

THE ART OF LANGUAGE AS A PRAXIS IN THE LANGUAGE OF ART

by Gabriela Szczygiel



“We’ve got to rip the old veil of a vision across and find what the heart really believes in after all: and what the heart really wants, for the next future. And we’ve got to put it down in terms of belief and knowledge. And then go forward again to the fulfilment in life and art.”

D.H. Lawrence “Fantasia of unconscious,” 1921

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ABSTRACT

The essay's ultimate purpose is to examine language as praxis in artistic creation and prove its crucial role in mediating between rational (reason) and intuitive (imagination) human understanding of reality in the modern era, at the time of meaning dilution.

To conduct an in-depth analysis of the topic, I turned to theories from the field of philosophy across the centuries, analytical (transpersonal) psychology, and psychoanalysis to contextualize selected examples of conceptual artistic practice that constitute a profound message for the present art creation.

The research I used to broaden the spectrum of discourse embraces theories and issues reaching fundamental concepts of logos, unconscious, and imagination referring further to the language of politics, advertising, or cybernetics to highlight their mutual interconnections, their significance for the development of human consciousness towards emergent change in today's world.

A great motivation behind this text, among the others, is my artistic process based on research in the field of conceptual art, with particular emphasis on language as a means of expression, which defined my view of the role of art in the development of human consciousness, underlies every social change.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION: 'I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.'

INTRODUCTION

The motivation and inspiration to create this essay are to an equal extent: my knowledge from life experiences, observations, and educational background in human science as well as research in the field of art and my artistic process in recent years. All of them significantly influenced my personal development and determined the direction of my further exploration in and through art.

In times of unprecedented progress and the breakdown of outdated social structures, there is a growing sense of disorientation and alienation, increasing addictions and mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, personality disorders resulting in self-destructive behavior, and a lack of a sense of meaning in life.

Old means of control, such as the language of political propaganda, which influence human consciousness by internalizing certain norms and narratives through the media and social institutions, have been reinforced by intense technological progress.

Cybernetic language, "understood as a cybernetic system of power works through information, feedback, and binarizing processes." (Baudrillard) Its presence in an interactive model of advertising, marketing, and social media "can skilfully simulate

emotions, experiences, and values, generate persuasive narratives around subjective states without an innate sense of causality, mortality, or lived values. Comprehension of AI large language models i.e.GPT-3 emerges purely from pattern analysis on vast datasets of human-generated". (Nanni, 2023)

Cybernetic language, operating at the unconscious structures level, affects the human ability to identify one's desires and triggers a tendency to imitate, which is deeply rooted in human nature and results in an identity crisis. It manifests in identifying with the values, beliefs, and desires of others, imposed by contemporary trends, in copying behaviors, slogans, preferences of communication styles, or dressing resulting in a lack of true communication.

Language allow itself to be dragged along by its double and joins the best to the worst for a phantom of rationality whose formula is “everyone must believe in it,” such is the message of what unites us. (Boutess,1979)

Therefore, humanity must evolve to adapt to the conditions dictated by new types of communication, social media, technological progress, etc., so as not to succumb to entropy. "Emergent change", in line with the collective evolution of consciousness, has become a necessity.

For instance, enabling cooperative coexistence with AI by “directing technology towards the benefit of positive transformation i.e. Performing automatic work creating space for healthy work-life balance, rather than dominating humanity” (Nanni, 2023)

Concerning these, constant insight into one's psyche, recognition of one's true desires and beliefs to distinguish them from the collective, and self-realization, through the ability of critical thinking and making choices, according to personal and collective moral good, become more relevant than ever.

This essay examines the capacity of the language of art to operate at the socio-symbolic boundary, deciphering and decoding repressed unconscious contents of the human mind, and integrating them into consciousness which is crucial for positive developmental change.

In chapter 1 I intend to outline a theoretical background for a future analysis of the subject to make the context more intelligible, starting from the definition of Language and fundamental concepts of logos in Christianity and ancient philosophy, through Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's theory of consciousness evolution to the concept of Individuation process of C.G. Jung.

In chapter 2 I will continue extensive theoretical discourse, referring to the issues mentioned in the introduction, based on J.P. Satre's insight into Imagination and art Lacan's psychoanalytical central thesis "unconscious is structured like a language", and J. Baudrillard, postmodernist philosopher's, S. Zizek, Slovenian cultural theorist, and A.Huxley novelist and philosopher concepts. I will refer the discussed issues and theories to selected works of conceptual artists: Yoko Ono and Barbara Kruger.

In chapter 3 I will conduct an analysis of selected conceptual artworks of artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Kosuth, and Michael Craig-Martin, focusing on language as a means of expression in their work.

CHAPTER 1

The principle of the universal unity of Logos in the evolution of consciousness towards individuation and free creative imagination.

The word “language” comes from the 13th century, according to etymology dictionary, from the Old French “langage” which is: speech, words, oratory but also from an earlier (12th century): “linguaticum” from vulgare Latin which means: a tribe, people, nation.

The definition given by the Century Dictionary (1897) provides basic coherence to the above meanings: “The whole body of uttered signs employed and understood by a given community as expressions of its thoughts; the aggregate of words, and of methods of their combination into sentences, used in a community for communication and record and for carrying on the processes of thought.”

Delving deeper into the sentences of this definition: “the whole body of uttered signs,” or “the aggregate of word,” “as an expression of thoughts” or “for carrying on the process

of thought” leads to the concept of the “logos” which has had a crucial influence upon the Christian and Ancient Greek philosophy and originally reach far beyond an academic sources of knowledge to the Bible. According to text found on the Christianity.com website, Logos means in classic Greek both: reason and word, which indicates inseparability of both: a thought “inwardly conceived in the mind” and speech as “the thought outwardly expressed through the vehicle of language.”

(Christianity.com)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning was the Word with God. All things were made through him, and without him was nothing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1 c)

The above biblical quote is a fundamental principle of the Christian faith and transcendence, reflecting the idea of Christ as a mediator between divine and human, spiritual, and mortal, who comes to reconcile the humanity marked by sin, by which capable of suffering, with his Father in his fulness of grace and glory.

“In the Johannine corpus (the Fourth Gospel, his First Letter, and the Book of Revelation), the word used to describe the role of mediator and redeemer of the Son of God become man is the Greek word Logos, already employed by pagan philosophers. (Tanzella-Nitti 2008)

I will briefly cite several concepts of Logos to show the common idea between them and the Christian perspective, based on the articles by: Bojovic V., Shah H., and Tanzella-Nitti G.

Pythagoras (570-495 B.C.) believed that the world is based on three main principles: Monad - which represents the unification of whole reality, the singularity of everything; Dyad, a principle of diversification, and differentiation, and Harmony, which represents the relation of one thing to another, the proportion between numbers, geometrical shapes, or tones.

This Harmony is based on logos, the role of which is uniting Monad and Dyad.

Heraclitus (550-480B.C.) was the first who developed a definite philosophy of the logos as “a universal mind, responsible for the harmony and order of the world, a mind which permeated everything but which most people were unaware of or did not understand” as it is lying beyond the surface of phenomena. “Human wisdom is tasked with understanding this principle as all our actions depend on the participation in this divine *logos*.” (Bojovic V.)

Plato and Aristotle understood Logos as “a law of being and the principle of logic. Plato (427-347 B.C.) principally used the concept of Logos according to its meaning of “discourse” and “reason,” He explained that “the characteristic of true knowledge is the ability to give account, of what one knows—marking the power of human expression.” Aristotle’s(384-322B.C.) notion of Logos is close to the Latin ratio defined as reason and rationality, especially in the ethical sense, which is reflected in some English words such as “rational” or “rationalism.”

The notion of the universality of Logos coincides with the natural need of man to search for a higher sense of existence as the whole's intelligible order. Logos as the synthetic unity of opposites reflected all universal order.

Seemingly divided, fragmented structures, remaining in reciprocal relations, through universal language of communication, like music is considered as the universal language of the world. The universe, as *Whole*, is “in evolution from the essential particles or stuff making up the objects of reality to the complexity and consciousness (sensitivity/intelligence) of organisms including the human being itself.” (Birx,1981)

Love is the music of the universe – someone can say poetically to express one's own beliefs that love is what links and explains all phenomena in the universe.

This mystery *Word*, being *God*, a *Reason* for the creation and the flow of everything, or Heraclitus's *Universal Mind* could be replaced with the word *Love*, although not less sensibly would be replacing it with the *Law as Universal Order* as many philosophers proposed.

In the XX-century Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), synthesized scientific facts, philosophical concepts, religious beliefs, and mystical intuitions in his evolutionary theory of consciousness development. His idea of Meta Christianity “does justice to both science and religion while emphasizing the love of man stemming from, and rooted in, a profoundly mystical love of God.” (Birx,1981)

Nowadays, there is agreement on the meaning of logos as a divine law of metaphysics and God of religious tradition in the world of modern science, particularly quantum physics or mathematics. Fibonacci sequence, sacred geometry symbols, fractals, the tree of life pattern, occurring in the entire cosmos, nature, and art (Vitruvian Man by Da Vinci) signify the existence of “creative divine force mediating between the Universe, God, and Man.” (Shah, 2021)

Teilhard's interpretation of whole earth history is “essentially a mystical vision of the unity of person with God as the supreme center of a personalizing universe.” (Birx,1981)

In Jungian analytical psychology, according to Shelbourne (1998) Logos as a rational masculine principle is counter parted to eros - the emotional, mythical element associated with femininity, as a representation of opposites: conscious and unconscious aspects of personality, light, and shadow, good and evil, imagination and reality. The unification of these opposites is the absolute condition for individuation, to become whole, conscious human beings. “The principle of individuation defines the essence of the human.” (Stein,2005)



Fig.1 Bollingen tower mandala stone, 1950

The photograph above shows a stone monument made by C.G. Jung in 1950, with engraved mandala - representation of the universe, its circular shape with the center, archetype of wholeness (squaring circle). In the center of the circle, he placed Telesphorus – the Greek semi-god of healing, surrounded by the words: "This is

Telesphorus, who roams through the dark regions of this cosmos and glows like a star of the depths. He shows the way to the gates of the sun and to the land of dreams."(Library of Congress)

According to article "The Red Book of Carl G. Jung: Its Origins and Influence" a squared circle (mandala in square) symbol of Alchemy represents Jungian Individuation process, (a term introduced in his text "Septem, Sermones at Mortuus" in 1916) related to "inner work" leading to individual wholeness and self-realization - "an attitude towards understanding of future possibilities." (Wickes F. 1876-1967)

According to Jung "the basest impulse of humans is to achieve self-uniqueness" but at the same time "human beings have one faculty which, is of the greatest utility for collective purposes, but most pernicious for individuation, and that is the faculty of imitation." (Jung cited by Stein)

He stated that "If we do not distinguish, we get beyond our own nature, away from creature(...) We are given over to dissolution in nothingness. Therefore, we die in such measure as we do not distinguish. Indistinctiveness and non-distinction are a great danger for the creature." (Jung, 1916)

According to the text "Inner Work" by M. Stein (2005) work on individuation is a lifelong process that consists of "the analytical movement through separation, differentiation, and synthesis of emergent aspects of self which manifest in dreams, active imagination, and archetypal transference."

Jung opposed the individuation process against identity - Persona (mask) which depends on unconscious projection and introjection and is related to the collective psyche by identifying with some qualities, values, convictions, and attachments accepted by the environment or culture, and rejecting its opposites. Repressing rejected values, feelings, and memories into the unconscious, creates a shadow, an aspect of personality that does not correspond with the ego-image of oneself.

This is how the words on his monument could be interpreted. “Roam through the dark region” (shadow, unconscious) of this cosmos (human psyche), glow like a star of the depths (bringing unconscious to the consciousness), and show the gate of the sun (light, consciousness) and to the land of dreams (healing through the dreams and imagination). The biblical word being a light over the darkness or logos as a symbolic order emerging from the chaos coincides with an individuation, based on same principles of unifying opposite forces.

Jung compared the individual to the mirror’s reflecting surface “in which the world of consciousness can perceive its own unconscious content,” not as permanent oil painting but as temporary and constantly changing. “The mirror of consciousness” allows to see a more whole image of self, imperfect but “more present and less distorted.” While illusion slowly dissolves, space for self-acceptance is created. (Stein, 2025)

The second part of the individuation process, the transcendent function of synthesis, conscious and unconscious contents which ,leads to create “a new synthetic psychological structure that which represent a person’s wholeness and individuality in all its heights and depths, from the instinctual to the spiritual—body, soul, and spirit, a genuine and free person.”(Stein 2005)

In this place, a reflection appears regarding the mutual relationship of human nature in the chaotic era of technology and social media, disappearing meanings and values. The questions arise: how far from the fundamental principles of the harmonious unity of Logos and the pursuit of the development of consciousness through individuation humanity is today and whether there is an antidote that will make people stop acting against their own nature?

CHAPTER 2

Power of language against a language of power

In this chapter I will attempt to answer above question by examine the language as a medium in art based on selected artworks compiling words with image, object, or installation, starting with Barbara's Kruger work "You are not yourself" which reflects a radical moment of contrasting persona (identity), product of social expectation with sense of individuality.

Barbara Kruger is an American conceptual artist, whose work addresses contemporary issues such as consumerism, politics, and feminism. Her approach to the themes remains very actual today, particularly by using advertising language and pop culture imagery.

"I work with pictures and words because they have the ability to determine who we are and who we are not." (Kruger B.)

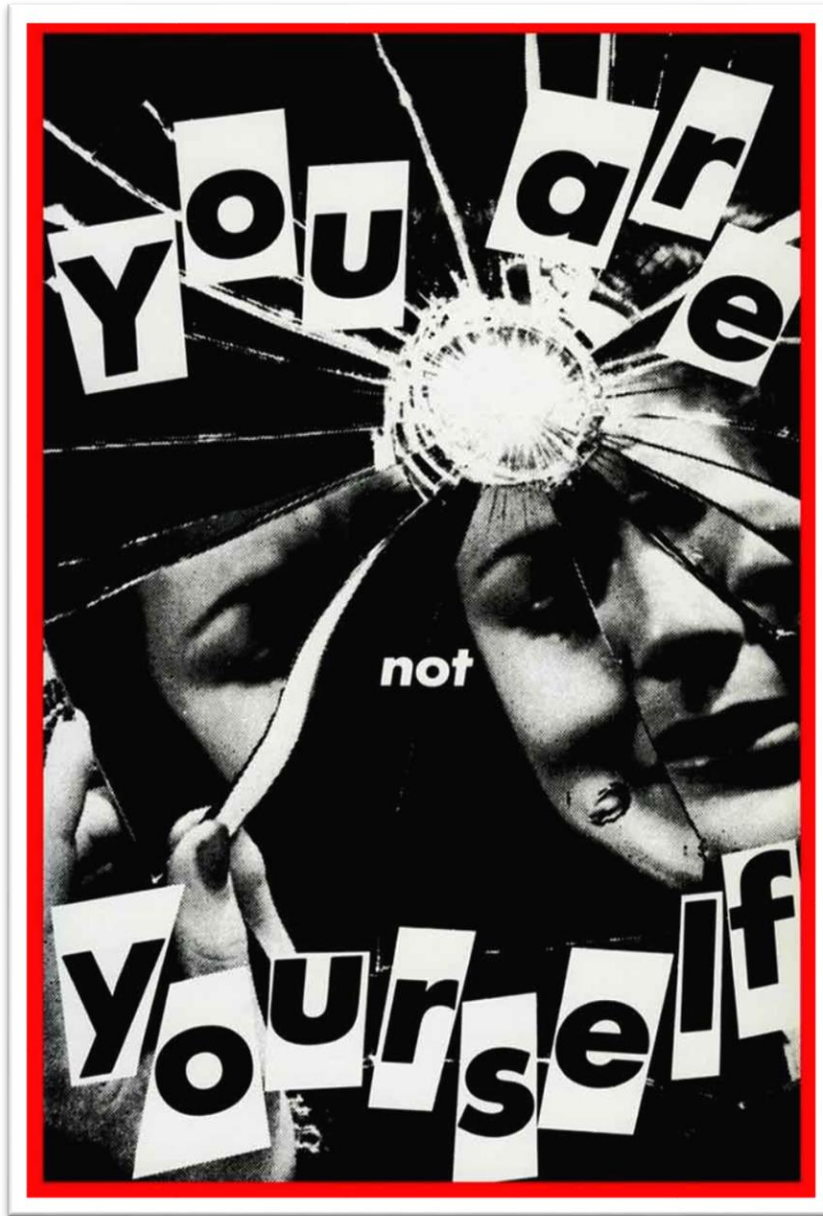


Fig.2 You are not yourself, 1981

Kruger work is a montage (collage) combining text with found, fragmented photograph. A broken mirror surface reflects a fragmented, disintegrated woman's face. The words: "you are not yourself" applied over the photograph, speak directly to the receiver (by "you") without subtexts, manipulation, or blurred meanings conveying direct, concisely

expressed truth that “society doesn’t allow women to be their “authentic self”

(Stankovic,2024) The way of using words by artist reverses a process of proliferation characterized a language of politics, media, and advertising, striving for unambiguity. All elements of her work are coherent and reinforce each other. Red frames refer to inner space, emphasize on boundaries of privacy.

This work undoubtedly speaking behalf of the female part of a society dominated by sexist tendencies, in which women's functioning is reduced to fulfilling strictly defined social roles and needs creating their unconscious desire within the framework of ideological and economic structures. But it could also refer, in general, to "control and positioning of the social body emerges as pivotal in shaping individuals into conforming members of society” (Sihe).

The notion of the fragmented body refers to “the self” as a mirror image” in Lacanian psychoanalysis, which “combined the phenomenological distinction between subject and ego with a psychological understanding of the role of image”(Homer, 2005) In “a mirror stage” infant is in love with a mirror reflection, which perceived, in the first instance as real self and then identifies self with reflection as a unified wholeness in contrast to the sense of fragmented body. A reflecting surface is always related to "The Others", a parent, a partner, a society, always reflecting fragmented parts of us until the mirror breaks and the illusory of unity with the reflected image slowly dissolves. The collective psyche is contrasted with individuality and starts reflecting on each other. A

piece of mirror in hand signifies awareness of the process, symbolizing presence out of the mirror image.

According to Jung, the most effective method for creating the transcendent function of individuation process is active imagination. "People must imagine and create a new meaning by Themselves, with complete responsibility for Their actions" (Satre J.1940)

Jean-Paul Satre, in his book "The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination states, that the power of imagination lies in its distance from reality and its capacity to envision things differently than when they appear in the world, even impossible or illogical. Imagination is a space for response to the stimuli from the surrounding environment, in which humans are free to choose their response therefore able to make a change.

According to Satre "Human are ontologically free because They can imagine.

"Consciousness incapable of imagination is incapable of the perception of unrealized possibilities, and thus any real freedom of thought or choice." (Satre,1940)



Fig.3 Imagine Peace 2008

Two words "IMAGINE PEACE," in iconic Yoko Ono work, is not a fantasy of better reality, against which the individual is helpless. The artist is fully aware of her message. By using only two simple words addressing the recipient directly, it creates the bridge between intuitive and rational, impossible, and possible. Unlike political Language, which "uses great words of freedom, obtaining meaning only in the context of propaganda, business, and discipline" (Marcuse H.), here is no room for ambiguity, to imagine means that everyone is completely free and capable of doing it, regardless of gender, age, race social and financial status. Yoko addresses the entire world as the receiver. This version of work as a billboard in public space is only one of many in series beginning from 1969,

which appeared in many forms and languages. Its validity did not change for over 50 years, the message speaks over time and space.

The artist's choice is to use the space of imagination to transform the world by inspiring others through their creation. "A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality."(Yoko Ono)

Music, poetry, books, paintings, and all other forms of art are created in the space of imagination therefore capable of changing reality. Like a lucid dream, art creation combines the possibilities of imagination with the features of reality; while not being limited by them. The ability to control dreams is the ability to make dreams come true. Therefore, art possesses an immense power as a catalyst of change, and the measure of this power lies in the communication between the sender and the receiver. It means that "we are responsible for the meaning which we create" (Satre) also by actively participating in receiving message from the artwork. According to Satre: "Aesthetic contemplation is an induced dream and the passage to this real is an authentic awaking." This means that humans must develop consciousness towards mental freedom and contemplation of art transfers us to a reflective imaginary world in which we awake to the reality of our freedom. As Satre states: "Imagination is the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom."

Art as a product of the imagination, mediates between the unconscious and the conscious, intuitive, and rational part of the mind, and between individual and collective

(artist and audience) as an intransitive language with all its intensity of never verbalized experience, speaking of metaphors, because is created out of metaphors.

To give strength to the above considerations, I will look at the topic from the perspective of the Latin object of study which was “Unconscious, structured like a language,” based on Sean Homer book "Jaques Lacan”.

“The language that speaks through us rather than the language we speak,” that's how Jacques Lacan defined unconscious, process of signification beyond our control, emphasizing its inseparability from the language. The Lacanian subject of Unconscious in contrary to self- consciousness is “a lacking subject who has lost his being and is realized through the process of metaphor and metonymy.” His central thesis that unconscious is structured as a language means “a signifying process that involves coding and decoding, and comes into being in the gap between signifier and signified through the sliding of signified beneath the signifier and the failure of meaning,” (Homer 2005)

In the gap between sign and its reference is the “The real” - “the unknow, existing at the limit of socio-symbolic universe,” associated with the concept of trauma. Trauma arises from the confrontation between external stimulus and the subject’s inability to understand, rationalize and respond, therefore is being repressed. “There is always something left over a residue that cannot be transformed through language.”(Lacan cited by Homer,2005)

The language capable of this operation is the language of art, reaching beyond conceptual thinking and transferring unconscious content into the conscious by

translating emotional to rational using the language of unambiguity, lying at the opposite end of the continuum to the language of media, advertising, and politics incapable of conveying truth. “It is useless to dream of revolution through content, useless to dream of a revelation through form, because the medium and the real are now in a single nebula whose truth is indecipherable.” (Baudrillard,1981)

In the essay “The Implosion of Meaning in the Media, Baudrillard argues that “the proliferation of information prevents communication, rather than enhancing it, and creates conditions of unresolvable uncertainty.”

“If the Real is disappearing, it is not for lack of it, on the contrary, there is too much of it. It is the excess of reality that puts an end to reality, as well as the excess of information puts an end to information, or the excess of communication puts an end to communication” (Baudrillard,2000).

The above quotes explain the nature of the vanishing role of the language and the thoughts, which originally were a vehicle to convey meaning.

Kruger’s work “I shop therefore I am” perfectly responds to this issue, subverting the meaning of Descartes's famous sentence “I think therefore I am.”



Fig.4 I Shop, Therefore I Am, 1987

Phrase “I shop therefore I am” ironically twists René Descartes ‘I think, therefore I am’ expressing certainty of self-consciousness and emphasizing thought as proof of our existence. Kruger subverted this sentence to define addictive shopping as an unconscious consumer behavior in the place of thinking. The inference in Kruger’s work is that the endless age of consumption and technological progress did the same,

promising a better and easier life. “The extent this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man’s mind and body.” (Godfrey,1998) Mindless shopping in the place of individual thinking impairs the road to self-awareness. People’s constant search for object of desire: fulfilment, possession, love, knowledge is the desire to fill the gap, the emptiness, thoughtlessly absorb everything that resonates with this emptiness and distracts.

The more intense the stimulation, the more attractive and the more effective distraction. Filling the gap of repressed trauma, the real is impossible, the only way is to face it and decode unconscious, repressed content, but most of “human beings will settle for any experience, however painful, rather than fall out of the familiarity of the symbolic into the trauma and void of the real.” (Ragland-Sullivan,1995)

Consumption and entertainment work like a virtual reality of fantasy. Instead, individuation and making progress by active using imagination, people choose a fantasy as “a defense against intrusion of “the real” into everyday human experience.” Unlike imagination, fantasy serves as an escape from responsibility for self-realization and well-being.

According to Slavoj Zizek, unconscious processes and fantasies underlie social and national conflicts, sexism, and homophobia in a collective sense, constitutes the structure of racism and antisemitism, by creating invisible enemy like Jewish in Nazi ideology, black, gypsies or gay whose “has stolen our jouissance” (enjoyment from pain) from us,” to justify our prejudice and hatred towards them.

"We think there must be something better, we believe there must be something better"
(Fink 2002) Something beyond our range, what the other can access.

Kruger uses language, which expresses the unconscious collective statement of the consumption era and simultaneously wakes up the rational mind to rethink his action. In her work she uses a bold text borrowed from the language of advertising and magazines and uncovers naked truth, exploring how ideological messages infiltrate daily life through the mass media.

The condensed effect of ideology and media is comparable to a drug which in small doses make people happy, in medium They have a vision, and in large doses put them to sleep in the sense of unawareness, entirely programmable, like a Soma in Huxley's fictional novel" Brave new world" (1932)

"We may have a drug which will profoundly change our mental state without doing any physiological harm. They will do it by bypassing the sort of rational side of man and appealing to his subconscious and his deeper emotions and even his physiology, making his love his slavery" (Huxley).

Above I recalled A. Huxley words that he used in his prophetic interview from 1958 while explaining the interconnection of political propaganda, media, advertising, with new advanced technology and social conditions, as a recurring theme in history.

"All technology is morally neutral, are just powers which either be used well or ill," like a television on-pointed drumming of a single idea all the time become so powerful instrument." With this words Huxley referring to the historical example of Hitler's

extremely effective propaganda, which imposed his will on huge masses, even educated people, using radio "to the maximum extent" as an advanced technology of the time.

"Through simulation unconscious can be produced just such as dream as a product of the human unconscious," (Baudrillard), in the same way "when the real world is transformed into simple images, simple images become real beings, that provide the direct motivations for hypnotic behavior" Debord (2002)

Concluding, after Huxley, "the preservation of integrity and reasserts the value of the human "is extremely important today, on the breakdown of new technological era that "every human being is unique based on his genetic makeup and the whole idea of the value of freedom based on it."

CHAPTER 3

In between a sign and meaning – art and trauma speak the same language

In the last chapter I will focus on how conceptual artists used language as a medium in art by analyzing the works of three artists: M. Duchamp, M. Craig Martin, and J. Kossuth to emphasize its power of making meaning which is extremely important for art today.

“Conceptual art, simply put, had as its basic tenet an understanding that artists work with meaning, not with shapes, colors, or materials.” (Kossuth 1966)

Text and language became a crucial medium for artists who questioned the notion of artwork that should consist of a physical object such like Sol Levitt along with other text – based artist: Joseph Kossuth, Hamish Fulton, Richard Long or Art& Language associated artists.

The most important, collaborative group of artists in late 1960 “Art & Language” described conceptual art as Modernism’s nervous breakdown comparing to the falls of beliefs in our lives, “we are no longer devoted to, as modernist art not represented longer what They believed that art supposed to be.”

The ability to rethink the world and remake meaning through the language was defined by Marcel Duchamp creating Fountain in 1917 and applying text: R. Mutt on it, which represents the shift towards pure ideas and systems focused on intellectual concepts of “dematerialization of art object”.



Fig.5 Fountain 1917

Before Duchamp, the work of art was always a physical object. Both the message's context and the combination of image and text were important for Duchamp to convey his idea.

“The readymade is a work of art reduced to the statement- this is Art”

“With the subsequent implications of negation, the work as a material object, as being an opus for an author, as visual phenomenon offered to a viewer and to negate a work

as an institutional value. In effect conceptual period became a moment of “awareness and intense reflective activity.” (De Duve1996).

Urinal ironically named Fontain, signed by R. Mutt, parodically, twisted name of manufacturer, landed in the gap between sign and symbol, signifier and signified, that is, where art “has something to do” and needs to be decoded, and secondly redefined in symbolic order according to the new meaning.

“It states the condition of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, once the copy precedes the original” and loses its original meaning. Practice of art and its quality depends on the most explicit recognition of its actual conditions of operation, with the substitution of language for visuality” (De Duve1996).

“In the era of new digitalized technologies enable perfectly faked documentary images, and Virtual Reality, the motto "believe my words (argumentation), not the fascination of your eyes!" is more actual than ever.” (Zizek,1997)

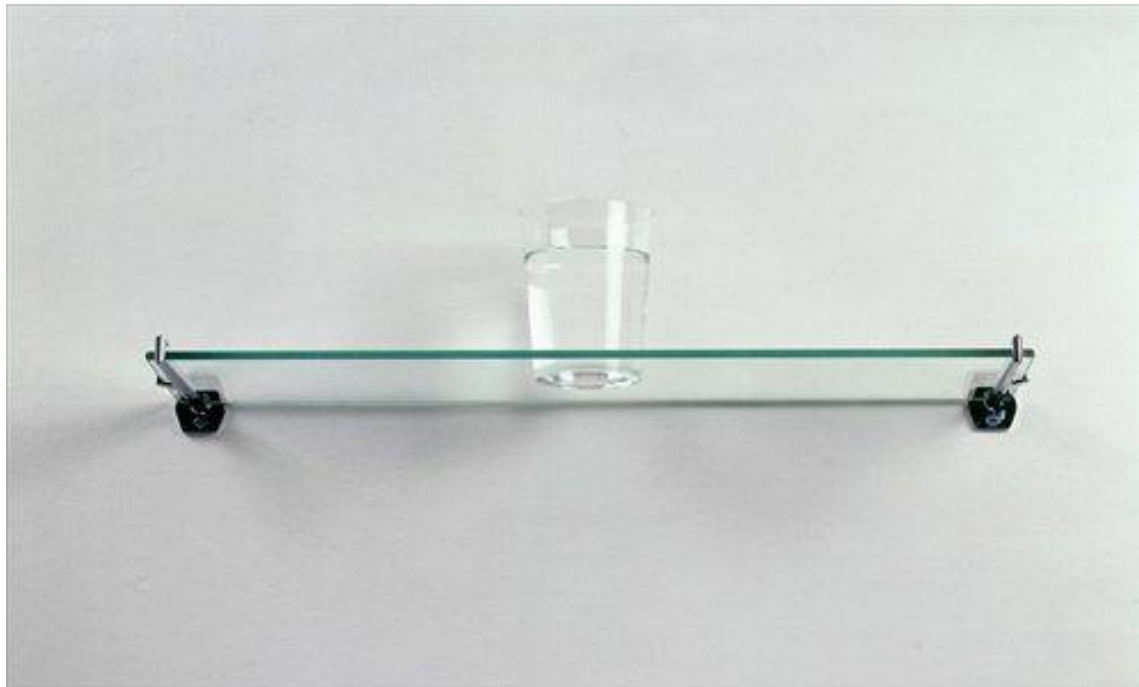


Fig.3 The oak tree 1973

Q: To begin with, could you describe this work?
A: Yes, of course. What I've done is change a glass of water into a full-grown oak tree without altering the accidents of the glass of water.
Q: The accidents?
A: Yes. The colour, feel, weight, size ...
Q: Do you mean that the glass of water is a symbol of an oak tree?
A: No. It's not a symbol. I've changed the physical substance of the glass of water into that of an oak tree.
Q: It looks like a glass of water ...
A: Of course it does. I didn't change its appearance. But it's not a glass of water. It's an oak tree.
Q: Can you prove what you claim to have done?
A: Well, yes and no. I claim to have maintained the physical form of the glass of water and, as you can see, I have. However, as one normally looks for evidence of physical change in terms of altered form, no such proof exists.
Q: Haven't you simply called this glass of water an oak tree?
A: Absolutely not. It is not a glass of water any more. I have changed its actual substance. It would no longer be accurate to call it a glass of water. One could call it anything one wished but that would not alter the fact that it is an oak tree.
Q: Isn't this just a case of the emperor's new clothes?
A: No. With the emperor's new clothes people claimed to see something which wasn't there because they felt they should. I would be very surprised if anyone told me they saw an oak tree.
Q: Was it difficult to effect the change?
A: No effort at all. But it took me years of work before I realized I could do it.
Q: When precisely did the glass of water become an oak tree?
A: When I put water in the glass.
Q: Does this happen every time you fill a glass with water?
A: No, of course not. Only when I intend to change it into an oak tree.
Q: Then intention causes the change?
A: I would say it precipitates the change.
Q: You don't know how you do it?
A: It contradicts what I feel I know about cause and effect.
Q: It seems to me you're claiming to have worked a miracle. Isn't that the case?
A: I'm flattered that you think so.
Q: But aren't you the only person who can do something like this?
A: How could I know?
Q: Could you teach others to do it?
A: No. It's not something one can teach.
Q: Do you consider that changing the glass of water into an oak tree constitutes an artwork?
A: Yes.
Q: What precisely is the artwork? The glass of water?
A: There is no glass of water any more.
Q: The process of change?
A: There is no process involved in the change.
Q: The oak tree?
A: Yes, the oak tree.
Q: But the oak tree only exists in the mind.
A: No. The actual oak tree is physically present but in the form of the glass of water. As the glass of water was a particular glass of water, the oak tree is also particular. To conceive the category 'oak tree' or to picture a particular oak tree is not to understand and experience what appears to be a glass of water as an oak tree. Just as it is imperceivable, it is also inconceivable.
Q: Did the particular oak tree exist somewhere else before it took the form of the glass of water?
A: No. This particular oak tree did not exist previously. I should also point out that it does not and will not ever have any other form but that of a glass of water.
Q: How long will it continue to be an oak tree?
A: Until I change it.

The title of Craig-Martin's work was 'An Oak Tree. This radical work of conceptual art, Michael Craig-Martin represents a glass of water on a glass shelf accompanied by a printed text containing a dialogue between the artist and an understandably skeptical

viewer, in which artist declaring that he had transformed the object into a tree without changing its appearance.

The verbal statement openly and consciously denies sensory perception, provoking dialogue on the border between rationality and metaphysics. The artist used a highly logical argumentation based on semiotics to prove illogical insinuation that the glass of water with all its physical features is an oak tree, not as a symbol but as a physical substance, which does not change appearance.

According to him the oak tree does not exist only in the mind as an idea or the name is not used as a metaphor, it is a real oak tree that is not a glass of water anymore. The question arises: can a viewer who sees a glass of water prove that it is not a tree in the form of a glass? Or can he only deny it based on faith in his senses and cognitive processes?

Referring to Catholic faith, Is the existence of the invisible God based on sensory knowledge or is it just an individual matter of faith? Is the consumption of the eucharist a purely symbolic gesture or a profound mystical experience, receiving the living Christ in the form of bread and wine?

In contrast to Duchamp's Fountain, this work conveys not only ideas but also the notion of belief, questioning perception as a purely cognitive process and reaching out to spiritual and metaphysical cognition, leading to considerations of miracles.

However, this work can also reflect the issue of artwork in the era of reproduction. Just as a copy of a painting, signed with the name of the original and its creator, is considered a work of art, it fundamentally contradicts the truth.

A glass of water can represent The oak tree, even though it exists in the physical form of a glass of water. Moreover, in the first case, we are dealing with an objective fact, the second is a matter of the individual perception of the recipient, depending on his or her faith and views. “The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe. Seeing, which come before words can never be quite covered by them, we only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice” (Berger,1972).

“The Key of Dreams” by Margrete, surrealist painter, is related to the gap between words and seeing in analogous way like The oak tree. Recalling Lacanian concept of “the unconscious which comes into being in symbolic order in the gap between signifier and signified, through the sliding of signified beneath the signifier and the failure of meaning” (Homer, 2005)

I conclude that Oak tree has as surreal(representation) as conceptual (values and ideas) dimension anchored on the border between the conscious and the unconscious, in the space between the imagined and the real, and therefore capable of mediating between them. Language as a medium in art, together with the symbolic language of the object, invigorate of reason and spirit, introducing a state of contemplation of metaphysical phenomena.

Today's virtual world of social media has become not only does not refer to reality but has become reality, a form without content, an objectification of subjectivity, a new symbolic order in which the symbol does not refer to anything outside itself. The boundaries between word and its meaning, image, and the idea it represents have been erased.

Kossuth's 1965 installation composed of an object, an image, and words, most accurately depicts the subject of the considerations here.



Fig.7 One and three chair, 1965

Indeed, that was his intention, to transform three simple chairs into an object of consternation in exploration of a new meaning.

This artwork speaks openly and directly, conveying a most meaningful message to the contemporary art world, what it should be and what language it should speak in a world in which the greatest threat to the development of human consciousness has become the lack of meaning.

In conclusion, I will explain it, once again recalling the Lacanian concept of The Real, functioning on the socio-symbolic border, beyond symbolic and imaginary, this gap between what we see, hear, and feel but do not understand. The meaning is a connection between them enables understanding, rationalization, and communication. Failure of meaning escapes every form of symbolic representation (image, words), repressing unknown elements in the abyss of the unconscious. Lacan identified this repressed element as “representative of representation” in other words: unknowable in itself or The Thing. It is a missing element, that people constantly attempt to find, to fill the gap, emptiness and They are looking for it in material objects or sensory experiences, sinking into a world of constant consumption.

Art has the power to mediate between an image, a symbol, and an idea. “Art is making meaning.” (Kossuth J.)

CONCLUSION

Human beings have the potential to consciously create their reality and their choices, transcendent unity with the rest of the universe through developing “appropriate adjustments in attitude, emotion, and conduct” (Hume D.)

Relevant to this kind of self-understanding is what we may refer to as “individuals' subjective senses of who They really are, Their self-images” of intellectual, artistic, and moral behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. (Martin, 1985)

Someone with proper self-understanding not only recognizes and affirms one's central commitments and values but also feels and acts according to them.

To activate his potential, a person must feel the sense of his existence, which determines the purpose of action towards the development of consciousness and needs tools that enable this development. One of them, which is naturally assigned to us, is imagination, which allows us to overcome all the limitations of reality. The second is art, which frees the imagination.

The language of art has the power to mediate between reality and imagination, operating at the socio-symbolic boundary, through the metaphors and metonymy, deciphering and decoding repressed unconscious contents of the human mind, and integrating them into consciousness, where the purely rational mind cannot reach.

The use of language as a medium in art makes art an extremely powerful tool for restoring meaning where it has been lost or blurred, which is extremely important in times when all technological propaganda aims to erase meaning in order to program and subordinate man to its own goals.

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