beholder that are read into the picture are 'ipso facto' valid, viewing the Mona Lisa becomes a continuous process of collaborative recreation*"²¹³- for the art piece might assume meaning, as an agent being mediated, "*only through the action of the spectator/user.*"²¹⁴

So here we adopt the term *user* to substitute receiver, viewer, beholder etc. for it captures better the involvement and action required. The interpretation of my art from the part of the user might therefore be not only valid, but right.

²⁰⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The picture of Dorian Gray*, McPherson Library, University of Victoria, 2011, p. 160.

²¹⁰ J. Bialostocki, p. 533.

²¹¹ *Ingenuous* (adj.), *Etymology Dictionary Online*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/ingenuous>, [Accessed 6 June, 2021].

²¹² J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 21.

²¹³ T. Tashiro, p. 56.

²¹⁴ J. M. Larrue & M. Vitali-Rosati, p. 21.

1) Giorgio De Chirico on the Digital Age - 2019

TECHNIQUE ~ Linocut

- 30 x 45 cm approximately, in varied paper sizes; almost bleed margins; shades of white and cream colour papers.
- 27 x 42 cm matrix size; unusual shape with three straight edges and the top edge contouring the image.
- 4 colours; 3 offset inks - yellow, vermilion, green and black, the latter two applied at the same layer.
- 20 individual copies.

PROPOSITION

A restrained experimentation was the premise. In order to obtain an outdated, old-school, trashy, pulp magazine kind of look, without imitating a typical front cover, technical solutions were sought. Printmaking and drawing papers were used, each copy printed in a different type. From higher quality Fabriano or Hahnemühle, to Canson and Academy drawing papers, as well as very low quality standard printing house papers. I wanted a simple print but departing from the typical black on white linocut. Experimenting with transparencies and opacities of inks, I printed three layers with no intermediate carving phases, principal difference with a reduction linocut. The point was not to uncover underlying incisions/colours of subsequent layers but to blend the full perimeter of the image in yellow, orange, green and black to obtain a richer plain colour, with nuances and texture. Modifying press pressure or rolling inks being selective in certain areas of the matrix, contributed to make visible colours and layers underneath. Then, mismatching registrations with offsets of differing degrees gave the image that chromatic aberration vibe, inspired from the ghost edges of vintage magazine prints but also from old TV screens and VHS debased tape footage. Finally, optimization of incisions by diversifying carving gesture and manner.

DESCRIPTION

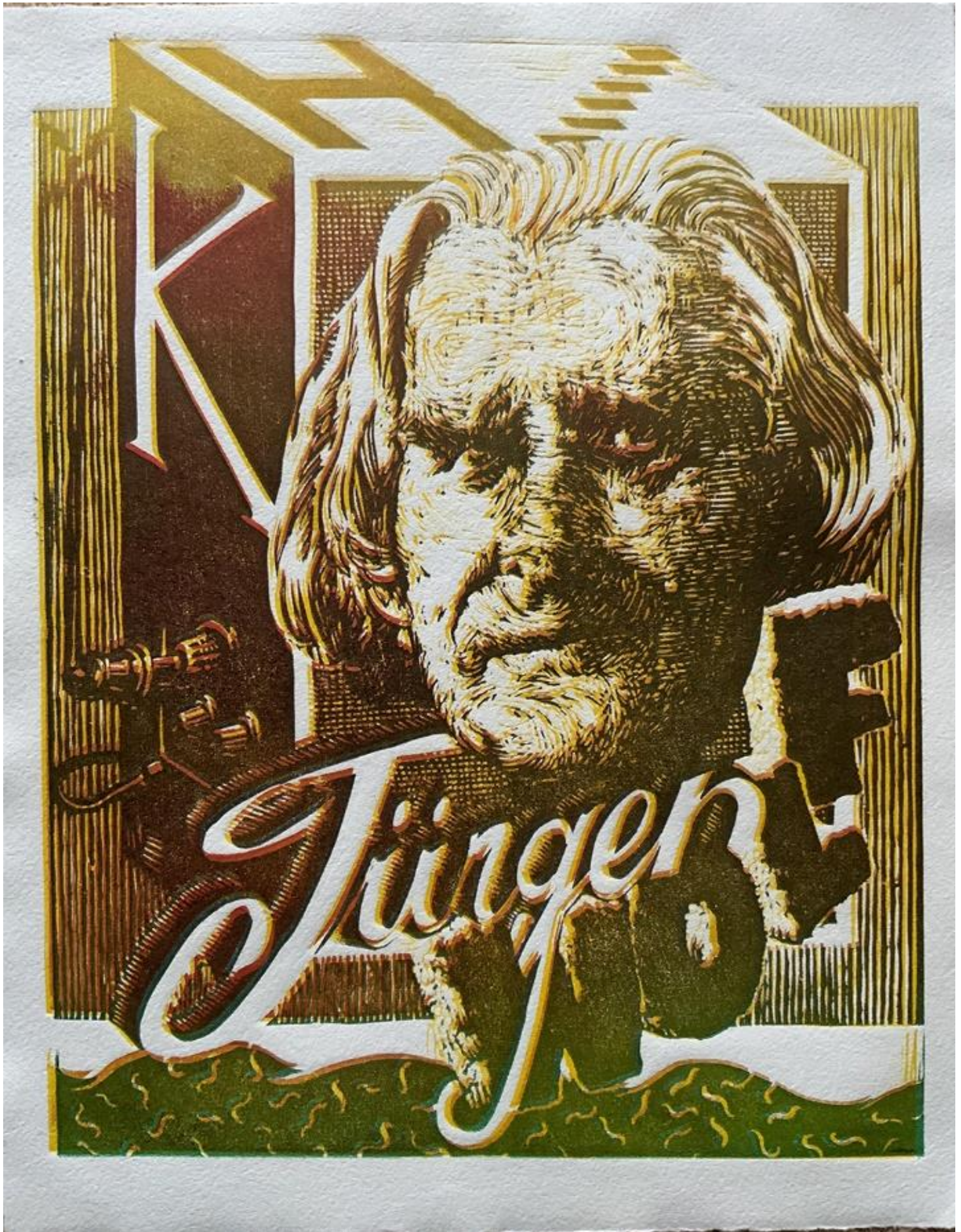
Text and image conform the composition. Three main elements float in an imagined triangle; *K* and *H* initials at the upper left side, below *Jürgenwolf* and wrapping them all in balance, a more centered portrait of Franz Liszt. Behind it another object floats, some sort of PA or undefined electronic box. Letters *K* and *H* appear somehow integrated in the shape of the box, whereas *Jürgenwolf* is prominent. There is an exploration for typography, clearly separating *Jürgen* from *Wolf*, also parted by the disposition of the words. It plays with the effect that *Jürgen Wolf*, divided, sounds like an additional male name. It suggests to be the

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name of the portrayed figure. It was carved in a very traditional way, inspired by wood engraving portraits, especially from Victorian era. The fact that linocut, although being likewise a relief technique, does not allow such intricate results, secured a raw, gross outcome. What was planned to be blank areas were also carefully carved, in order to gain expression by locally pushing the roller and inking in there bright and transparent colours. Thus, with the offset and the grainy ink-paper blend, some sense of distortion is achieved, in a metaphor connecting the rudimentary amplifier behind the head. I think the link with music is self-evident.

The title in this case is playing an important role. It is not reflecting, like in some other case discussed before, a text already included in the artwork. It is, clearly, an intruder in the sense defined; a contextual intruder, a linguistic text supporting what the image is not saying. However, it is closer to the spirit of the art piece and what it is *saying* than to a pure and simple context. First, it connects the piece to a particular artistic movement, paying it tribute (or travesty) and foregrounding a similar aroma, already existing between the ink and paper of the art piece. The sense of intertextuality is absolute, and the presence of Giorgio de Chirico is made clear by including his full name in the title. This is a second key, title and artwork summon (after Jürgenwolf and Liszt) a third person, de Chirico, and inserts him in a string line connecting Greek sculpture portraits of metaphysical painting, the artist himself, Franz Liszt, Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf, an alleged Jürgen Wolf and The Ogrocadaver, as the author. This association of ideas, by a metonymic snowball, a contiguous derivation (as Frazier noted, typical of magic) is what I usually propose when I speak of narratives in my art. One thing leads to another and possible ramifications are tossed free.

To conclude, it is worth to mention that the weight of this project was put on the technical aspect rather than the conceptual, which is thus tethered.



2) Foundation of Cheops Aeons before Civilization - 2021

TECHNIQUE ~ Linocut; Reduction Linocut

- 5 print series – 4 linocuts, 1 reduction linocut.
- 30 x 45 cm paper size; narrow margins, white Fabriano paper and orange standard drawing paper.
- 28 x 43 cm matrix size. 4 matrices.
- Black colour offset ink in 3 prints; purple and deep purple blended colour offset ink in a variant; green and deep purple colour offset inks in the reduction print.
- 25 copies – 4 positive; 5 negative; 5 regular; 2 variant; 9 reduction.

PROPOSITION

The basic premise was a technical exploration, the versatility of a relief printing technique in the most elementary and simple forms. Out of a sole image, from a single drawing it is possible, without any complexity, to obtain a variety of results, including black & white and colourful prints. Thus, the same drawing was transferred screen printed onto four linoleum matrices. One was carved in positive, leaving intact the drawing (*Pict. 3, p. 125*). A second was carved in negative, cutting out the drawing (*Pict. 4, p. 126*). A third was carved regularly, namely, approached as most linocut prints do -what in fact is a combination of positive and negative modes of representation (see project picture). A fourth print was a variant of the later, serving to exemplify how easily superficial modifications lead to gain expressiveness (*Pict. 5, 127*). A mild adjustment is enough; change the colour of the paper (white for orange) and replace the typical black ink for a blended colour (purple and deep purple) and results vary greatly. The premise seems to be obvious but the aim is to underscore that basic beginner modifications, when applied with subtle insight, warrant a wide spectrum of possibilities in terms of representation, expressiveness and aesthetic. The same is true to the reduction linocut (*Pict. 6, p. 128*), which served the same idea. It is often seen as a complex technique but the basic is extremely simple. My proposition was to stretch the results of the original drawing implementing basic technical changes; in this case a two layer reduction linocut got some degree of sophistication compared to other prints in the series, certain richness, but still in line to the cheap colour variant. Often, linocut artists begin with light colours to gradually add darker shades and build up the image. This requires some level of complexity which was out of the purposes of the proposition. I applied two dark colour layers, green first and a dark purple on top, a thin and slightly transparent layer to blend with underlying green and get a darker colour resembling the vibe

of the basic black & white prints, making it look a bit richer next to these. All, I insist, working in a territory of absolute technical simplicity.

DESCRIPTION

In spite of having a strong technical preoccupation, it is nonetheless a project of capital presence in my overall artistic imaginary. After all, as artist, technical aspects bear the same importance and deserve equal treatment.

This is the only project with bald image, excluded possible texts. Title appears then forcefully acting as a contextual force grafted to the artwork. However, again is thoroughly considered and rather than contextualizing, it acts as the intermediary bridge between the visual object and the sonic object. Indeed, Foundation of Cheops Aeons before Civilization²¹⁵ is also the title of a song I have written. The title is also external to the song, for the lyrics, still partially written, do not mention it. Song and visual art complement each other, without subordination. An illustrated book bases the elements included in the illustration on descriptions and suggestions from the written text, habitually a job of a second person. Comic books often employ the same formula. In this case it is neither an illustrated book, nor a comic, but the use of different media to satisfy a single artist, where the visual object and the sonic object exist separately, physically speaking. Conceptually too, since I reveal this information here, in the framework of a doctoral dissertation but not in the real world where the art pieces co-exist. Credited to different names (The Ogrocadaver and Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf) they are linked by title only, standing each on their own.

The image suggests a mystical connection; the highest cross and the top of the mountain meet at the compositional center. The sacred heathen worship of mountains in humankind is known, for a mountain peak is closer to the sky. The title assists the interpretation; it seems like the mountain and its sacred status (supported by the localization of the cross) was the basis for the creation of the pyramid, rather than an artificial construction. All in a distant time where the area was not desert. Then, stars are aligned with crosses and shaped as four cross-like arms, connecting both by shape also. Suggesting a link between pyramids and Egyptian civilization with Christian Orthodox church is rather superficial, despite the fact of the debt of the latter (Christianity in general) to the former. Here it is a recourse to serve formal and aesthetical purposes. The idea is that a civilization lived before and ours is just a different evolved phase of it. Aligned stars connect religion and civilization with outer life forms that travel to Earth. The closest two stars to the cross appear unlikely to be stars since they are in a position between the darkened area of the waxing Moon and Earth. They must be gleaming unidentified flying objects, not stars. Thus, the alignment traces a line to the center, meeting the sacred zone (cross and mountain top) and suggesting a

²¹⁵ Scheduled to be released on 2022, still in recording and postproduction process.

direction down (for a space trip) from the upper right area. Under that line a second line reinforces the suggestion.

There is a second *mountain*. Suggested by repetition of the shape, a hill appears with an open crack at the lower left-side (*Pict. 7, p. 129*). It is a microcosmos/macrosomos principle. There is a cave, an entrance to ancient habitational space for human, suggesting that (1) humankind was in prehistoric era, stressing the time distance and the paradox with advanced architectural capacity, and (2) according to the shape of the caved hill and the parallel entrance to the building at its right-side, it suggests, by displacement, that the mountain is already a rudimentary pyramid, with that entrance and a window in the vertical axis of the composition acting like gate and window of the pyramid (*Pict. 8, p. 129*). Both entrances, cave and building, are unfolded in symmetry with a rock mediating in the middle, like a separating line. It is placed strategically to suggest dualist questions of *cave-as-home* and *building-as-home*, in terms of old/new or ancient/modern oppositions. Without the mediating rock the figures appear incongruent for they are in the same plane where hill and roof would collapse against each other.

On the other hand, the song hooks up in a distant future, where Egypt exists as we know it, at its time of splendour. Lyrically, a completely fictitious story is narrated; by orders from the pharaoh, regional rulers ban certain old customs because they are leading towards isolation, in terms of modes of life and language, a circumstance the pharaoh wants to prevent. As a consequence particular idioms and words are prohibited. It provokes turmoil and insurrection.

Formally, the song aims to express aeons, the march of time. Thus it is structurally quite linear and long, evolving as the song progresses by adding harmonizing phrases, interweaving and interpenetrating solos and sequential instrumentation. This song is, in turn, connected to a second song in the scheduled album. It makes sense. Foundation of Cheops Aeons before Civilization is the opening track and the correlate song is the closing track, titled *Laments from the Sealed Chamber*. The latter is equally a progressive song, with extensive instrumental parts constantly evolving towards different phrases. Being the first and the last songs, with eight songs in between, metaphorically underlines a long distance, where *Laments from the Sealed Chamber* catches up in an unforeseen future time in reference to the previous epoch.

Lyrically, they are also connected. Each song is structured with two choruses each. Vocally, all four choruses sound almost the same but are slightly different. The first repeats few times *Holy Word*, referring to the prohibited word. The second chorus evolves and transforms in *Holy War*, suggesting how insurrection derived in a confrontation. Then, the last song repeats a similar formula; it goes *Hollow Word* in the first chorus and *Hollow War* in the second. This way, lyrically and formally the following idea is expressed: The prohibition of pagan customs declared a

religious war but after a long time (expressed in the lyrics, the structure and progression of the music, and the position in the track list) the real contents of the once prohibited customs and words are forgotten, resulting on a useless and absurd persisting state of war. Those *laments* in the title of the second song refer to the curse of the pharaohs, honoured in their tombs in sealed chambers of the pyramid, but responsible for the massacre outside suffered for ages.

This way the linocut is tied with an invisible thread to the first song that share title and in turn with the last song, proposing a story line to the tale. The visual object offers information not contained in the music (too abstract) nor in the lyrics (sensed differently and describing additional events). The visual object, in regard of the imaginary proposed by the lyrics, suggests complementary information, e.g. how the desert looked like aeons before or how the heritage of religious forms in a dystopian Egypt were of extra-terrestrial origin.

Once again, compromising brevity, I am expanding apparently unnecessary topics but I think this is the best way to illustrate how I work with art. Let me give the key; Typically, when I construct these type of tales, which are a specific form of narration,²¹⁶ they actually are an allegory of philosophical or intellectual thought, the surface of an underlying structure, in a similar sense the citation of Oscar Wilde explains. This tale is an artistic form to reflections around the evolution of languages, how they evolve to metamorphose into something different, being mere states of the same flow. Latin did not die, only evolved to Italian or Spanish, hence no longer considered *Latin* for did not attain likeness to these languages. Words muted in their external appearance and their internal meaning. They do it subject to the inclement run of time. This is expressed in the sequence *holy word-holy war-hollow word-hollow war*, as it were a transformation of language, situated in separate songs of considerable length (over 8 and 13 minutes respectively) and as the opener track and closing track of a non-conceptual album, that is, with the rest of the material not lyrically related, as it were a gulf in between. The *holy-hollow-word-war* sequence also is a reflection around the idea of taboo, a major evidence of the power and creator potency of words. Taboos block the access to meanings, often of religious nature. In turn religion is unfortunately too often source of confrontation. The title *Laments from a Sealed Chamber* is a metaphor of taboo; in the lyrical tale it functions as a description of the cursed pharaoh in the enclosure of the sarcophagus and the secret chamber in the pyramid, supposedly safe from profanation but apparently imprisoned. In fact it refers to something deeper, the meaning of tabooed words that far from harming, struggle to fulfil their finality, to convey meaning (*laments*) but cannot because people either by fear or prohibition avoid its use (*sealed chamber*).

"The art of interpretation (...) is subsumed under their cover-term, discovery, a way of approaching problems, whether scientific, philosophical or artistic".²¹⁷ I am no

²¹⁶ Usually I do not employ *tales* in visual art, and when I do they are very open and *absurd*.

²¹⁷ T. Tashiro, p. 59.

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linguist and own no competence to discuss it. But as artist I transform those discussions in a certain aesthetical dialectic, to aspire to gain some knowledge of heavens.



3) The Cheater - 2020

TECHNIQUE ~ Linocut & Woodcut

- 100 x 70 cm Fabriano white paper, almost bleed margins; 120 x 80 cm Hahnemühle white paper; regular margins.
- 70 x 89 cm linoleum matrix; 20 x 35 cm wood matrix.
- Desaturated black offset ink -dark grey- displayed regularly; golden metallic offset ink.
- 20 identical copies; 1 artist proof in dark blue paper.

PROPOSITION

A classical looking linocut. Specifics were (1) to make a large size; (2) to slightly lower the saturation of the typical black ink, to soften the contrast with the paper's white background; (3) to combine linocut with woodcut; (4) to add a gold colour on top of the main layer's blackness; (5) to achieve a wide range of carving styles, intricate technical incisions -especially complex and varied were: long curved lines (the shroud), straight thin vertical and horizontal cross-hatched lines (citadel walls), long horizontal parallel and proximate lines to express mid tone (building, roof, sky), precise round cuts (chain), short diagonal incisions (horn rope) and the repeated cut of the frame ornament; (6) to include text and make it using equipment of the academy, a laser cutter that permitted to add digitally produced elements and minuscule details to a relief printing context; (7) to infuse certain poster-like savour combining a scene with text and graphic elements and suggest a narrative, obscure enough to fake poster's standard informative function (text vs image hierarchy).

A vital aspect of the proposition was to confiscate context, like in the catalogue case described in *Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf* section of chapter two, and convert that site into a fully textual space, namely, a site to display a complementary art piece to the main *official* art piece. That *context* was a concrete contextual situation; an exhibition in a museum²¹⁸ accompanied by a promotional poster, a folded informative catalogue and a short clip covering the state of affairs of the artist. I was credited simply as The Ogrocadaver and all information was the technical protocol and the title. The short clip was declined but anyway prepared. The empty space in the catalogue supposedly dedicated for the biography, statements and/or descriptions of participants, in my case was supplanted by the very text displayed in the piece (vague and cryptic) and a QR code that could be

²¹⁸ 'Borders' exhibition in the Contemporary Art City Museum in Omsk, Russia, was scheduled on March-April 2020 but due to the COVID-19 pandemic exceptional situation, it is postponed to an undetermined date.

scanned and thus be redirected to the short clip (*Pict. 9, p. 129*). The video, without revealing my identity and focusing in the material, showed the artwork's execution progress, which is a chronological and inherent part of the piece. Inking and impression were featured. But again the most important characteristic is the formal and the aesthetic. It was not, by any means, a clip focused on the informative and documentation side; on the contrary, it has an audiovisual or video art approach. The process footage is not really visible for the postproduction of the video heavily distorted the transparency with grainy texture, low exposition, glitches and on purpose poorly edited transitions. Close-ups of the matrix capture recognizable figures of the print, but with a large *ОГРОКАДАВЕР* (Ogrocadaver) caption at the center. Below, running subtitles hardly readable for the lo-fi quality of the clip, intertextually translates to Cyrillic Russian the untranslatable text included in the print, providing a senseless and absurd twist, all put together to gain a cheesy B movie type of aesthetic. In addition, I composed a song for the occasion. Except for tape-recording, I made the edition and postproduction of the clip, including adding the audio of the song which I also recorded, produced and mixed.

The appropriation of the context and its neutralization was completed, ending up with an overall intermedia proposition; the linocut piece looks traditional within the framework of the exhibition (the textual framework) hanging on the wall, unaware of the complementing elements in exile, but technologically belonging, phagocytizing the contextual framework and turning it in a textual framework, a text/text, artwork/artwork unity that shatters the text/context notion.

DESCRIPTION

The text/text or artwork/artwork binary is not an opposition but a hierarchy, like the usual text/context conception itself. The main art piece is the linocut/woodcut print. Then the music and the video are domains of Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf and probably Klemens Benedykt Ząbkowicz, respectively. This project glues together the three, without dividing segments, being the quintessence of the confusing program. But clip and music are secondary, adding an extra element that complements the aesthetic and experience of the print, which stands on its own. There is no need to mention them outside of this dissertation, no need to credit the music to Karl-Heinz Jürgenwolf in an exhibition situation and bother explaining anything to gild the lily. Enough is to make the print, credit it to the *Ogrocadaver*, add title and technique and go for lunch.

Now, what a better time to make a scene of the apocalypse? Fact: it was completed by February 2020, before anybody could anticipate what was about to come. So I can't help saying that it was prophetic, a manic artistic vision. Of course, tongue-in-cheek. But perhaps in remote times such coincidence was regarded as a prophecy, who knows. Anyway, the scene has a classic flavour,

inspired by archetypal paintings about death, pandemonium, catastrophes, war and, yes, plagues. It is quite rare that I choose so recognizable prototype and build the composition in this fashion. Usually other strategies feel more adequate than figures performing some action against a landscape, facilitating interpretation based on more traditional models. However, the inclusion of texts and other signs associate such elements and ideas to defined personal conceptions.

Like in the previous project, a surface fabric is the gateway to an underlying structure. The scene depicted in the artwork is somehow a code. It is made in such way that the scene, the immediate pictures, are to be interpreted in the established plane, without the urge to go deeper. But from my perspective, the scene as a whole, alongside the compositional elements, departs from root concepts underneath. Foundation of Cheops Aeons before Civilization was complex in terms of story, the tale, more than the basic structure concerned with processes of language and the role of taboos. In the current case, the simpler narrative is restricted to the depicted scene and what it proposes. The intermedia connection of music and clip proposes issues in another plane, which we shall overlook.

Now, these artistic projects have a vertical structure;

- (1) At the bottom ground, the fundamental concepts.
- (2) On a superposed subsequent layer, the formal object, a depicted scene, what the artwork offers to perception. This layer contains in turn a number of sublayers internally interrelated (2.a).
- (3) The upper layer is the plane where the artwork adjoins the contextual plane. In this case its obtrusive input is neutralized thanks to affiliated objects, namely, clip and music.

(1) is what I keep for myself; (2) and (3) are public; (2.a) contains perceptible interconnections and imperceptible. The latter also belongs to me.

The root concern, what originates the scene is the notion of *dualism*, a philosophical axiom that permeates most of my artwork. I understand dualism roughly as two opposed forces in constant movement. It can be represented by endless opposition such as day/night or inside/outside. I consider words (signs) to be the result of such equivalency, where signifier and signified function as a duality, albeit not necessarily in antagonism. *Language* is the form, the signifier, what is outside, the day. On the contrary *Thought* is the meaning, the signified, what is inside, the night. The very nature of dualism provokes this scheme to be fluctuating, so the mobile principle keeps undulation active. Between the two poles there is the undecided zone, the sacred, where both poles are simultaneously the same thing, the mediating conjuncture, the signification, the symbolization, the symbiosis; all these notions expressing somehow the reciprocal

penetration of word into meaning. In alchemy, replete of dualistic tenets like dissolution/coagulation, disintegration/bonding, distillation/condensation etc., it is symbolized by the hermaphrodite principle, both male (*Hermes*, intellectual appeal) and female (*Aphrodite*, sensual stimulus).²¹⁹ "He is the hermaphrodite that was in the beginning, that splits into the classical brother-sister duality and is reunited in the 'coniunctio'".²²⁰ I have used the metaphor of the siamese twins earlier, which is similar but also dissimilar. The hermaphrodite completes one unity, one body. The siamese is conjoined in one part (in our analogy, head), a zone where it is hard to discern who is who. Both principles are valid for both can be interpreted in various ways.

Now, I do not depict such figures literally in my artwork. I use other representations to symbolize those dualist poles. These projects are a good example.

In particular, *The Cheater* is influenced by the Freudian *heimlich/unheimlich* (homely/unhomely) principle of the uncanny.²²¹ There, what is familiar may turn unfamiliar and invoke the uncanny, discomfort or anxiety. Freud's premise is that the semantics of terms overlap with each other; *heimlich*-homely, the familiar, what feels safe and hospitable, moves in the direction of its opposite eventually turning ideas of private and intimate (also meanings derived from the polysemy of *heimlich*-homely) into secret or impenetrable, whereas the *unheimlich*-unhomely, the unfamiliar, strange or frightful goes full circle turning into revealed or unrepressed, ultimately resulting into ideas of relief, disclosure and comfort.²²² These in principle opposite terms evidence the incessant movement and alternation of meaning, eloquently contained in mystical Gnostic visions of the world where light and darkness fall upon human life, whose fate is subject to the rotation of earth; these are ideas that speak of an inevitable ambiguity. Terms such as *twilight*, literary two-lights, indicate a state of being simultaneously both light and darkness, somewhere undeterminable between day and night. This transformation that Freud observed in the familiar-unfamiliar case, of a pole advancing into its opposite, is observed in Classic Greek literature where the term *hero* was originally applied only to the dead, but progressively applied to the living, a cultural change that "created a third, ambiguous middle zone between the natural and supernatural worlds."²²³ This ambiguity, the presence of two or more possible meanings, what is behind the aesthetics of the uncanny is also a principle of art. Russian formalists thought one function of art is "to make the familiar strange."²²⁴ Concealing the signified by denaturalising the signifier (we

²¹⁹ A. Roob, pp. 11, 25.

²²⁰ Carl Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy, the Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Complete Digital Edition, Vol. 12, Princeton University Press, USA, 1968, para. 404.

²²¹ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, Penguin Books, London, UK, 2003.

²²² "Heimlich thus becomes increasingly ambivalent, until it finally merges with its antonym unheimlich." Ibid. p. 134.

²²³ T. Tashiro, p. 49.

²²⁴ D. Chandler, *Modality and Representation* entry.

could call it *defamiliarizing*), would basically be the same principle. On the one hand the hermaphrodite, where the completeness of signifier and signified keeps on moving as a fluxus, as just one stream, where my art production would be taken as a unitary whole. On the other, the Siamese, where one of the two bodies is submitted to operations (the external body, the signifier) and the second body is neglected (the signified, the meaning), but then again what one body suffers inevitably counter-affects the other. The Cheater, as an art piece belonging to a wider artistic production, is just an isolated item. The piece is itself a big signifier, just a *body* aesthetically treated, offered to the public. The meaning stays internal, secret, intimate, heimlich to me. Or unheimlich. It will depend on which side of the fence we watch from.

These revelations exposed so far belong to the inferior, first cause layer of the vertical structure -(1). The conceptual root about dualism, from where I proceed to work with the elements of the art piece, materialises in visual objects after transpiring those raw concepts in concrete ideas -(2)-, e.g., a *church* that can convey the interior and the exterior or the sacred and the secular -(2.a). These conceptual grounds hibernate in me, all things about the signified. In the coming paragraphs we move up to the second plane, the art work. The aesthetic of the signifier, where matters from the deeper plane find their reflection *siamesically*.

Along with Freud's specific vision of opposite forces in heimlich/unheimlich and some other outlined terms of the uncanny, I take up Derrida's idea of frame, a notion that escapes the categories of *inside* and *outside*. "*The frame is both at once, a hybrid*"²²⁵ or a mediating zone, "*consigned to a kind of conceptual limbo.*"²²⁶ It merges thus with those already discussed categories of the *in-between* where conjunctures, significations occur. The frame, a more tangible object than *undecided zone* or even *interface*, assists to focus on its derivatives the *inside* and the *outside*, certain opposite poles of dualism.²²⁷ These considerations exposed hitherto, crystalize in the real visual print.

The paper on which the impression is made, is the art work. Within its perimeter all is *inside*; *outside*, we stand. The linoleum matrix has its own limits and out of its edges a white margin acts like a first frame. Printmakers autograph in this area, as we have seen, being this signature and intruder. Therefore, although it comes from outside, this margin still is the inside of the art work. A first observation points out a rectangular second frame within the limits of the art piece, a repeated, a doubled frame, displaced to conform new boundaries. This implies a reformulation of the inside and the outside. Now we are outside by being inside the artwork, while the scene is framed beyond, *there*, and the margins of the new

²²⁵ M. Bal & N. Bryson, p. 193.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ "*What it (the frame) can discuss is the 'outside' of the work of art, which comes into being as outside once the concept of frame is in place; and equally well it can discuss the 'inside', what is proper to the work of art.*" Ibid.

outside is *here*. Thus, the central figure is in-between two worlds. Initially, by classic compositional models, that is, dividing it in two sides, left and right. But more decidedly because the figure is at the same time *there*, with the shroud waving at the other side, and *here*, trespassed the limits of the frame. In other words, the figure who explicitly symbolizes death is with us or coming to us.

This figure, easily recognizable as a *personification* symbolizing death, is not a living skeleton nor a dead body, it is a *transi*, which means *going across*, *transitioning*, a figure that appeared in late Middle Ages and early Renaissance in cadaver monuments and dance macabre paintings and prints.²²⁸ The symbolism of the figure is evidently that which is both things simultaneously, living and dead, that which is mediating, extensively discussed already.

There are a number of ideas around dualism complementing the most marked inside/outside conception. The hermaphroditic, opposed poles which constitute a full unity, and the siamesic, which conform two things linked. Hermaphroditic pairs are; besides of the described main duality inside/outside, less obvious binary systems that are expressed by the intramural/extramural citadel and interior/exterior of buildings, the in-doors and out-doors. Another basic dichotomy is the black and white of the print, or corpse shrouds, black on the *transi*, white in the grave. This white shroud is also *here* and *there*, where *there* is more precisely the tomb cavity, symbolizing the idea of life and death, reciprocally supported by white and black shrouds. Another basic duality is the linguistic and semiotic signs, images and texts. An especially interesting duality is proposed by the unification of two distinct concepts of perspective, the medieval perspective, where distant objects surmount what are supposed to be front objects (visible in the citadel walls and the grave), and Renaissance perspective, which is a naturalistic perspective common this days -visible in the *transi* figure and the clock tower.

Now, before giving account of those siamesic dualities we shall return to the frames. There is an additional nested frame (a sub-frame) which contains the text, proposing an alternate plane, which in turn contains a sub-frame (a sub-sub-frame) of six compartments (*Pict. 10, p. 130*). A *mise-en-abyme*, kind of Matryoshka doll that assumes the same sort of questions but using a spectrum of signs of a more linguistic provenance. The medium size sub-frame contains a rather graphic design aesthetic, with some stylized picture, typographies, icons, numerals etc. Inside, everything is subject to Freud's double (the *Doppelgänger*) phenomenon. The title, The Cheater, is inserted there written in Russian and Cyrillic alphabet (ЛЖЕЦ), making it part of the art work, the *inside*, rendered in two guises (two languages, two alphabets). The text displays a Latin alphabet

²²⁸ "The noun 'transi' apparently derives from the Latin verb 'transire': 'trans' meaning 'across' and 'ire' meaning 'to go.'" Kathleen Rogers Cohen, *The Changing Meaning of the Transi Tomb in Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Europe*, Faculty Publications, University of California, Berkeley, USA, 1969, p. 13.

typography that I designed imitating the Cyrillic in order to obscure it, denaturalized increasing the opacity. It says:

Once abundant ~ the Cheater blows the Seventh horn ~ all bells toll ~ planets of Holst ~ time fugue as fire consumes ~ ruins & runhes ~ chance to dance the totentanz ~ dust to dust ~ meet the bringer of ashes ~ minister of misery ~ no emissary ~ no mercury ~ sinister hand of eternity ~ time fugue as fire consumes ~ aske til aske ~ aske hil arte

The meaning is secondary, but full of internal references. However, let us focus by now on form and dualities of siamese type. By sonic and visual proximity, words and expressions are doubled; *all-toll, ruin-rhunes, chance-dance, minister-sinister, misery-emissary, aske-arte*; or directly doubled: *dust* appears two times, like *time fugue as fire consumes*. The dome tower is doubled too, in the scene as well as in the sub-frame, transformed into a kind of logotype stylization. The look of the sub-frame is repeated as a miniature dash lined sub-sub-frame, imitating it. Even the rectangular shape is analogous. The principle microcosmos/macrocosmos (another dualism) is applied. The six sub-sub-frames contain each a different sort of sign. The first in the far left is an iconic, stylized *brick wall* with a pair of blind arched windows, multiplied as a doubled brick façade of the clock tower. The second and fourth compartments express the idea of *little time* with numerals, eloquently connotative by a blood dripping signifier. This is doubling an alternative time measure, the tower roof clock, introducing a digital/analogue duality. Typically, this type of allegorical depictions include an hourglass, which I discarded in favour of analogue clock and digital watch. Thus, without using words the idea *two minutes to midnight* is expressed two times. Then, the numerals are not really together in a digital watch 23:58, they are mediated by colon, two vertical dots in-between that I substituted by the cross. It would be, as it were, the sacred zone allegory. Then again, in another twist, the number two is identical to five, just flipped horizontally, while three '3' is visually half of eight '8'. The cross is, at the same time, doubled in the ornaments of the frame, which is a chain of crosses. Finally, the last sign in a compartment is a monogram, an additional type of sign consisting in a series of letters merged in a single visual item. It is doubled at the frontispiece of the arched entrance to the clock tower. It combines the letters A, V and E.

These are examples of Freudian doubling or repetition, features of the uncanny heimlich/unheimlich, displacements, where one object appears scattered over several places capable of transferring altered meanings. Freud explains that psychologically "*The double has become an object of terror*"²²⁹ in the aftermath

²²⁹ S. Freud, p. 143.

"an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death",²³⁰ which can serve to produce disturbance in aesthetical artworks. Condensation occurs when one single item plays different roles.²³¹ For instance, the clock in the tower is also acting like a full moon; the light of the Moon can somehow be sensed but it is not depicted, left out of the composition. In such position, the clock is condensed. At once, the clock (or white sphere) is also displaced, doubled as the white round window in the building of the citadel, with the fissures tracing exactly the same outline as the clock hands do, in a *two minutes to midnight* instant. Another white round can be spotted at the dark side of the same building. These elements function as doubled displacements, establishing connections among forms and possible meanings that stimulate the narrative, and also as visual guides supplying rhyme and rhythm to the composition. Most of these two-time-repeated figures may be categorized as siamesic dualisms. There are many more, but it appears unnecessary to exhaust them.

Briefly, I proceed to point out some denotations, symbology, further Freudian encounters and text deliberations. Let us begin returning to Freud and the uncanny. According to the Austrian eminence the castration complex would be one of the conditions that propitiates feelings of unhomely. Especial attention is given to the loss of eyes. Animism and echoes of superstitious primitive human life also call for sensations of discomfort. Now, our transi could have eyes but I depicted it following the classical model for no more reason than respecting a trait I just liked. But nevertheless it lacks eyes and, thus, may refer to the Freudian complex, moreover considered the prominence it is attributed. The clock and the round windows, however, function as eyes. But rather than a pair of natural eyes, each window is projected individually as the cyclopean eye of a monolithic giant. It summons the mythological and fantastical, together with the animist belief of objects having life. See the anthropomorphic façade of the clock tower (and its doubled icon in the sub-sub-frame) whose blind windows resemble ocular cavities. Especial emphasis was put on the top center where the scythe mutilates the phallic dome tower, doubled in this case in the fashion of medieval pictorial tradition, where a chronology of events used to be depicted in sequences occurring at the same scene; The collapsing dome tower is inserted in the logic of the scene (also doubled at the far right, collapsing black tower), but by virtue of this additional obsolete function, it represents the thrust of the hand in a *one-two* action when the second tower, as a figured phallus, is amputated.

The text deserves some commentary. In parallel it aids discussed motivations such as the language question. Written in English, it introduces words and phrases in German, Russian, Norwegian, Basque and Latin, evidencing the chimeric prospect of making a *right* interpretation of the artwork. It is virtually impossible to even grasp the real motivations of the author. First, because it is rather difficult to read what actually is written. It is a denaturalized, formalised text, purportedly

²³⁰ Ibid. p. 142.

²³¹ Literally "*several thoughts are condensed into one symbol*", D. Chandler, *Signs* entry.

unfamiliar and opaque. It is a rough poetic verse about the apocalypse and *memento mori*, the irremediable fate of all life forms. The most interesting points are the intertextual function and the interrelated threads. It conjures favourite topics: music and occultism. An ostensible reference is the obvious presence of music manifested in the long horn the protagonist is blowing, destroying everything in its path. The *time fugue* expression, inspired by the Latin *tempus fugit*, means time leak, escape. But it comes doubled; fugue as a classical music figure which in particular appeals to Sebastian Bach's masterpiece *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor*, and its iconic spooky intro, adequate for such a prophetic scene. The visual proximity of *Aske hil arte* with *Aske til aske* catches sight. The former is Basque and literary means *free till death* whereas the latter is Norwegian equivalent to *dust to dust* (or its complement, since literally means *ashes to ashes*), an idiom whose significance is the inevitable consummation of life. It alludes to a Black Metal band's 1993 record *Aske* (ashes) by Burzum, infamously known for the EP cover picture of a calcined monumental wooden church, allegedly but not demonstrated, burned down by the only member of the band Varg Vikernes. Again, such imagery matches the scene, summoning weak but present ideas of music and Heavy Metal, who traditionally bears a particular sinister reputation. In line, *all bells toll* is a reference to a song by Metallica, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1984), in turn inspired by a novel of Ernest Hemingway. In this light, the previously discussed *two minutes to midnight* locution gains another sense, for it is a 1984 song (referencing the *Doomsday Clock*) of another Heavy Metal band, Iron Maiden. *No emissary No mercury* is a reference of alchemy but also to Freddy Mercury, charismatic frontman of the rock band Queen. Mercury is a planet that traces a connection with the line *Planets of Holst*, reference to the 1916 *The Planets, Op. 32* by the English composer Gustav Holst, an orchestral suite credited for being primordial for the origin of the Heavy Metal genre. Beyond the text, other disseminated elements are symbols equally interconnected in the overall composition. A couple of instances are, the left (in Latin, *sinister*) hand wielding the war scythe. Originally an agricultural tool, the scythe is a symbol of Saturn, the Roman god of time, as well as the ringed planet honouring him. In alchemy, Saturn symbolized the grossest material, heavy metal *lead*, which in turn is a ciphered term for a process that required "*physical death and putrefaction.*"²³²

The last example illustrates the use of personal motifs or symbols in contrast to those universal symbolisms of planets and metals. On the arched lintel of the gate of the clock tower, there is an inscription; it is the same sign doubled in the sixth sub-sub-frame, the repetition of the monogram that joins the letters A, V and E (*Pict. 11, p. 129*). It is a sign halfway between a semiotic sign (because it is an image) and a linguistic sign (because AVE is not an acronym but a word). It is a Latin word used to greet, like in the well-known formula *ave Caesar*. At the entrance of the arched door greets guests. But *ave* in Spanish means *bird*, and

²³² A. Roob, p. 19.

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birds have a particular presence and symbolism in my personal iconography. Bird symbols *fate*, because in Basque language the respective words for bird and fate (*txoria* and *zoria*) are phonologically cognates. This way, those who enter in the building are saluted in their fate. Indeed, windows of the building are shut and dark, but the entrance is open and bright, which is a reference to the afterlife. Not in vain, the empty grave is just in front of the way to the door.

The intertextuality and sub-internal connections, external and self-referential are endless by the principle of association of ideas. All these interweaving, contagious, overlapping, multidirectional displacements, condensations and flammable matters enter in action in what I called the sub-layers of the vertical structure (2.a), wherein some are perceptible to the initiated and connoisseurs, but others are too narrow and vague to even expect ramifying links. The creativity of the user will be the provision to harvest interpretations from the proposed fertile soil. The openly narrative nature of the proposition and the abundance of elements operating in various substrata, warrant ambiguity, conceptual mobility and the eradication of fixed noumena. The user is the unfettered receiver autonomous to contradict whatever is written in these lines.

4) Drug of My Archenemy ~ 2021

TECHNIQUE - Woodcut; Screen print; linoleum.

-A diptych, 2 print series – 100 x 70 cm white Fabriano and white chalk overlay papers²³³; bleed margins.

-90 x 60 cm 3 wood matrices; 90 x 60 cm screen; 100 x 70 cm linoleum matrix.

-Golden metallic, silver metallic and black offset inks for relief impressions; bright orange-ochre colour screen printing water based ink.

-18 copies, 9 of each.

PROPOSITION

In contrast to the previous project, which sought the aesthetic of a classical relief print, this one longed for a more modern outlook, formally subtle in a departure from the expressive features typical of relief printmaking. However I wanted to keep it chromatically austere, proximate to other projects; black, white, gold and silver. Texture or, perhaps, *feel* or *vibe*, was one major concern. Transparencies usually are used in a layering system from bright to darker colours but my intention was not to work with shades of grey. Gold and Silver are metallic inks which do not permit mixtures with base transparent inks if one wishes to preserve their metallic quality, so the transparency/opacity play was necessarily restricted to black and white inks. To achieve the desired vibe, numerous tests and experiments were scheduled. Around 80 small prints with 200 layers on a dozen different papers were executed in order to define the right technical route, each meticulously annotated and referenced. Conclusions attested that the desired effects were not possible to be achieved in the case of white ink, which soon was kind of spoiled. I wanted an immaculate white and experiments showed that it always resulted darker than the paper's white coat. Since metallic inks do not shine unless they are printed on top of at least one thick layer of ink, for the paper absorbs it, the relief technique was rejected in favour of screen printing. Thus, the white piece would not require embedded layers to have a good shiny golden ink, since *chalk overlay* paper (not absorbent) proved to be good for that purpose, so the screen print would feature the image by positive printing, raising reserved areas of the paper. Then, by woodcut, the golden layer was added. In contrast, the black piece offered satisfactory results with relief techniques at the experimental stage, so after embedding three layers of metallic silver ink that secured a shiny effect, two distinct recipes for black ink layers will proceed to imprint the image in negative, letting the intact underlying silver ink emerge to sort the image. The metallic silver layer was embed in three subsequent layers

²³³ Translation from Polish *papier kredowy*. I did not find any English name for this type of paper.

printed with an uncarved matrix of linoleum, whereas the black features two carved wood matrices.

On the other hand, the image is the result of a sophisticated combination of analogue and digital procedures. Drawings were made by hand on physical paper first, and then combined with (1) digitally created elements (texts, medallions, chains), and (2) entirely redrawn by hand again in digital media, after combining scanned drawings and digital elements in computer programmes. The final matrices are digital files, transferred to silk screens and wood boards. Therefore, the wood matrices are in fact delegates of the original digital matrices, which eventually could be transferred to silk screen and be printed by screen printing procedures if desired.

DESCRIPTION

Two considerably large prints comprise the series. In terms of composition both are, individually, identical; combined, almost symmetrical. A drawing is the principal element occupying more than half of the upper part, supported by texts at the lower part. Feathers and a chain with a medallion constitute the drawing, while texts are accommodated in two sections, the upper with a pair of large words and the lower with a much smaller caption, a paragraph of a verse containing seven lines. Two different drawings, a different set of words in the pair section and a variation of the colour sequence qualify the separation. The latter is the most evident and indicates we are in front of a proposition dealing with questions outlined in the previous project; dualism and oppositions. Two prints, one white and the next black incontestably point out such a direction. Still in the territory of colour, gold and silver confirm the theme of dichotomy. Gold and white symbolize the day, brightness and the Sun. Silver and black, are the allegory of night, darkness and the Moon. The claimed symmetry occurs with the shape traced by the medallions, mirroring each other. Medallions also confirm the opposition poles; a stylized Sun is inscribed in one whereas the second features a waxing Moon and five stars, symbols of the classical planets.

Contraries featured in *The Cheater* like inside/outside, here/there are also neat in this project. The drawing is inserted in a frame where part of it belongs to both sides; indeed, medallions are simultaneously inside the drawing frame and outside. Drawings feature feathers. One is a white bird and the second is a black bird. The characteristic feathers of a peacock make it quite distinguishable in the case of the white bird. The black bird could be any crow related. Well, both have a rich symbolism in culture and are open to be interpreted this way. Religious and mysticism regard the peacock as a positive and divine creature, especially the more iconic colourful peacock. White peacock too, but is a rare species. I wanted it white to fit the conceptual frame, for its symbolism of purity. In contrast, the crow is despised as bird of sin, treason and death. However, it was also important the general presumption of *bird* as a collective, not only the particular species.

Bird, as I have described it, symbolises fate in my personal art. It appears in many of my art works and somehow link them all. The crow is a personal favourite because it permits merging universal understanding of it and my personal vision. In other words, condensation, which leads to ambiguity and possibilities of narrative.

A second feature of the partition is given in the text. Of course, image and text support the insistent duality in any case where both are in junction. But here text is given in two sections, upper and lower. In turn, the upper section is occupied by a pair. The semiotic dimension of this project is humble, in contrast to The Cheater project. Images suggest a decent amount of interconnections and references but not the overwhelming abundance found in the preceding project. Elements are scarce; feathers, chains, medallions, Sun, Moon, four colours and little more. Obviously, shapes, gestures, what I called *vibe* and some other factors have a lot to say and to interpret, but it is the linguistic dimension, the text sections of this particular project that enrich the narrative and assist supplying ambivalent threads.

The upper text section is modelled with a denaturalising motivation, whereas the lower section is obscure for its poetic and symbolic meaning but it is not denaturalised, it is formally transparent. Note how I used just a typography, some font that resulted useful. Precisely because I decided to put the conceptual weight *in* the text instead of *on* the text, so that meaning is not diminished to the minimum but fairly oxygenated, the text is transparent and naturally readable. Let us now take a look on the upper section.

The white piece presents the words KRUK - DRUK. In the black piece it goes CUERNO - CUERVO. A first sight suggest we are in front of old questions; Two elements. Visual and sonic proximity. Doubling, etc. As objects, DRUK - KRUK are the microcosmos, a minute imitation of the project macrocosmos within which they exist, two elements, like two prints, juxtaposed that look similar but are dissimilar. Same as CUERNO - CUERVO. They are denaturalised, picked to look similar and doubly denaturalised for the form, the typography, is designed for the cause, emphasizing the external aspect of the signifier, boosting its visual form. Thus, their repeated shape and their relation with the prints wherein they actually belong, not only stress the Freudian *Doppelgänger* (double) stratagem, but posit questions of completely different philosophical nature, namely, (1) what is a print and (2) what does it mean repetition in printmaking. DRUK - KRUK, displayed in the peacock print, trigger interconnections after the understanding of their meaning. It requires competency from the user/interpreter, to know the language; that is why in the context of the art work elements have to work first and foremost as compositional forms, not as vehicles of meaning. Then, narratives will be boosted depending on the user's experiential background. DRUK - KRUK mean in Polish *impression* and *crow* respectively, *impression* in the sense of *print* and *copy*, which ignite interconnections. Well, *druk* is, in some kind of schizophrenic back-to-the-womb trance, doubling, repeating, displacing the very inherent nature of

the print, which is both a print and a copy, part of an edition. Crow (*kruk*) is repeating in turn what the second print is suggesting with images, that is, a crow, with the black feathers and related symbology. But then again, this print features, in a third language, Spanish, CUERNO - CUERVO, which signify respectively *horn* and *crow*. Consequently *crow* is not only suggested but textually cited, and the repetition, the copy, is manifest. Horn (*cuerno*), by its side, is functioning as the hypertext, connecting this project with many others for the horn is a recurrent personal motif. Remember the great blowing horn of The Cheater. Remember the shape of the Moon in Foundation of Cheops Aeons before Civilization, which is identical to the waxing Moon of the medallion. Not in vain it is one of the numerous Moon names, the *horned*. Now we shall try to envision why the Moon in The Cheater was figured by the clock, but actually left out of the composition; indeed, we could figure a horned Moon up in the sky, repeated, one more time, in the symbolical shape of the transi's left hand, wielding the scythe with horned fingers -in turn, reference to Heavy Metal music.

DRUK - KRUK and CUERNO - CUERVO operate a secondary function concerned with other preoccupations besides of the dominant dualist questions. Reflections about art and its communicative capacities and to what extent equals mechanisms typical of languages. In *Languages of Art*, Nelson Goodman discusses authenticity and forgery, and says that "extremely subtle changes can alter the whole design, feeling, or expression of a painting."²³⁴ As a painter, I agree. But I also have observed the opposite, that even extensive changes often do not make great difference. We have discussed the case in language, how *face* and **FACE** do not alter an inch the meaning of *face*. However, the visual differences between *face* and **FACE** are more than *extremely subtle*. Why Nelson points out the case in visual content is to justify the status of art as original versus copy, authentic versus fake. But for example *fake* contains a rather extremely subtle change regarding *face*. One element -one only- the « c » has been replaced by a « k » and the meaning has changed dramatically. The question is why certain formal changes do not affect the meaning but others do. *face* and **FACE** are graphemes (visual expression of sound) that suffer allographic transformation,²³⁵ like upper and lowercase use, which do not register variations of meaning. Likewise the transformation is typographic, which has to do with the formal, artistic nature of the letter's design, but nonetheless sterile to change the meaning, despite of these being *subtle changes that can alter the whole design*. Letters « c » and « k » can also be allographs of the same sound, for « c » in

²³⁴ N. Goodman, p. 108.

²³⁵ Genette regard this transformations as a "*schematic opposition –saying the same thing differently/saying another thing similarly.*" Provides the following example to illustrate such minor changes provoking major semantical difference "Le temps est un grand maître' {Time is a great master} (...) If, by eliminating one letter, I write 'Le temps est un gran maître', the the 'correct' text is transformed, in a purely formal manner, into a text that is 'incorrect' (spelling error). If, by substituting one letter for another, I write, as does Balzac in the words of Mistigris, Le temps est un grand maigre' {Time is a great faster (maigre=lean)}, this substitution of a letter produces a word substitution and creates a new meaning." {original emphasis}, G. Genette. pp. 6-7.

canary sounds like the « k » in *fake*; why not then in *face*? It might be objected that they represent different sounds since *face* and *fake* do not sound alike in that particular phoneme. But then again why *face* and *phase* convey such different things? In this case the formal differences are more than extremely subtle because the sonic substance is nearly identical in both, only the visual substance of *face* and *phase* is different in the allographs « f »/« ph » and « c »/« s ».

Well, the answer is that it totally depends on arbitrary conventions. Language and meaning overlook the forms to favour rational engagement, while many of those mechanisms operate unconsciously, based on connotations suggested in the forms, those *subtle changes* Goodman mentions. In art, minor changes can alter some aesthetical feeling but is entirely out of reach to indicate what. If we take the sinuous ways traced by the chains of the medallions and alter them altogether, we probably could not tell much difference in sensation, needless to say in meaning, which would be imperceptible. However shifting the gold colour to pink would ruin the whole thing. So, major changes in the forms of art can both leave the state of affairs as they were while a minutia could as well totally shake it.

*The slightest perceptual differences sometimes matter the most aesthetically; gross physical damage to a fresco may be less consequential than slight but smug retouching*²³⁶

Art without explanatory linguistic attachments, alone without a situational context, cannot aspire to communicate meaning, it is only an aesthetical enterprise. The minor changes of punctuation or quotation marks, which have the power to completely alter meaning, contrast with major formal changes of typography, size or colour that act like the not-bothering *physical damage to a fresco*, naturalised by conventions letting see through, and precipitating the consciousness to be moved by the connotations of the forms, those scratches and erosions that affect us aesthetically, the only domain where art has any influence at all.

In this regard, I take the formal aspect of language, its shapes and visual content as artistic agents, as an opposition of the binary speech/writing, the clear, communicative, meaningful signified, which by norm I neglect, versus the obscure, duplicable (able to be doubled "*writing is a representation of a representation*"²³⁷), ambiguous signifier, "*a 'supplement' to speech, sinister and*

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ R. Monelle, p. 304.

elusive, an unreliable counterfeit."²³⁸ Writing and picture are thus consanguineous relatives.²³⁹

DRUK - KRUK and CUERNO - CUERVO reflect these insights. I designed the appearance of these words to be absolutely identical. KRUK and DRUK are the exact repetition produced in a digital programme, where one was created first and the second was copy-pasted. The subtlest possible change works the magic; while the rest remains intact, a single element, the crooked line of « K » (*Pict. 12, p. 130*) is flipped horizontally to function as « D », thus rearranging the latter into a new dimension, acquiring a distant meaning in a blink. Same as with CUERNO and CUERVO, both equal, vulgar repetitions where the « V » is adjoined a l, a simple vertical line, a mere slash, (which in turn is the vowel « I » but for some reason sterile to count as an added letter) transmuting its form into a « N », and consequently shaking the substratum of semantics. But one needs to know the language, to be part of a convention in order to see through and grasp the internal strings. Otherwise, it supposes nothing else than a minor form variation with little influence in the broader structure.

We encounter a number of contradictions and tensions; according to Goodman "*minute perceptual differences can bear enormous weight in art*", that is, in the aesthetics and the forms, so that they can be indicative of the authenticity of works of art.²⁴⁰ But the aesthetical, formal aspect of language, writing, prone to minor changes that drastically convert the semantic property, is seen as a *representation of a representation, an elusive unreliable counterfeit*. Derrida and Austin insisted in the need of iterability, repetition, of duplicity (the property of being doubled) to language function satisfactorily conveying meaning.²⁴¹ Without repetition there is no meaning. But in art repetition is seen as imitation, copy, the opposite of authentic, exactly the forgery Goodman denounces. Culler argues;

There is such a thing as an original Hemingway style only if it can be cited, imitated, and parodied. (...); for features to be recognizable, one must be able to isolate them as elements that could be repeated, and thus the iterability manifested in the inauthentic, the derivative, the imitative, the parodic is what makes possible the authentic or original ²⁴²

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ "*The general history of writing proceeds by simple gradation from the state of painting to that of the letter.*" E. Condillac {cited by} J. Derrida, p. 5.

²⁴⁰ Goodman says such words while advocating the argument of authenticity of originals against forgery art works. N. Goodman, p. 108.

²⁴¹ "*Something can be a signifying sequence only if it is iterable, only if it can be repeated in various serious and nonserious contexts, cited, and parodied.*" J. Culler, p. 22.

²⁴² Ibid.

Yet, the repeated copies of my prints are considered originals and the digital matrices of this particular project are virtually possible to (re)produce *ad infinitum*. So conventions are not only result of repetitions. These apparent contradictions are result of tensions created by the mobile nature of signification and meaning. Mutability and multiplicity are necessary features of language to gain meaning; but its ambiguous facet is characterized by a propensity to switch after effects of minor yet sometimes indiscernible traits (punctuation, quotation marks, allography, etc.). This feature regards it as deceiving and unreliable. In Freudian terms, we could say that the reliability of meaning clashes with the unreliability of volatile properties, ready to change meaning in an instant, turning the familiar unfamiliar.

These conclusions find their reflection in the lower text section of the prints. Highly cryptic, it is aesthetically intended to fit the imagery and symbolism of the composition, serving the overall narrative but taking charge on it. It is evident the advantage of language to propel it and, as it is mentioned, favoured by discarding denaturalization and reduction of words to mere forms, as is customary. Displayed in seven lines (a wink to the classical planets Sun, Moon, Venus, Mercury, Mars, Saturn and Jupiter) it is the same in both prints. It says:

“CELESTIAL WHITE HORNS RIDE THEIR COURSE UNDER AN ADORNED MANTLE OF STARS – PALPITATING THEIR DISTANT SHINE BEHIND THE CURTAIN BLACK – CHARIOT IN THE NIGHT, SHALL THE MOON REIGN HIGH- ENTHRONED IN A DAY OF ABSENCE, DEATH AND DEMISE – REFLECTING THE MORBID ORBIT OF THE SUN – REVEALS GOLD IN THE FACE OF MARS – SPILLS BLOOD IN THE ARMS OF KNIGHTS – SILVER TEARS CRY AN IRRECONCILABLE RIVALRY – EMBODIED IN CONSTELLATIONS OF SCARS – BURIED IN WHITE GARMENT AND JEWELRY – HONEY, YELLOW LEAVES, ABSINTHE, FAITH AND WAX – THE COSMIC TOMB OF A DECEASED GALAXY – I AM THE DRUG OF MY ARCHENEMY”

It uses figures of astronomy and personifications laxly interweaved, creating associations mainly by forms, with very vague meaning. Some might be uncovered after descriptions provided so far, like for example *celestial white horns* or references to *wax*, *irreconcilably rivalry* and so on. I will not discuss it, only say that like bird does with fate, cosmos and motifs of astronomy often symbolize the idea of the unconsciousness in my personal iconography.

Now, the point of the text is to surreptitiously suggest questions beyond the narrative and aesthetic perceptible in the first order. The lyrics contain codified a sequence of opposite poles, casually scattered. Isolated from the camouflage, a cluster of pairs emerge and segregate themselves as correspondent dualities.

“CELESTIAL **WHITE** HORNS RIDE THEIR COURSE UNDER AN ADORNED MANTLE OF STARS - PALPITATING THEIR DISTANT SHINE BEHIND THE CURTAIN **BLACK** - CHARIOT IN THE **NIGHT**, SHALL THE **MOON** REIGN HIGH- ENTHRONED IN A **DAY** OF ABSENCE, DEATH AND DEMISE - REFLECTING THE MORBID ORBIT OF THE **SUN** - REVEALS **GOLD** IN THE FACE OF MARS - SPILLS BLOOD IN THE ARMS OF KNIGHTS - **SILVER** TEARS CRY AN IRRECONCILABLE RIVALRY - EMBODIED IN CONSTELLATIONS OF SCARS - BURIED IN **WHITE** GARMENT AND JEWELRY - HONEY, **YELLOW** LEAVES, ABSINTHE, FAITH AND WAX - THE COSMIC TOMB OF A DECEASED GALAXY - I AM THE DRUG OF MY ARCHENEMY”

All are legitimate dichotomies. Moving one by one down the next level **White-Black** results in a correspondent **Day-Night**. Perfect. The same happens with the successive *Day-Night* which results in **Sun-Moon**. Logic prevails. Then, **Sun-Moon** have their metal equivalents of alchemy in the dualism **Gold-Silver**. Everything flows smoothly in this triad of oppositions proposed in the art work; until the last correspondence of contraries: In alchemy, colours assigned to Gold and Silver are **Yellow** and **White**, which reverse the logic and contradict the first two dualisms. We find that now White is repeated in the place where supposedly its opposite should be, located in the last end and beginning of the loop, biting its own tail.

WHITE - BLACK
DAY - NIGHT
SUN-MOON
GOLD-SILVER
YELLOW-WHITE

We can conclude that (1) conventions are not universal, but circumscribed to specific groups with internal codes; (2) we attest the mobility, instability and flow of meaning, how signification is subject to constant change; (3) it finds its confirmation in the Freudian heimlich/unheimlich opposition, where by an exhaustive etymological analysis of many languages Freud is able to describe the progression and transformation of one pole towards its antonym, ultimately merging and taking its form, somewhat the route *white* follows in the white-black, day-night, sun-moon, gold-silver, yellow-white scheme; (4) consequently, things are what they are depending on the standpoint adopted to look at them, the side of the fence from where we view. Thus, the matter of interpretation is satisfactorily deposited in the sovereign dominion of the receiver (user) and the logical attitude of the artist is to preserve the nature of art without external artifices.

The vertical structure described in The Cheater project applies to this case just the same. At the bottom level conceptual subject matter is managed, which remains inside and is expressed allegorically in a posterior layer. This layer is the perceptible art piece, the public manifestation of those ideas under forms of the aesthetic, disguised in figures, objects and other elements proposing narratives. This layer in turn operates in additional sub-layers interconnecting ideas and forms, a number of which are traceable for the user but others inversely remain in the realm of the artist. Finally the last layer, articulated with external linguistic

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agents supposedly shedding light upon the art piece. In this project, still unreleased, there will not be, as usual, a context to elucidate anything. All external linguistic agents are reduced to the title, which is a repetition of an internal feature; *Drug of my Archenemy* is integral part of the art work and, therefore, the title is not a graft; it belongs *inside*. However, one is visible but its double phantasmagorical.



5) The Relic, The Auspex & The Knight ~ 2021

TECHNIQUE – Painting and linocut.

-A tryptic, 3 piece series;

-100 x 70 cm wood board; approximately 15 x 25 cm 3 linoleum matrices of irregular edges.

-Black and white acrylics; golden metallic offset ink.

-3 individual pieces.

PROPOSITION

Painting, drawing and printmaking meet in this project. Acrylic technique for painting, gel markers for drawing and linocut for printmaking. Acrylic was restricted to two paints, black and white, although all shades of greys were elaborated. Gel markers were just a single metallic gel, of gold colour. The same is true for the offset inks used for the linocuts. It comprises three individual pieces executed on wood board. The idea was mainly to base the combination of media on painting, adding an extra touch with linocut impression, instead of making prints and painting them, which would be a more obvious approach. This way we end up with unique linocut impressions but without prints on paper, the typical outcome of linocut. The aesthetic intention was on the one hand to approximate a typical linocut appearance, not imitating the results but having in mind The Cheater project (a quite classical relief print), somehow matching both mediums without compromising the idiosyncrasy of painting, making it look like a painting in its own right. This project next to The Cheater project looks integrated, kind of complementing each other. On the other hand, the precept was to manufacture a fine, elegant, subtle painting to contrast the more rustic results of linocut – despite of the intricacy of The Cheater or Drug of my Archenemy. Also the contrast was intended internally, that is, the contradiction encountered between the technical and formal approach and the actual depicted figures. Disquieting and fragile at once.

Regarding technical procedure, wood panels were coated and sanded three times to achieve a super polished surface, to facilitate detailed brush work and a quasi-porcelaneous tact. The printed images, however, infuse a certain antique and granulated breath, with a rough and debased impression, cracked, like some baroque vestiges in an abandoned ruinous palace. At a first stage acrylic paint was completed; at the second stage golden touches were drawn by hand, and then repeated with the second and third pieces. The last stage consisted on manual linocut impressions, press discarded. Carving the linoleum required acute concentration and patience. The image was highly complex, transferred to the matrices after precise digital drawings.

DESCRIPTION

Technically demanding, formally somewhat simple but complex and conceptually byzantine. A series of three pieces comprise the artwork, all similar looking paintings avoiding contrasts and harmonizing a union. Text and image once again share the composition. Each individual piece can stand on its own, but the composition includes the three. A narrative is suggested but the inscription is opaque, hardly readable. Title, the other only linguistic element, is integral for it repeats the words, this time in clear support of the narrative. The inscriptions work as forms, providing some mysterious aura akin to certain type of Gothic panels in cathedrals. In fact, the typography was created using as reference Gothic and archaic Cyrillic alphabets, difficult to read for the untrained eye of 21st century man. Title, immaterial and haunting the artwork, possesses the forms and elucidates what the inscriptions actually say; *the Relic, the Auspex and the Knight* (Pict. 13 p. 131; 14, p. 132; 15, 133). The formal unity, the three-piece and the confirmation in the title, give a clue of the underlying idea; trinity. However, not the Christian trinity but a species rooted in mysticism. This would be the first cause, initial concept. Now, the perceptible layer, where a symbolical or allegorical narrative is inserted, reveals few other clues. Three colours, black, white and gold are used, and three media, painting and its brushes, drawing and its markers and printmaking and its impressions. Technology and technique match the central idea.

Trinity is a derivation of dualism. The opposition of two poles generates a third element; motion. The tension, the friction of the contraries struggling to triumph over each other. The rotation of earth is the product of such combat between the forces of light and darkness. The third element mediating between creator and user, the never-ending movement of meaning. The sacred zone. Thus, relic, auspex and knight, speak about their nature. *Auspex* (synonym of augur, *oracle, prophetess* or *sybil*) and *knight* are mundane elements, they represent secular life. The third element is divine, a *relic*. The technical approach reflect this premise; black and white colours symbolize the secular, whereas gold colour points out the divine. Painting and drawing are direct techniques, correspondent to human. Printmaking is on the contrary indirect, its nature is revelatory, in an analogy to the god-like. Thus we have two poles and a third element.

Since it is somehow an allegory of some of the ideas contained in this dissertation, like the semiosis process occurring between signifier and signified, or the mediating conjunctures giving raise to the existence of two events, it would be expected to place the sacred element in the center of the composition, with the other two looking in symmetry. But that would presume stability. The composition seeks instability and therefore movement. Also, the movement is two directional, breaking linear continuity. The figure of the relic foregrounds with a frontal

portrait, unlike the profiled portraits of the mundane figures. Inscriptions include an attached element each, two keys and a padlock. However in this case the repeated key does not belong to the presupposed pair (Auspex and Knight) but to Relic and Auspex, with the differentiated item (the padlock) belonging to the Knight. What does it mean? Culturally we are bound to read from left to right, so we would typically begin reading from the painting on the left to the second in the middle and finish at the right. This is one legitimate procedure, suggested by text. But images suggest something else. The Knight figure directs his face to the right, looking outside the limits of the artwork. In contrast, his counterpart the Auspex is placed back to back with him, looking at the divine figure who looks straight to the spectator. Obviously keys and padlock play a role (which will be discussed in due course) but here they function with a specific aim. Through the padlock's hole one can see intimate secrets. If we start the contemplation of the artwork from the right instead of the left, as texts suggest, we go from and through the padlock to the Auspex, whose profile direction attracts the sight string to that area. Two-thirds of the composition are inclined to the left so our sight moves from right to left. In other words, texts suggest going from left to right but pictorial elements suggest the opposite, driving our gaze back and forth on the horizon axis.

Now, let us describe each piece and the features of each individual. The Knight is related to the Auspex. Both are mundane figures. He looks to the right, to the telluric world, in the opposite direction of the spiritual, hallowed realm occurring at his back. He is interested in the extrinsic material life, in battle and war. The padlock symbolizes his restraint from mystical and out-worldly matters, although with chance, as stressed, to reconsider and look at it; it is just possible to open what is by now closed. His attribute, the helmet, symbolizing war, also symbolizes his fate for it features motifs of bird in the shape and the adorning feathers. He is made with vulgar (in the context of the artwork) colours, black and white, as he is related to the other figure made as well of black and white. Golden colours only are spotted in the object, the helmet, not in his real nature. Identically, the Auspex features golden colours only in her attributes. On the contrary, the Relic exhibits gold in both the attributes (head veil) and especially as part of its real nature, as hair and moustache designate. The Auspex is the mediating element. She, contrary to the Knight, is female, who looks to the opposite side. Not towards the world but the celestial, imbued in something sacred. She is a medium. That is why she has a key, like the Relic, for she can also open that what is closed in the faithless man. A medium is a seer, some kind of a sorcerer, a pythoness, a fortune-teller, someone who can envision destiny and access it. The fortress on the head is an attribute of the Greek goddess of fortune, *Tyche*, but also something that separates two spaces, here and there. The building also supports, as in other projects, notions of inside and outside. The laurel leaves on her head are on the one hand a chaplet or crown that reveals a respected status, but also an element to complement the idea of the fortress walls as a fence that separates spaces.

The German word *hexe* (witch) is cognate to *hedge*,²⁴³ a fence of bushes separating two areas. They are related as something existing in the middle of two areas or worlds, as medium, where *witch* is a woman who lives and transcends two thresholds, with power to summon agents which do not belong in our side. Following this precedent of etymological analysis, let us note that *auspex* derives from Latin *auspex* which meant *interpreter of omens given by birds*, which in turn originates in Proto-Indo-European *awi-spek*, literally, *observer of birds*.²⁴⁴ It was originated in antiquity as a form of divination and soothsaying based in the observation of birds behaviour and foretell fate, especially later in the Roman Empire as officials in service of the Caesar, to tell the auspices, or auguries. The *Auspex* and the *Knight* are closely related as contraries, but also by their worldly fate, in both with elements of bird symbolizing it. The third element is the *Relic*, the divine. Yet, the mediating element is the *Auspex* which contains traces of sacred. The *Relic* is different because it is not portrayed sideways but frontally, looking at us, albeit an eerie feeling is sensed by castration of eyes and its uncanny Freudian implications. The *Knight* and The *Auspex* have eyes closed, in a strange ambiguity suggesting sleep when they apparently are cadavers. In fact, the three have features of the *transi*, an in-between status, with decrepit flesh still attached to their skulls whilst their hair is visibly healthy. *Transience*, death, unconsciousness, night etc. are ideas floating in the air.

The *Relic* is ambiguous. It has androgynous features. Something related to virginity, purity, and woman is graspable but yet moustache and traits in the face evoke a male figure. Head covered by an impeccable veil traditionally signified sanctity and femininity, reason why the *Auspex* has the top of the head just partially covered, with an identical veil whose austere ornament is not made of gold, unlike the case of the *Relic*. The *Relic's* androgynous sensation is based on the hermaphrodite, the union of male and female natures, an idea incorporated within itself, the empyrean, by the earthly *Auspex* and *Knight*. Yet the *Auspex* is somehow closer to the *Relic* for *Tyche*, Greek goddess of fortune and fate, was the offspring of *Hermes* and *Aphrodite*.²⁴⁵

Now, going back to the text, it can be asserted that in a narrative it is a fair source of information. We can see that the words *relic* and *auspex* do not contain the grapheme or character « k », inversely present in the word *knight*. The letter « k » in English is *kay*, pronounced /kei/. Considering certain phonetic proximity between the word *key*, pronounced /ki/ and the letter « k », mixing the pronunciation /kei/ with /ki/ but also with the graphic representation, *key*, I set

²⁴³ Hedge (n.), *Online Etymology Dictionary*, (website), <https://www.etymonline.com/word/hedge>, [Accessed 4 June, 2021].

²⁴⁴ *Auspex* (n.), *Online Etymology Dictionary*, (website), https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=auspex&ref=searchbar_searchhint [Accessed 4 June, 2021].

²⁴⁵ Some sources also account *Tyche* as daughter of the Titans *Oceanus* and *Tethys*. *World History Edu*, *Tyche: Greek Goddess of Fortune and Good Luck*, (website), *Ancient Greek Gods and Goddesses*, *World History Edu*, April 20 2021, <https://www.worldhistoryedu.com/tyche-greek-goddess-of-fortune-and-good-luck/>, [Accessed June 5, 2021].

up the premise upon which the key figures complement the words lacking the « k » letter, namely, relic and auspex, while the word knight is not complemented by it but with the padlock.

However, here we are only considering the visual information, the pictorial aspect of both words and images. When we turn the focus to the auditory, the sonic substance of the words, we notice that the previously assimilated information is not supported but entirely contradicted. By the allographs « c » and « x », *relic* is pronounced /re-lik/ and *auspex* is /aū-speks/, both containing the sound /k/, whereas it is actually *knight* lacking it, for the initial « k » is mute and left unspoken /nīt/.²⁴⁶ The result is a visual information given by the form, the signifier, diametrically opposed to the acoustic information provided by the very same source. This implies that (1) words have a double nature in terms of forms or signifiers; (2) although we might be tempted to think otherwise, both substances are not infallibly harmonious; (3) these contradictions create tension and therefore, movement, the possibility of different narratives; (4) The dimension of word is triadic, assorting sound, vision and concept; (5) In the context of the current artwork, it supports the general idea of the trinity as two opposite secular agents existing in relation to a third of a superior divine category, where in conjunction with pictures words are manifested as two forms in contradictory tension (hearing, sight) producing a third instable agent, the meaning; (6) simultaneously, the contradictory information available in the words, confirms in turn the separation in the composition and general concept of the Knight from the Relic-Auspex binary, a sub-species of the chief trinity as two secular opposites in relation to the holy. The earthly origin of the Auspex is closer to the supernatural and is expressly displayed in the composition; the man looks away and gives his back to the eternal, while the female is in contact with it. She has a key, like the Relic, to divinity. The visual substance of the words confirm it, grouping the two without « k » and isolating the « k », but also de sonic substance follows the scheme with the phoneme /k/ grouping the same elements and insulating the lack of it. To pictorially support it, both keys incorporate the letter « k » integrated as a form (fig. x) but only the Relic's key is, so to speak, operative for the letter is situated in the penetrating tip, while The Auspex only have it in the sterile bow.

In my art, I to try to establish connections on the horizontal and vertical planes. The technical aspect, the formal and the conceptual are three different dominions that I like to correlate symbolically, so that e.g. paint or colours speak about the ideas, while the aesthetic in turn can tell us something more about the technology used and potentiate connotations of the materials. The narrative character of my art in general is based in the fundament that all elements may be associated one way or another to open new floodgates and let streams of content flow, thus to be interpreted in countless ways. Besides, we have seen the ambivalent

²⁴⁶ Pronunciation references in correspondent dictionary entries of Merriam-Webster Dictionary online.

consideration of arts, sciences and other domains of human cognitive activity throughout history; as Goodman puts it "*art and science are not altogether alien.*"²⁴⁷ This project is a personal way to situate myself in between them by reflecting and understanding issues through art, my main activity. In it, words and images coexist and the hierarchies are not all clear. In the framework of art, the visual can lead us in one direction while the acoustics indicate another sometimes even warring direction, but also linguistics dealing with the visual and the auditory account for relative issues. Speech and writing are just two forms of language and communication, but all the variant factors like intonation and pronunciation, codes, jargon and polysemy, or allography, orthography or typography, even channel or media, among many more, leave the question of meaning essentially subject to interpretation, in the two hands of the user.

²⁴⁷ N. Goodman, p. 255.



6) Breslaughter ~ 2020

TECHNIQUE - Reduction Linocut

-110 x 85 cm Somerset white paper.

-105 x 80 cm linoleum matrix.

-10 offset inks; bright blue, bright orange, darker shade of orange, bright grey, magenta, bluish grey, red, dark grey, darker shade of bluish grey, black.

-7 unique copies.

PROPOSITION

The emphasis of this project is laid rather on the technical and formal aspects, although the conceptual side is not neglected. The foundational incentive was to depart from the exploited Victorian or Baroque conception of the art work, to break with delicate and refined technical processes and aesthetic. Variety pleases me, so after few projects exploring the anatomy of the print with a caress, it was time to infringe some injury and contusion. The crude approach did not suppose a dereliction of duty or spare dedication, on the contrary, it was physically more demanding while equally focused on preoccupations around the aesthetic and the conceptual. The formal features required technical solutions at times fairly complex, especially at the printing stage. But one factor was to grant some level of experimentation and improvisation which liberated at times hermetic steps encountered in previous projects. Although all methodically planned, not spontaneous.

By disruption, earlier paradigms were inverted. The apparent simplicity of *clean* prints would now feature brute traits; where no-colours were favoured, those blacks, greys, whites, and metallics, now would be defenestrated and dominated by more colourful shades. Transparent and opaque layers of irregularly applied ink, combined to build up the image, grounded the meeting point of improvised and planned moves. Here must be added the flexibility of layering, deliberately lax to obtain levels of mismatching and subsequent blunt edges, featuring overlapped and repeated contours. The disproportionate size of the matrix allowed expressive multidirectional carving, violent gesture and careless gouge strikes, as well as dynamic inking with long distance rolling, locally pressing it to register serpentine irregular incisions in a priori uncovered areas. Ten layers secured innumerable and incontrollable marks, ink stains, dots, traces and tracks of all sort unearthed by the roller every time it patrolled the more and more desolated terrains of the eroded linoleum surface. The reduction technique practically dismantled the totality of the matrix in a frenzied cutting process. The paper choice was paramount for it had to be of the highest quality to optimally

survive such heavy undergoing. It did, as expected. I had previous experience with Somerset papers and not only is larger than most standard printmaking papers, but also have a very smooth and attractive white coat that perfectly absorbs and stabilizes offset inks without having to wet it, my preferred proceeding. The result is satisfactory, with a very tactile feel, substantial materiality and a shiny sticky epidermis, irregular with disseminated reliefs and protrusions.

DESCRIPTION

Subtlety and translucent finesse offered in the three portraiture of vanitas, are implacably decimated with a terrorizing depiction of a transi. The motif is extirpated from the previous profound conceptual basis and isolated, only to be revised in a new proposition framework. The raw and aggressive technical execution fits in consonance with the horrendously gruesome imagery of the print. A bath of blood and viscous fluids drench a bare composition, lacking any trace of ornamentation as well as symbolism or elaborate narratives. It is a straightforward, disgusting decapitated transi with an uneasy gesticulation, nailing its sight upon us. Colours are quite dark and rather cold, albeit red prevails incarnating the representation of blood. The inspiration is undeniably persistent in horror and Sci-Fi pulp magazine illustrations of the 70s and 80s, cheap B movies and tasteless posters of the genre.²⁴⁸

The extensive inclination for the alliance of text and images is owed, credit where credit is due, to 20th century posters, remarkably the decade of 1970s with the psychedelic aesthetic and particularly those placards promoting movies. The idea of having a picture encapsulating the plot of a whole movie just within the scarce boundaries of the poster, fascinated me even more than the movie per se, in clear advantage to deliver a narrative. The narrative of the poster was more interesting precisely because of the creative interpretation it stimulates, so I envisioned posters of movies *without* movies, which vaticinated a sophistication of the narratives and picture plus text I foster. In this sense, the subordination of the picture to the text encountered in the prototypical poster, despite of my insistent advocacy to have it dethroned, is somewhat participating in the conception behind this project.

The word *Breslaughter*, coined for the occasion, heads the composition. Quite denaturalised as dripping and bloody letters, matches the pictures as it constitutes an integral element of them. It also integrates the title in the same manner it does in some of the previous projects. The word, after its denaturalization and consequent formalization, is not easy to read, so the title corresponds. However in this case it is important to be read for it contributes to the enabling of the experiential chain. Like in the poster model, image complements what the text conveys. Thus, *Breslaughter* is designed to bifurcate

²⁴⁸ The briefly discussed audiovisual complement of *The Cheater*, also as an opposite aesthetical pole, feasts on this sources.

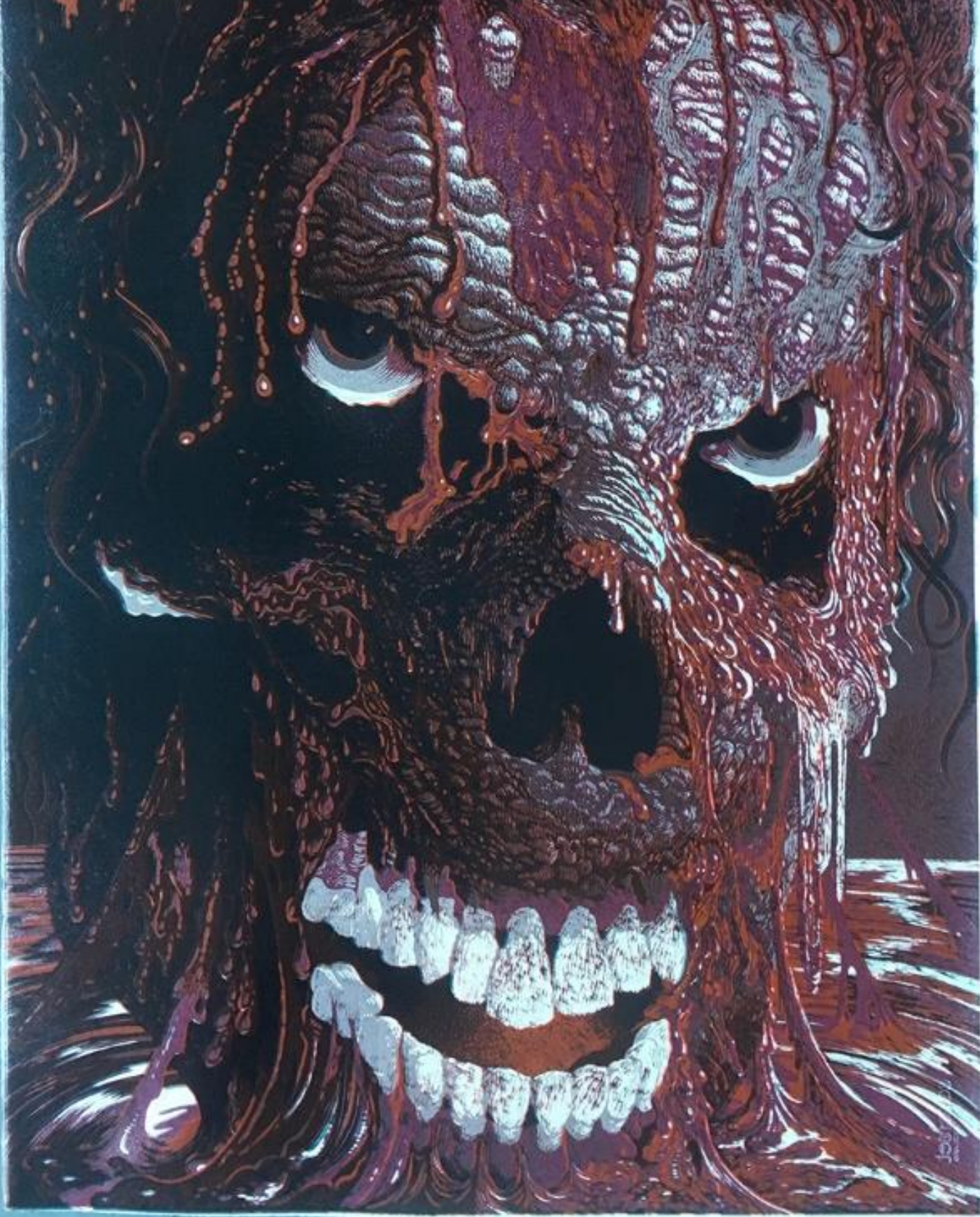
and open a pair of possibilities depending on the way it is read, namely, pronounced. Therefore, we are dealing once again with matters of visual and sonic substances of form. Visually Breslaughter is just a good looking (in my standards) word/image. It is a word game based in the German *Breslauer*, a person from *Breslau*, *Wrocław* in Polish; so Breslauer is a demonym for Wrocław (*Wrocławianin*, Wroclavian), just like *Krakauer* is *Krakowiak* (Cracowian) or *Warschauer* is *Warszawiak* (Varsovian). The premise is that it is possible to read it as *Bres-laughter* or *Bre-slaughter*. Sonically it makes a big difference, at least if read in English, which is intended. The digraph (a grapheme of two letters) « gh » has various possibilities of sound but in this case two phonemes are suggested, and depending on which of them is employed when vocalized, it will automatically trigger one interpretation or the other. The point is that whichever is chosen the image will follow and match it; if read as /f/ the word *laughter* /laf-ter/ gains significance and thus face gesture and teeth emerge to complement and illustrate this particular interpretation of Breslaughter. Conversely, when it occurs to be read as silent then the favoured word is *slaughter* /slo-ter/²⁴⁹ so that elements like blood, viscera, or whatever linked to the execrable and repugnant already suggested by the pictures, gains momentum.

Ambiguity proves to be recurrent in my art but such property appears to be likely a general feature of language, words and signifiers, signifies and meaning, fluctuating in perpetual motion. The same with semiotic types of signs. The artwork suggests and proposes a number of different key elements, even in a more simple kind of example like this project, but all elements, from the most elemental technical sign to the upmost conceptual symbol, can be perceived one way or another. The user, in an active attitude backed up by whatever his or her competencies are, in terms of cultural experience and social implication, will end up interpreting the artwork either laughing or disgusted, and no one could ever tell them it was not there, for it is there, both at once.

²⁴⁹ Pronunciation references in correspondent dictionary entries of Merriam-Webster Dictionary online.

Illustration by
JOSIPIC

BREAST AUGMENTER



JOSIPIC

EPILOGUE

Izena duen guztia omen da

'Whatever has name it is'

Basque Dictum

This adage expresses an idea of creation. Anything that can be named exists somehow and was ever created. All name is a word, product of thought on the one hand and language on the other. It is hard to imagine a word which is not some sort of thought. Neither is possible to figure out a word that is not a language. Word is a product of interaction between the two.

A pseudonym is a new name and, as name, a new word instigating some action. Early on it performs events for the bearer for no one else has experienced the new name. Under its influence one does things that can exist only in the imagination of the individual, fantasizing about anything that no one else might never know about. It is an internal function of the pseudonym. Eventually, taking for granted that pseudonym is adopted by an artist, can create objects and thus exist available for others. Objects such as words (speech, writing) or images (writing, pictures, things) will constitute signs.

The creative power of language is biological and therefore a faculty of all humans. Each individual can create a word out of nothing by that property called language and its inseparable counterpart, thought. But that creation always depends on pre-existing agents (signs) whether they are previous meanings combined in different ways to produce ideas, words combined in daily life to produce speech, or letters combined in brand new words. Thus, creation is closely related to interpretation, for interpreting those items in new ways create it.

The Basque adage already made sense, and it would make sense to any linguist at any moment for whatever has a name it is sign of a word. But in Basque culture it has nothing to do with Linguistics. To be understood the text requires a context. Only this way will be clarified in its pure sense. It is a paradox because the work of art without context is the purest form of art, which reflects us, the interpreter, the user, who creates something in there. In fact, it is the same with the adage. Without its *real* sense (that for the Basques), the meaning is already full, de facto part of this discussion. But for the sake of knowing it, it should be revealed. The proverb alludes mythology and its deities, especially witches and sorcerers. It was uttered as a cautious warning, not to be fooled by an alleged mere superstition because if it has a name, it might exist and have an impact. One must be prudent.

Epilogue

Probably, now that it has been revealed it suddenly makes some sense; a familiar word *omen* indicated something about the real superstitious nature of the adage. After all the topic permeated this thesis. But the word *omen* in Basque has nothing to do with presages, auguries and symbols. It is a particle of grammar with a contextual function (paradoxically) without any fixed meaning by itself, the best example of ambiguity. In our adage it means *must* or *apparently; whatever has a name must exist* or *it is said that anything that has a name it is*; it implies the meaning of *rumour* or the formulaic *they say, it is said*, something not seen but maybe heard. Ultimately, itself an aphorism. An adage.

Ambiguity is not a defect but a property. Everything visual or sound based, from art to speech and from speech to writing, can be understood in endless ways depending on contexts, codes, punctuation, intonations etc. History shows that concepts and names of art and artist have fluctuated from craftsmanship to philosophy to science, as well as saint, prophet or lunatic, but the core has always been the same; to know, and the flow continues moving. This thesis is a scientific research in the field of art, which is actually quite an ambiguous thing to be. My activity is based in art and whatever metaphysical or cognitive enterprise this involves, shall remain art. Geber, the Arab master of alchemy who bequeathed chemical formulas to science, left for posterity a dictum recorded in the *Rosary of Philosophers* (1550), a compendium of words of wisdom regarded today as a mere anthology of alchemy in its pejorative sense of magic and superstition;

Wheresoever we have spoken plainly, there we have spoken nothing, but where we have used riddles and figures, there we have hidden the truth ²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ *The Rosary of the Philosophers*, English transcription of 18th century MS Ferguson 210, opensource, p. 19, <https://archive.org/details/EnglishTranslationOfTheRosariumPhilosophorum/page/n1/mode/2up?q=whenever+we+have+spoken+openly> [Accessed June 6, 2021].

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IMAGES



Pict. 1



Pict. 2



Pict. 3



Pict. 4



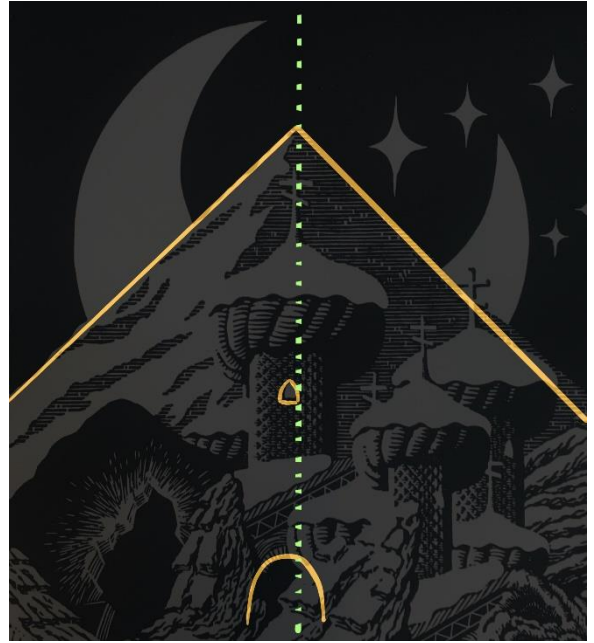
Pict. 5



Pict. 6



Pict. 7



Pict. 8



Pict. 9

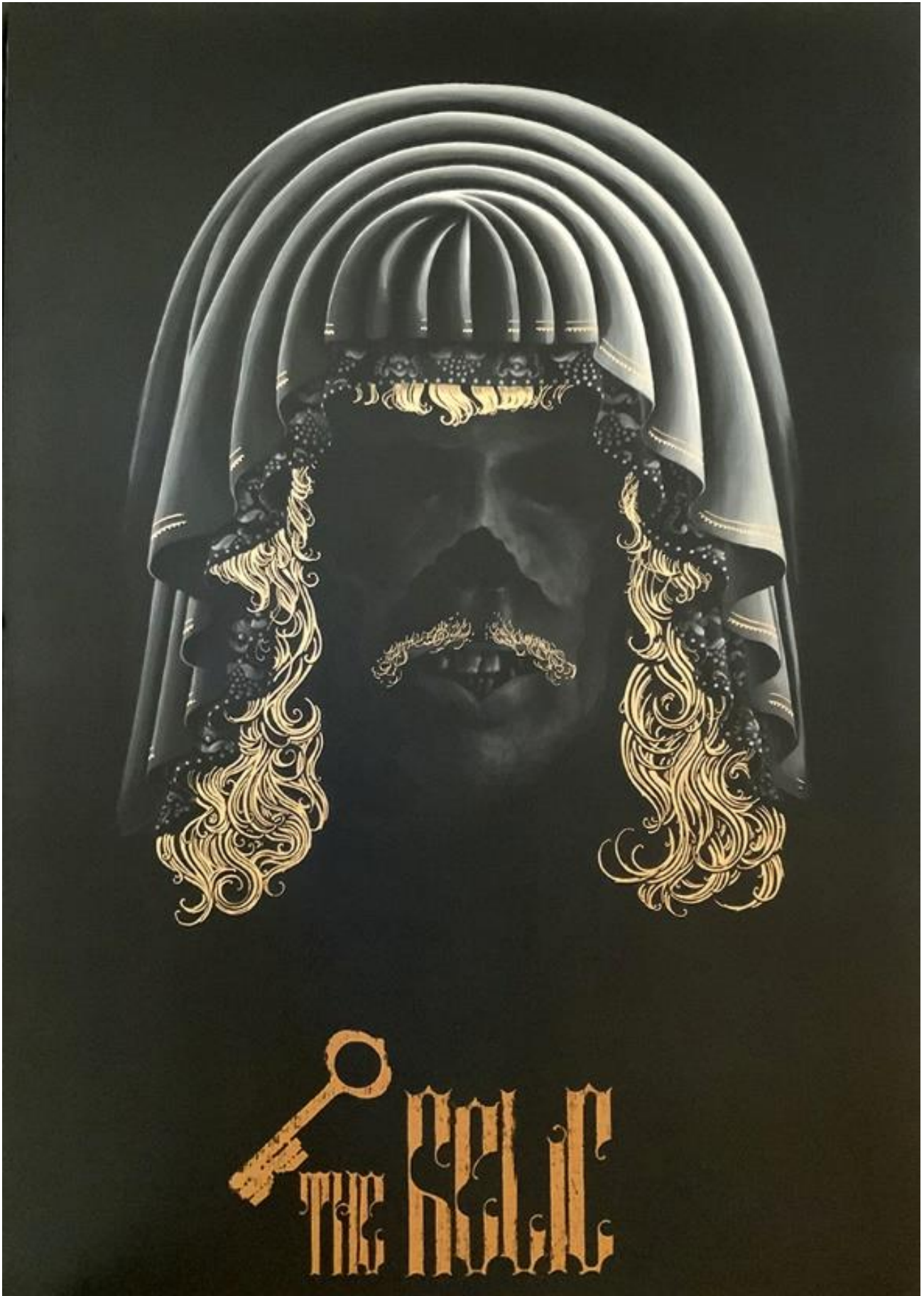


Pict. 11

Pict. 10



Pict. 12



Pict. 13



Pict. 14



Pict. 15