From Emblem to Album: Transhistorical Comparisons of Text/Image Interplay in Cover Art and Renaissance Emblems

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my Grandpa Adam McGee (1921–2007) and Nonno Peter Vezza (1929–2020).

Abstract

Drawing upon a transhistorical perspective that has, over the past two decades, gained traction in visual culture and text/image scholarship (Daly, Mödersheim, Rypson, Van Dongen, and Grove), this thesis considers text/image interplay as exhibited in album cover art and Renaissance emblems (and emblematic manifestations) by drawing comparisons in form and function. Rather than provide an account of each form's historical evolution in its multifarious cultural contexts, this study uses album covers and emblems as part of wider transhistorical comparisons of recurring communicative procedures in Western visual culture.

Chapter 1 begins by briefly addressing questions of definition with respect to the terms 'emblem' and 'emblematic', and then moves to explore what the existing literature has offered as a theorisation of emblematic text/image interaction. The second section of the chapter looks at the work previously carried out by text/image scholars who have also made transhistorical comparisons between the Emblematic Age and our modern text/image culture. These studies show that current-day emblematic parallels are discovered in symbolic advertising, tattoo art, American paperback covers, contemporary art, and *bande dessinée*. As such, Chapter 2 builds on this work by introducing album cover art to the critical discussion; an exploration of its design origins from a text/image perspective, a survey of existing scholarly approaches, and finally an 'emblematic reading' of cover art's visual/verbal characteristics opens up new comparative dimensions. To draw a formal parallel between album covers and emblems, a set of threefold criteria is proposed and applied to a case in point.

The conclusions drawn in Chapter 2 are then applied to Chapters 3-5, which feature close analytical readings of text/image interplay in three examples of album cover art, spanning 1940–1970. By way of the criteria of *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure*, and *interactive hybridity*, emblematic counterparts to these album covers are discovered and analysed. The overriding conclusion of this study is that through close analysis of selected cultural objects, we can identify analogous communicative tendencies involving the interaction of text and image across disparate historical periods and contexts in Western culture. To that end, this thesis asserts that album covers and emblems can further advance Grove's notion of *parallel mentalities* with respect to the Renaissance period and our modern age.

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I am, first and foremost, deeply grateful to my supervisors Prof. Laurence (Billy) Grove and Prof. Louise Harris. Their advice, expertise, support, and good humour have been indispensable throughout my work on this thesis. I would also like to thank Prof. Björn Heile who acted as my APR reader since the beginning; his insights have led to a number of important breakthroughs in my thinking and research. In the early years of this work, I was a fortunate beneficiary of the Dr. Peter Davies scholarship. I was even more fortunate to have spent time with Peter; his erudition, kindness, humour, and, above all, scholarly enthusiasm have always stayed with me. I express heartfelt thanks to him also.

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I would finally like to thank my Mum and Dad, and all other family members who supported me in more ways than one throughout this process, and without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

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Prologue

> Contemporary studies continually emphasize the presence of a new visuality of culture. They interpret the wealth of visual material surrounding us and the gap between it and our ability to analyse it as a phenomenon typical of our multimedia visual experience. However, is this visual surplus only a phenomenon of the present time? The Western tradition has always had an abundance of visual experiences available to it: illustrated books, prints, paintings, frescoes, decorative arts, emblems, votive images, and picture shows are only a few examples of the presence of images, artefacts and objets d'art which have always characterized ordinary life.
>
> (Braida, Antonella, 2003, pp. 1-2)

> As we have come to understand it more, the rhetorical tradition has thrown light not merely on the past but almost equally on the present, for it has enabled us better to see the significance of the shifts in media and in modes of knowledge storage and retrieval which have both resulted from and produced our present technological age. The ancient rhetoricians were the first media buffs. Study of the rhetorical tradition enables us to interpret the past on its own terms and thus to discover many of the real roots out of which the present grows. It is thus one way to keep history from degenerating into antiquarianism.
>
> (Ong, 1971, p. viii)

A Cross-Media Metaphor?

In 2004, American authors Ian Caldwell and Dustin Thomason published their *New York Times* best-selling thriller *The Rule of Four*, which follows a group of four graduate students at Princeton University who become embroiled in a deadly pursuit of the truth behind the enigmas of a Renaissance text/image masterpiece: Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* [The Strife of Love in a Dream] of 1499 (Venice: Manuzio). Tom, the narrator, is the son of an academic whose life was dedicated to the *Hypnerotomachia*. His main counterpart Paul is currently writing his thesis on the same work, with support from close college friends Charlie and Gill. The *Hypnerotomachia*, as well as consisting of an arcane allegory in which Poliphilo pursues

his love Polia — with beautifully illustrated dreamlike landscapes that includes exotic animals, extravagant architectural forms, wild gardens and forests, and nymphs — is said to contain an important but life-threatening secret of the past. The book's ensuing chapters comprise the discovery of clues in a mysterious diary, unsolved murders, threats and/or meddling from thesis supervisors who turn out to be old family rivals, with the final revelation that Colonna had hidden precious literature and art in a vault in Rome to avoid Girolamo Savonarola's bonfire of the vanities. These are all qualities that transform *The Rule of Four* itself into a book of enigmas resembling the same Renaissance mode of composition that initially produced the *Hypnerotomachia.* Unsurprisingly, *The Rule of Four* has been positively, even preferentially, compared to Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* (2003), which is part of the same vogue of literature that unlocks codes, ciphers, and hidden meanings to historical aspects of world culture.

That same year also saw the release of Jon Turteltaub and Jerry Bruckheimer's Hollywood-blockbuster *National Treasure*, starring Nicholas Cage as historian and treasure-hunter (protector?) Benjamin Gates, Justin Bartha as computer expert Riley Poole, and Diane Kruger as archivist Abigail Chase. The film centres upon the fabled existence and hidden location of the treasure of the Knights Templar, a story passed down through generations of the Gates family which Ben Gates wishes to prove beyond doubt. After years of searching and failed expeditions, a pivotal moment arrives with Gates' realisation that the only hope of completing their quest lies in stealing the Declaration of Independence. Astonishingly, on the back of the Declaration is inscribed an invisible map, as well as 'a way to find a way to find a way to read the map', which is now also at risk of being stolen by friend-turned-enemy Ian Howe (Sean Bean). The same code, or rather book cipher, then points to the Silence Dogood letters of Benjamin Franklin (incidentally, Franklin was also a key figure of North American emblematics). The amalgamation of these clues reveal the location of map-reading spectacles and — amongst intense action sequences, a flourishing romance, and yet more enigmas — the entrance to the resting place of the Knights Templar treasure.

Why should these two examples of Western popular culture be selected to open our discussion? How, exactly, do they relate to the subject matter of the present thesis? Both the film and book juxtapose distinct historical periods and cultural contexts: that of Renaissance Europe or Colonial North America and that of the twentieth century. They also directly or indirectly deal with historical forms of text/image interaction,

either in the form of coded messages, ciphers, and maps, or indeed in the context of a canonical Renaissance text/image enigma. Likewise, their inner-functioning hinges upon the bringing together of seemingly disparate elements: lavish historical documents, fast cars and explosions, intellectual contexts/expertise, and murder-mystery tropes. It is, furthermore, through this combination of disparate elements that typical notions of high and low culture intermingle, and the boundaries between them become blurred. Finally, both the film and book comprise a plot structure that teases the viewer with enigmatic clues, references, and plot twists — *aporia* — that eventually form a cohesive ending where all is revealed — *dénouement*. These attributes, as shall become apparent, can be seen as a wide metaphor for the themes and structure of this thesis.

Research Questions

At the macro level, the following research is preoccupied with two major questions pertaining to the history, theory, and practice of text/image production in Western visual culture:

1) Can an awareness of text/image interaction of the so-called *Aetas Emblematica*, or Early Modern Emblematic Age, be applied to the interpretation of modern-day text/image culture?
2) Likewise, can we challenge the assumption that the innovative text/image combinations of modern-day Western visual culture are unique to our times?

Given the expansive nature of these questions, there are several possibilities in terms of approach and objects of study. That said, this thesis undertakes to respond to these transhistorical questions by comparing two distinct forms of visual culture: emblem books and album cover art. It would doubtless be easy to assume that emblems and album covers have little in common by simple virtue of their drastically opposing historical and cultural contexts. That said, this study hopes to reveal that cover designs may be seen to function through visual imagery and interpretative texts in a way that also formally resembles Renaissance emblem literature. To that end, what follows is essentially a comparison of communicative procedures, rather than an all-encompassing historical timeline that directly links album covers to emblems. In other words, album art and emblematics are analysed synchronically. What this also implies is that the chosen artforms are far from the only possible means of making

transhistorical comparisons of modern and Early modern text/image interplay. By the same token, they seem as valid as any other choice of comparators.

Thesis Structure

In terms of schematisation, then, the present thesis is divided into Part I and Part II. The former contains two chapters that provide the explanatory backdrop, terminological regulation, and theoretical context for the latter. Part II consists of three analytical case-studies of selected primary materials that purport to illustrate text/image analogies across our respective time periods and cultures. As such, Chapter 1 is predominantly concerned with the so-called *Aetas Emblematica* or Emblematic Age of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and begins with a fundamental terminological question: what exactly do we mean when we use the terms 'emblem' and 'emblematic'? A brief overview of the emblem genre's origins and of the seismic impact of the Gutenberg printing press upon Early Modern cultural output, and the first mass *public*, contextualises the notion of emblematic text/image interaction. Questions of definition and the emblem's semiotic functioning are further explored in the reappraisal of recent emblem theory, with particular reference to the aesthetics of reader engagement, nonlinear modes of interpretation, and a poetics of text/image fragmentation. The final section critically reviews previous attempts at drawing transhistorical comparisons between emblems and modern visual forms, thereby not only highlighting their innovation but potentially also their shortcomings.

Chapter 2 shifts its focus to album cover art, both as an under-researched object of intellectual value and as a major exponent of twentieth-century text/image production. The initial section applies a text/image perspective to the nascent years of cover design, from the primitive packaging of Thomas Edison's wax cylinders to the birth of a new commercial artform arising from the convergence of mass production, artistic expression, and the modernist principle of the *gesamstkunstwerk*. While the majority of written works that have commented on album cover art can be generally considered as belonging to coffee-table literature, there exists nevertheless a handful of scholarly approaches. The latter is the main focus of this chapter's middle section, which offers a critical discussion of the emergent field of 'album art studies' and considers the impact of this scholarly discourse upon our conception of what album covers 'are' and 'do' in popular and consumer culture. The major original contribution of this chapter is then set forth in the final section on album art and emblematics, which seeks to outline the beginnings of a transhistorical comparison of

text/image characteristics between the two forms by proposing a set of threefold criteria that may be applied to analytical readings. A preliminary demonstration of how these comparisons might usefully operate takes the form of a close reading of the album cover art of Metallica's *…And Justice For All* record (Elektra, 1988), which is argued to have its formal analogue in the emblematic bi-mediality of Herman Hugo's *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp: Aertssens, 1624).

The selection of album covers that serve as the objects of critical readings in Part II was based upon two key factors: the first was that they lent themselves well to visual/verbal criteria set forth in Chapter 2, while the second was that they could be seen to stand in a meaningful relationship with the social, artistic, and technological contexts giving rise to new instances of text/image interaction. The latter is what differentiates these longer analytical readings from the previous case in point, which self-consciously dispenses with socio-historical concerns so as to prioritise those of the formal emblematic comparison. In that regard, despite the overriding synchronic approach, the cover designs are themselves loosely arranged in chronological order. The first looks at Alex Steinweiss' cover art for Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men* (Columbia, 1941), the second at Burt Goldblatt's design for Carmen McRae's *Carmen McRae* (Bethlehem, 1955), and finally at Hipgnosis' cover art for Pink Floyd's *Wish You Were Here* (Harvest, 1975). This is because these studies not only consider the emblematic quality of the bi-medial cover designs in question, but they also seek to explain, through an exploration of each cover's broader artistic context, *why* such an emblem-like format should exist in these popular music design contexts. Conversely, the emblematic comparisons that are made and analysed do not have a chronological dimension, precisely because the parallels themselves are both unanticipated and formal.

Judging a Record by its Emblematic Cover

By way of a final opening remark, album covers have already and repeatedly been referred to as 'emblematic' in various forms of recent popular discourse: digital music magazine *Musiclipse*, who published an article in 2023 on the designs of Jimi Hendrix's album covers, describe the cover art of *Are You Experienced?* (Track, 1967) as 'emblematic of the spirit of that era'.[1] In 2015, the *New York Times* published an

[1] G. Alexandre, 'The Design and Meaning of Jimi Hendrix Album Covers', *Musiclipse* (2023): https://www.musiclipse.com/2023/09/15/the-design-and-meaning-of-jimi-hendrix-album-covers/

obituary for Grammy-winning art director John Berg, whose images of Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen adorned 'some of the most emblematic album covers of the late 20th century'.[2] The multinational broker of fine and decorative arts Sotheby's acquired in 2020 an original print of the cover art for Metallica's *Master of Puppets* (Elektra, 1986), signed by the band and since deceased bassist Cliff Burton, which they label as 'one of Metallica's most emblematic album covers'.[3] A brief Google search would suffice to find more examples. The pattern that quickly emerges, however, is that the term in question is applied to album covers that, on the one hand, the writer believes should be acknowledged as an object of cultural importance and, on the other hand, is felt immediately to evoke cultural moods, aesthetic contexts, or historical moments. Perhaps, therefore, readers will discover throughout this thesis not only a different understanding of what it means to make historical and technical use of the term 'emblematic' in relation to modern visual forms, but also how it implicitly relates to on-going debates surrounding transhistorical parallels in Western visual culture.

[2] Margalit Fox, 'John Berg, Art Director Who Made Album Covers Sing, Dies at 83', *New York Times* (2015):https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/13/arts/john-berg-art-director-who-made-album-covers-sing-dies-at-83.html

[3] The auction took place in 2020, closing officially on 18th April of the same year. The letter of authenticity was signed by Beckett Authentication Services experts Steve Grad, Brian Sobrero, Charlie Price, and Larry Studebaker: https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2023/rock-roll/metallica-signed-master-of-puppets-album-cover

PART I

Chapter 1

The *Aetas Emblematica* and Modern Text/Image Culture: Contexts and Previous Criticisms

1.1 Emblems: A Very Short Introduction

As the prologue of this thesis implies, a transhistorical and interdisciplinary study of this kind must inevitably face a fundamental terminological issue: what do 'emblem' and 'emblematic' mean exactly? For scholars of the Early Modern emblem tradition, the matter may well be settled, or at least the debate felt to have moved on to new pastures. However, album cover art enthusiasts, popular culture scholars, and, in fact, most readers outside of this literary and art-historical field called 'emblem studies' will probably have a different interpretation. For such individuals, 'emblem' and 'emblematic' might call to mind a variety of visual artefacts, such as the badges of schools and universities, or family crests and coats-of-arms, not to mention company logos or superhero insignias — Superman and Batman both have their 'emblems'. The list could go on. What is curious, is that these can, in effect, all be considered survivors and descendants of a rich and long-standing tradition of word-image relationships that permeated Europe during the Early Modern period. Likewise, the combination of moralising motto or maxim and symbolic picture that is often encountered in school and university badges is not far removed from the format of the Renaissance emblem or device, as we shall see.

1.1.1 Etymological Questions and Basic Definitions

Before the Neo-Latinists of the Early Modern Era, the word 'emblem' had its origins in Ancient Greek — *ἐμβλημα*, meaning decorative or inlaid work of all kinds — and then appeared in Ancient Roman culture as a general signifier of mosaics and low reliefs.[4] It was not until the sixteenth century that the term arguably began the journey

[4] Elizabeth K. Hill 'What Is an Emblem?', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Winter, 1970), pp. 261–262.

towards its synonymity with 'symbol' and 'symbolic'; nowadays, cultural objects or phenomena are interchangeably labelled as 'emblematic' or 'symbolic'. Nevertheless, the emblem proper was a popular exponent of Early Modern printing and thus also an important expression of the cultural inclinations of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Along similar lines, and in particular reference to production, is Karl Enenkel and Paul J. Smith's concise summary of the Renaissance emblem as '…one of the most successful and influential inventions of early modern book production, which was born through a combined effort of Neo-Latin humanism, the printing press, and the renewal of the graphic arts by the techniques of woodcut and engraving.'[5] Indeed, the popularity of the emblem genre is reflected not only in the transmission of around 6,500 books to reading/viewing publics on an unprecedented scale, but also the text/image form's treatment of a vast array of topics, such as war and love, social mores and cultural traditions, general wisdom and encyclopaedic knowledge, as well as religious contemplation, serious political commentary, and pure entertainment.[6]

1.1.2 Alciato and the Printing Press

The most widely recognised name in the field of emblematics is undoubtedly that of Andrea Alciato, the Northern Italian jurist and humanist. His *Emblematum Liber* (or 'little book of emblems'), which first appeared in 1531 from Heinrich Steiner's printing presses in Augsburg, Germany, is also the publication from which the genre takes its name. The book's popularity was such that by the 1620s, over a hundred other editions of Alciato's emblems were published in French, German, Italian and Spanish.[7] Understood in the context of the Gutenberg Revolution,[8] beginning in the mid-fifteenth century and pioneered by the engraver and gem-cutter from Mainz Johannes Gutenberg, Alciato's *emblemata* doubtless rode the wave of a powerful new method for mass-communication and mass-dissemination of information that would remain virtually unaltered for the next five centuries.

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[5] Karl A. E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (eds.) *Emblems and the Natural World* (BRILL, 2017), p. 1.

[6] Peter Daly et al., *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2002), p. ix.

[7] Digital critical editions of the most important emblems are available to view via the online Alciato Project carried out by the University of Glasgow's Stirling Maxwell Centre for the Study of Text/Image Cultures: http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato

[8] This term is used in Richard Abel's *The Gutenberg Revolution* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011).

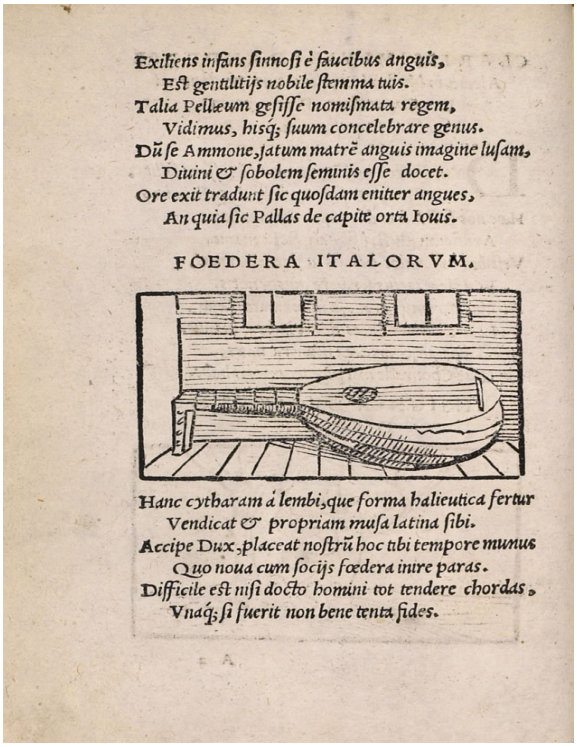
As Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday have noted,[9] Gutenberg's moveable type was not only responsible for the first instance of true mass-communication, but also for the creation of a *public.* Beyond Germany, printing presses were soon to be established all-across Europe: in Italy (1465), France (1470), Spain (1472), Holland and England (1475) and Denmark (1489). Rhodes and Sawday even document its influence across the Atlantic with presses eventually set up in Mexico City (1533) and later in English speaking colonies of North America, starting from Cambridge, Massachusetts (1638). They proceed to explain that by 1500, over 280 European towns had some form of printing press from which books came to be distributed in hitherto unprecedented numbers.[10] The rate at which books and other printed materials were disseminated from urban centres saw the book's transformation into a commodity, as opposed to its previous status in manuscript culture as an exclusive, crafted object.

To return to *Emblematum liber*, Alciato's emblems set the precedent for what was to become known as the canonical *emblema triplex*: a tripartite text/image structure consisting of *inscriptio* (motto or title), *pictura* (woodcut, or later copperplate image) and *subscriptio* (text printed underneath the image). For example, this format is clearly discernible in the second emblem of Alciato's collection, entitled 'Foedera Italorum' [The Italians' Alliances] which features the illustration of a lute (fig. 1). At first glance, it is unclear what relates the *pictura* to *inscriptio*. It is only in reading the epigrammatic text that we realise Alciato is drawing a parallel between the complexity of political negotiation amongst the Italian leaders and the intricacies of accurately tuning a lute to perform music; just as when one string remains out of tune the entire song may suffer, so peace accords and alliances are compromised if one individual does not maintain their end of the bargain. It is, therefore, the unification of the emblem's component text/image elements that permits us to interpret the lute as a moral visual metaphor for the nature of forming alliances. This is but one example of just over one hundred of Alciato's emblems which feature a wide range of themes — the silent scholar, blind Cupid, ivy on a tree, the blind man helping the lame man, and relic-bearing donkeys, to cite but a few — based upon such diverse sources as the *Greek*

[9] Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday, *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print* (Taylor & Francis, Inc. 2000), p. 1.

[10] Ibid.

Anthology,[11] classical mythology, Horus Apollo's *Hieroglyphica*, the Bible, and commonplace folklore.


Exiliens infans sinnosi è faucibus anguis,
Est gentilitijs nobile stemma tuis.
Talia Pellæum gessisse nomisma regem,
Vidimus, hisq; suum concelebrare genus.
Dū se Ammone, fatum matrē anguis imagine lusam,
Diuini & sobolem seminis esse docet.
Ore exit tradunt sic quosdam emitter angues,
An quia sic Pallas de capite orta Iouis.

FOEDERA ITALORVM.

Hanc cytharam á lembi, que forma halieutica fertur
Vendicat & propriam musa latina sibi.
Accipe Dux, placeat nostrū hoc tibi tempore munus
Quo noua cum socijs fœdera inire paras.
Difficile est nisi docto homini tot tendere chordas,
Vnáq; si fuerit non bene tenta fides.

Figure 1: Pictura of Alciato's emblem *'Foedera Italorum', Emblematum Liber* (Augsburg: Heinrich Steyner, 1531)

1.1.3 Questions over the Emblem's Originator and Hybrid Authorship

It should be acknowledged that the emblem may also stand as an early example of the authorial ambiguities inherent in hybrid productions. On the one hand, Alciato is seen as originator of the genre, and certainly the early use of the term 'emblem' is apparent in the original manuscript of 1522, first announced to Francesco Calvo, which comprised a set of 'naked' epigrams to which he had given the title *Emblemata*.[12] On the other hand, it was most likely Steiner, the Augsburg-based printer, who had the revolutionary idea to combine Alciato's Latin epigrams, with miniature symbolic

[11] It should be noted that the majority of the literature of the *Greek Anthology*, comprising chiefly epigrams, comes from the *Palatine Anthology* (circa 1000 BC) and the *Anthology of Planudes* (circa 1400 BC).

[12] John Manning, *The Emblem*, (Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 38.

illustrations.[13] To what, or to whom, then, can the success of *Emblematum liber* be attributed? Clearly, these are also current-day concerns; one is left wondering whether the commercial success of a popular music record, for example, was just as much due to the album cover designer or the cast and crew of the accompanying MTV music video as it was the music itself, or whether a comic book became a best-seller due to the writer of the narratives and speech bubbles or the graphic artist behind the images. The examples of music records and comic books are just two among a multitude of possibilities, but a passing analogy should suffice to make the point.

In the case of the emblem — but essentially this applies to all hybrid works — the logical response would doubtless be the middle road: a mixture of Alciato's compositional wit, Steiner's technical know-how, and the fortuity of time and place, insofar as Alciato's emblem book corresponded ideally with the (then) contemporary creative climate and general *air du temps*. That said, the Romantic notion of a sole author or single source of inspiration is perhaps inescapable, not to mention that this is far more convenient for modern readers both in matters of historical description and interpretation.[14]

1.1.4 A Note on Vernacular Emblems and National Literatures Post-Alciato

Following the success of Alciato's *Emblematum liber* and its subsequent translations across Europe, the evolution of vernacular languages and national literatures could also be felt through the emblem vogue. France not only became the epicentre of early printing in Europe, but likewise developed a considerable emblem tradition of its own, starting with Guillaume La Perrière's *Theatre des bons engins* (Lyon: Denis Janot, 1540). Among the multitude of emblematic manifestations, the French tradition also

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[13] More information pertaining to this question is available via the 'Alciato at Glasgow' project: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/books.php?id=A31a. It is notable that while the visual additions of the 1531 publication are remarkable, the emblems feature fairly crude woodblock illustrations, as seen in Fig. 1, compared to the hand-crafted, lavish visuals of the manuscript tradition. Regardless, the pervasiveness of a mentality favouring the combination of text and image was undeniable.

[14] While the question of authorship in literary and visual cultural production is a broad topic and therefore elicits deeper analysis than that which is provided here, it has notably been explored by Michel Foucault in his essay 'What Is An Author?' adapted from a lecture he gave at the Société Française de la philosophie in 1969 — see Donald Bouchard, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault* (Cornell University Press, 1980) — and Roland Barthes's essay 'Death of the Author' — see Stephen Heath, *Image-Music-Text* (Fontana Press, 1977).

saw the ground-breaking publication of Georgette de Montenay's *Emblesmes ou devises chrestiennes* (Lyon: Jean Marcorelle, 1571), which stands not only as the first woman-authored emblem book, but also the first to comprise a common theme: de Montenay's Protestant faith.

Thereafter, thematic emblems proliferated and became the standard model by the early years of the sixteenth century. Of particular significance was the thematic emblem literature of the Low Countries; the love emblems of Daniel Heinsius and Otto Van Veen exerted a considerable influence upon production and reception of the genre and were often composed in multiple languages. Thematic coherence was also present in the wide range of religious emblems that permeated Early Modern Europe, particularly those of the Jesuits. A representative example might be the *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp: Balthasar Moretus, 1640), which was published in celebration of the Society's one hundredth anniversary.

Less thematically-related, but certainly important was the appearance and use of emblems in Spain and her territories. The Spanish tradition produced hundreds of titles, treatises and variant traditions. Other, under-acknowledged, traditions included the emblems of Portugal, which, though extant and alive, counted for fewer than ten over the course of two centuries. The fact that more European emblematic manifestations have only recently come to light and are now receiving due critical discussion, however, reflects just how widespread the passion for, and influence of, emblematics was over the two-and-a-half centuries that the genre thrived. As such, there are countless directions one could take and innumerable pages one could fill in the exploration of 'vernacular emblems', but this contextual note intends simply to point to this phenomenon as an important aspect of the emblem's historical context.

1.1.5 Roadmap of Chapter

What this chapter is not, is an attempt to present the emblem in its multifarious socio-historic and cultural settings, with a comprehensive timeline of its evolution and influence on subsequent related artforms.[15] As stated, this thesis has the transhistorical

[15] Should this be your present requirement, a list of worthy publications might resemble the following: Mario Praz, *Studies in Seventeeth-Century Imagery* (Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1939). Rosemary Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (Catto & Windus, 1948). Alison Adams, Stephen Rawles and Alison Saunders, *A Bibliography of French Emblem Books of The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Libraries

and cross-cultural aim of exploring whether some forms of album cover art can be seen as modern-day variations of the emblematic mode of combining symbolic pictures and interpretative texts. To do so, we shall therefore first have to establish a *formal* understanding of the emblem — in other words, what it *looks like*, what it *does*, and how it *works*. For that reason, the first section of this chapter provides a survey of modern attempts to theorise the emblem's bi-medial structure and inner workings, spanning the reawakening in theory of the early-twentieth century to a selection of ground-breaking critical syntheses of the past two decades.

This overview of modern emblem theory shall also serve as the backdrop to the second key section of this chapter, which considers critical approaches to the emblematic aspects of a diverse range of modern-day visual and hybrid cultural outputs. As we shall see, there exist previous models in the field that seek to apply a knowledge of emblems and the emblematic principles of composition to the interpretation of contemporary cultural works, be they in printed form or beyond the page. Alongside the analysis of form and function, some scholars will even be seen to have uncovered historical and cultural links between modern visual/verbal forms and the Renaissance emblem. These are typically due to the modern author's prior awareness of emblem literature and interest in the form's compositional conventions. That being said, the publications and previous approaches under examination here — important as they are — have appeared somewhat sporadically over the years. Very few attempts have been made to bring together these lines of enquiry under one project and as part of a cohesive methodology. This is therefore also an important aspect of this chapter's originality.

Such are the main concerns of Chapter 1. By reviewing a representative selection of the work carried out on 'contemporary emblematics', it is possible to discuss the strengths but also the potential limitations or gaps in the existing literature. Moreover, the findings of this chapter shall prove essential to the contextualisation of Chapter 2, which in turn seeks to set forth a number of governing principles and general criteria for exploring the emblematic resonance of twentieth-century album cover art.

Droz, 1999), Grove and Russell, *The French Emblem: Bibliography of Secondary Sources* (Droz, 2000), Alison Saunders, *The Seventeenth-Century French Emblem: A Study in Diversity* (Droz, 2000), and John Manning, *The Emblem* (Reaktion Books 2002).

1.2 Modern Theories of the Emblem: From Triplex to Multiplex

While the emblem's formal structure fluctuated considerably over time, like that of so many hybrid forms,[16] it is canonically threefold: *motto*, *pictura* and *subscriptio*. Indeed, David Graham, who has periodically concerned himself with more theoretical treatments of the emblem, succinctly notes the following:

> That the *emblema triplex* is the canonical structural form of the European emblem must surely rank as one of the most widely accepted conclusions of emblem theory. From the time of the encyclopaedic Jesuit theorist of iconography Claude-François Menestrier through the ground-breaking modern theoretical syntheses of such scholars as Albrecht Schöne, Hessel Miedema and Peter Daly, scholars have in the main concluded that the normative emblematic consists of an image, whether woodcut or engraving; a short title, lemma or motto; and a somewhat longer text, usually in verse.[17]

There exists now a panoply of publications attempting to deconstruct the formal workings of the emblem. In fact, though emblem studies may still be regarded as a comparatively new subfield of literary and art historical studies, much has been achieved since the revival of interest (after a considerable period of neglect)[18] beginning in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Amidst his wide range of authoritative accounts on the emblem and emblem theory, Peter Daly has usefully outlined major breakthroughs in theoretical approaches over the years in his book *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe*: *Contributions to The Theory of the Emblem*.[19] That said, for our purposes, it is pertinent to single out certain breakthroughs and points of consensus. A common thread throughout, however, will be the question of whether the emblem constitutes an artform or a mode of thought.

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[16] Precisely because many hybrid phenomena are the product of more than one author (e.g. the illustrator, the engraver, the printer or the emblematist), it is not always certain that a coherent artistic vision, much less a regimented format, should be followed.

[17] David Graham '*Emblema Multiplex*: Towards a Typology of Emblematic Forms, Structures and Functions', *Emblem Scholarship Directions and Developments*, Imago Figurata Studies, Vol. 5 (Brepols, 2005)

[18] This is most likely attributed to the decline in the production and publication of emblem books, as the genre's lifespan might be seen as between the years of 1531 and 1800.

[19] It is advisable that any researcher interested in such a comprehensive bibliographic account of theories of the emblem consult this work.

1.2.1 A Reawakening in Theory: From Praz to Heckscher

Italian critic of art and literature Mario Praz, who was working in the early-to-mid-twentieth century, precipitated the first wave of modern enquiries into the emblem. His ground-breaking publication on seventeenth century imagery consisted of an extensive historic and bibliographic treatment of the European emblem and other manifestations of the emblematic mode.[20] Praz's work, revered to this day, lay the foundation for what would become a widely accepted theory of the emblem, then to be made explicit by German critic William S. Heckscher in collaboration with Karl-August Wirth.[21] It is, however, important to recognise that Peter Daly's subsequent translation of this theoretical work into English had a significant impact upon its accessibility and thus reception beyond Germanist circles.[22] In essence, Heckscher and Wirth's theory centres upon the notions of enigma and resolution within the emblem's text/image structure itself:

> In the emblem, one is dealing with the combination of the word of the lemma with the picture of the icon which produces an enigma, the resolution of which is made possible by the epigram.

Later, Heckscher came to rephrase this theory in his widely recognised essay for the Princeton University Library Chronicle, stating that:

> The motto is […] invariably associated with a picture. The picture must not try to illustrate the motto, and vice versa. The two elements rather must complement each other as in a happy marriage. The third of the three elements […] consisted of either some epigrammatic or some prose passage, designed to pull picture and motto together.[23]

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[20] Praz, *Studies in Seventeeth-Century Imagery* (1939). While Praz symbolises a modern return to emblem studies, a certain degree of 'theorising' of the emblem can be traced back to the period in which the works were popular. Among the first to offer any form of written evaluation of the emblem appears to have been Frenchman Claude Mignault, beginning from his lengthy, erudite commentary on Alciato's emblem book in 1571. His 1577 version, however, is perhaps one of his most expanded ones and first of the 'Syntagma de Symbolis', available via the Emblems at Glasgow project: http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/Mignault_intro.html .

[21] William S. Heckscher and Karl-August Wirth, 'Emblem, Emblembuch.' In *Reallexikon zur Deutchen Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 5, (Metzler, 1959).

[22] This first appeared in Peter M. Daly's pioneering book *Emblem Theory: Recent German Contribution to the Characterization of the Emblem Genre* (KTO, 1979).

[23] Heckscher, *Renaissance Emblems*, p. 57.

Thus, Heckscher seemingly felt that the emblem provided the reader/viewer with all of the visual and verbal components necessary to produce coherent meaning. Just as this theoretical perspective corresponds with the emblem's canonical structure and that of several emblems of Alciato, so it is unsurprising that this has been frequently employed general introductions to the emblem's *modus operandi*. Indeed, this view has been propagated well into twenty-first century scholarship by critics such as John Manning in writing the following:

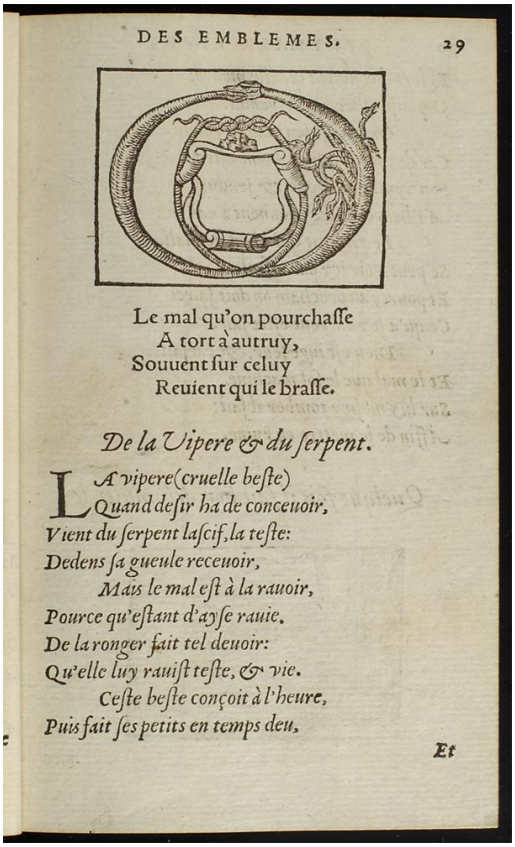
> The emblem cut is variously detachable, and the same cut might at one time be emblematical and at another no more than an illustration of a fable's narrative. The implication of this is that the woodblock image was not emblematic in itself, but only when attached to emblematic verses. Further, the same cut can be read differently, according to its context. There can be little in the way of surprise in the provision of an illustration to a short narrative. But when the cut becomes the bearer of a hitherto unexpected significance *made explicit* in the emblematic verses, we have the very essence of emblematic wit — the evocation of new significance hitherto unexpected in the previous life of the image.[24] (my italics)

That said, it is perhaps just as easy to find examples that do not fit this narrow description, where the emblematic verses 'make explicit' a meaning in the image. In some of those cases, we may find that that the text does not simply tell the reader how to interpret the picture, but rather invites them to tease out meaning by means of word-image interrelation and reader knowledge.

Take for example (fig. 2) the tenth emblem of Guillaume Gueroult's *Le premier livre des emblemes* of 1550 (Lyon: Balthazar Arnoullet), entitled 'Le malfait retourne à son maistre'.[25] While the visuals depict the *ouroboros* illustration of the serpent eating its own tail, the text refers to a wrong-doing individual whose judgement day will arrive as God, the 'juge seur, &, parfait' sees fit. However, the verses do not entirely explain the significance of the *ouroboros*, and therefore without knowing the ancient associations with cyclicity and unity we may not fully understand the choice of image in relation to the text. Such an emblem can thus be thought to assume the intellectual and cultural experience of its recipient. This is an essential concept to which we will return.

[24] Manning, *The Emblem*, p. 85.

[25] Digitised version available through French Emblems at Glasgow project: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FGUa010.


DES EMBLEMES. 29

Le mal qu'on pourchaſſe
A tort à autruy,
Souuent ſur celuy
Reuient qui le braſſe.

De la Vipere & du ſerpent.

LA vipere (cruelle beſte)
Quand deſir ha de conceuoir,
Vient du ſerpent laſcif, la teſte:
Dedens ſa gueule receuoir,
Mais le mal eſt à la rauoir,
Pource qu'eſtant d'ayſe rauie,
De la ronger fait tel deuoir:
Qu'elle luy rauiſt teſte, & vie.
Ceſte beſte conçoit à l'heure,
Puis fait ſes petits en temps deu,

Et

Figure 2: Guillaume Gueroult's emblem *'Le malfait retourne à son maistre', Le premier livre des emblemes* (Lyon: Balthazar Anroullet, 1550)

1.2.2 German Criticism of the Emblem: Schöne and Jöns

The 1960s bore witness to important theoretical breakthroughs in the characterisation of the emblem and its governing principles of communication by scholars Albrecht Schöne and Dietrich Walter Jöns. Like those of Heckscher and Wirth before them, however, these publications appeared exclusively in German and it was not until 1979 that they were made globally accessible through Daly's translations and synthetical work of his own.[26] A common concern throughout these writings, as we shall see, is the functional text/image relationships in emblems and the embracing of formal, ontological, semantic, functional and intentional aspects.

Albrecht Schöne's characterisation of the emblem centred upon the dual function of literal representation (*res picta*) and figurative interpretation (*res significans*) amongst the form's component elements. That is to say, the emblem's words and pictures may

[26] Cf. Daly, *Emblem Theory*.

at any given point, and to varying degrees, serve literally to describe aspects of the work's content and meaning, but also participate in the enigma and 'secondary' meaning, therefore aligning themselves with the function of interpretation. While Schöne does introduce more elasticity to definitions of the emblem, he nevertheless stresses the importance and pervasiveness of the tripartite structure. This means that the emblem's texts and images to which he refers are the *inscriptio, pictura* and *subscriptio*.

A further aspect of Schöne's theory allows for the distinction between emblems and other forms of metaphorical construction: the (albeit contested) notion of 'potenzielle Faktizität' [potential facticity] of the emblematic sign.[27] Here, Schöne sets forth the argument that in juxtaposing text and image with a view to deriving a moral application from the emblematic *pictura*, the author(s) must trust that their audience shares their belief in the semantic properties of a particular motif. This, in essence, becomes a question of common cultural baggage and values, and emphasises the importance of communities and readerships in relation to the emblem's reception. It is, however, something of an oxymoron to combine 'potential' with 'fact'.

On the other hand, Dietrich Jöns' conception of the emblem was innovative in its distinction between emblem as an artform and as a mode of thought. Framing emblem as artform, he characterises it as an 'intellectual game' and draws upon many of Alciato's emblems to illustrate the kind of cross-referencing and reciprocal reading strategies that the word-image interplay invites.[28] That said, in attributing this definition chiefly to Alciato's mode of emblematic composition, wherein emblematic meaning is made virtually explicit in the epigrammatic text, the emblem-as-an-artform characterisation does not account for the range of cultural biases and assumptions upon which the emblematic word-image interaction often hinges. Peter Daly's translation is as follows:

> Between the motto and the picture there existed a more or less hidden relationship which the epigram illuminated… [the emblem is] a relationship of tension between *pictura* and meaning resulting from the desire to create an enigma…without asserting

[27] Albrecht Schöne and Arthur Henkel, *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*. (Metzler, 1967).

[28] Dietrich Jöns, 'Die emblematische Predigweise Johann Sauberts.' In *Rezeption und Produktion zwischen 1570 und 1730. Festsschrift für Günther Weydt zum 65. Geburstag*, ed Wolfdietrich Rasch, Hans Geulen, and Klaus Haberkamm (Munich, 1972) pp. 137–58.

> any necessary relationship between picture and meaning that extends beyond the aesthetic.

This is therefore to be contrasted against the notion of emblem as mode of thought, and here Jöns and Schöne appear to agree. Jöns posits that the emblem may also serve as an instrument of knowledge and a mode of interpreting reality, which may be attributed to the emblem's allegorical roots in the Middle Ages. Daly explains this point of view in the following manner:

> If the cosmos is a system of correspondences and analogies in which each object carries meaning imprinted in its very qualities by God at creation, then the interpretation of reality — the meanings read out of individual objects — is not capricious and accidental; it is not an invention of the poet, but a recognition of inherent meaning.

It follows that emblematic constructions that resemble more closely a 'mode of thought' are those which take for granted and therefore do not pronounce certain belief systems to the reader. In turn, when we interpret these emblems, insights may be gleaned as to the overriding world view of the creator(s). Few critics have categorically rejected theses syntheses and to this day they remain a key point of reference for emblem theorists.

1.2.3 Bath and *Ars Rhetorica*: Reappraising Schöne

In the latter years of the twentieth century, Schöne's theories were taken up and re-appraised in Michael Bath's seminal publication *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture*.[29] Bath became a widely recognised authority on English emblem books, having taken over from the important work of Rosemary Freeman.[30] He devotes a significant portion of his book to theoretical approaches to the emblem and considers its text/image structure by means of Erasmian rhetoric. In referencing Erasmus' conception of 'parabolae' or analogies, Bath posits that the emblem reader must carry out a form of reciprocal reading of the various textual and visual elements, while seeking comparisons with cultural phenomena outside of the primary source:

> The process of interpreting an emblem involves recognising the significant relationship between text and image, but in many cases where this is based on a received topos, that relationship also involves recognising something which is *hors de*

[29] Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (Longman, 1994).

[30] Freeman, *English Emblem Books* (1948).

> *texte* in the sense that it is not announced by the emblem itself — a third element which is the reader's recognition of the topos itself. Such recognition demands what T.M Greene usefully calls 'subreading' — that pervasive technique in Renaissance writing where understanding depends on the recognition of sources.[31]

Following the concept of 'subreading', Bath reframes Schöne's theory of 'potential facticity' and the reliance upon shared belief systems in terms of rhetorical criticism. Drawing on aspects of twentieth century Critical Theory, he likens the concept of *topos* to Gérard Genette's structuralist notion of the *vraisemblable*.[32] That is to say, many emblems draw upon bodies of maxims and *topoi* which collectively make up the clichés and stereotypes of knowledge that are accepted as true by the public to which the work is generally addressed.

As for the extratextual referencing to popular *topoi* — this was called *copia* in Renaissance theories of composition — this evidently corresponds with the modern critical concept of 'intertextuality'.[33] Broadly speaking, intertextuality might be characterised as referencing (visual or verbal, in this case) to the wider world of cultural production and expression, which can either have the effect of producing complex and polyvalent layers of meaning or simply pay tribute to figures, places or phenomena. Furthermore, cultural works that comprise intertexts implicitly play upon the public's cultural experiences and intellectual knowledge. The ability to catch the references outside the primary source text is key to understanding its meaning.

Consequently, as far as the emblem's functional text/image relationship is concerned, the words and pictures can be seen to set certain intellectual or cultural conditions that the public is expected to meet so as to arrive at a coherent interpretation. As such, it is possible to summarise Bath's theoretical synthesis and re-appraisal of Schöne's work on two key levels: the first is the process of reciprocal reading of text and image to interpret meaning, while the second involves the recognition of outside sources that allows the spectator to distinguish between the vehicle (thematic content) and tenor (expressed idea) of the work.

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[31] Bath, *Speaking Pictures* (1994), p. 31.

[32] Gérard Genette, 'Vraisemblance et motivation' in *Communications*, Vol. 11 (Seuil, 1968) pp. 5–21.

[33] For a comprehensive overview of this concept, see Allen Graham, *Intertextuality* (Routledge, 2011).

1.2.4 Problems of a Normative Structure

Notwithstanding the significant progress made in theorising the emblem's formal *modus operandi*, there remains the complicated issue of a normative structure: is it tripartite or not? Manning's introductory passage to *The Emblem* succinctly addresses this problem of definition through a question-and-answer mode of discussion.[34] These include: 'The emblem consists of three parts', 'How long should an emblem be? Doesn't it have a short accompanying verse epigram?', 'However many parts it has, one, at least, must be a picture', 'These are works of mysterious, esoteric symbolism' and 'I have seen some emblems that contain music'.[35] In addressing each of these points, Manning is effectively demonstrating that when it comes to the emblem' formal structure, heterogeneity is the more the rule than the exception.

Manning's exploration of normative definitions leads him finally to argue that the question of 'What is an emblem?' is not even a particularly good one. Elsewhere and prior to Manning's publication, other critics have arrived at similar conclusions, such as Alastair Fowler's investigation of the emblem as a literary genre and the resultant emphatic claim that to conceive of a normative model of the emblem is to make a rope of sand.[36] Likewise, Daly has previously affirmed that 'attempts to define the genre of illustrated books called emblem books have not been overly successful. If definitions are too narrow, they exclude too much; if definitions are too wide, they embrace too much.'[37]

1.2.5 Russell's Theory of an Emblematic Mode or Process

Daniel Russell, whose diverse body of work in the field of French emblematics is widely recognised as simply indispensable, prompted a major rethink of the emblem at the turn of the century. In essence, Russell advocated for moving away from notion of the emblem as a cultural 'form' and rather set forth the idea of an 'emblematic

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[34] Is it perhaps paradoxical, however, that these objections are highlighted by Manning in view of his clear description of emblematic rhetoric as the textual anchorage of a polyvalent woodcut via title and epigram.

[35] For a key example of what might be named a musical emblem, see Michael Mayer's *Atalanta Fugiens*.

[36] Alastair Fowler, 'The Emblem as a Literary Genre' in *Deviceful Settings: The English Renaissance Emblem and Its Contexts* eds. Michael Bath and Daniel Russell (AMS Press, 1999), pp. 1–2.

[37] Peter M. Daly, 'Sixteenth Century Emblems and Imprese as Indicators of Cultural Change' in *Interpretation and Allegory: Antiquity to the Modern Period* ed. Jon Witman (Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), p. 283.

process'. In the following excerpt, Russell reflects upon the issues of definition faced by scholars of the emblem as well as his decision to conceive of the emblem as a process or mode of communication.

> Dès mon premier livre sur l'emblématique, je me suis efforcé d'éclaircir cette question de définition en ce qui concerne le domaine. Si mes prédécesseurs n'avaient pas réussi à articuler une définition qui puisse tenir compte de la complexité du phénomène emblématique en France, c'est qu'ils privilégiaient trop la question de la forme. Nous savons aujourd'hui que l'emblème n'est pas une forme seulement, du moins en France, mais un mode de communication qui peut prendre une variété de formes selon l'emploi envisagé et la tradition nationale dans laquelle il se situe.[38]
>
> [From my first book on emblematics, I have sought to clarify this issue of definition as far as the field is concerned. If my predecessors were not successful in articulating a definition capable of accounting for the complexity of the emblematic phenomenon in France, it is because they gave undue primacy to the question of form. We now know that the emblem was not just a form, at least in France, but a mode of communication that may take a variety of forms according to intended use and the national tradition in which it is situated.]

In his fundamental book *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture*, Russell offers a potentially twofold categorisation of the emblematic process. Firstly, it can be understood as an act of borrowing, fragmentation and recontextualisation that together invite interpretation. Russell explains this side of the process in the latter section of his book:

> When such a fragmentary motif or allusion in painting or discourse can be interpreted or integrated only in an allegorical way, it becomes, as I have contended, an emblematic image. The emblematic image lies between the naturalistic and the allegorical because, on the one hand, its presentation is often highly realistic while, on the other hand, its lack of naturalistic links to the surrounding setting makes it understandable only through some kind of allegorical interpolation […] These are 'emblematic images' simply because they may be understood to find a place in the economy of the whole only through an emblematic reading of them.[39]

[38] Daniel Russel, 'Nouvelles directions dans l'étude de l'emblème français', *Littérature*, No. 145 (2007), pp. 138–150.

[39] Daniel Russell, *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 193–94.

> The emblematic image is one that can, almost by definition, be interpreted in more than one way […] Second the emblematic image represents, at least very often, something that exists independently of any symbolic meaning it may carry; it tended to become a radically detachable image […] The emblematic image was, especially in Dutch emblems, a naturalistically presented image that could be used in other, non-emblematic contexts […] The signifier was taken, increasingly, to signify only itself, unless of course some contextual sign directed its viewer or reader to do otherwise. *Providing such a signal was the function of the emblematic: it fitted an image into a setting that would transform it from a simple part of nature into a metaphorical ornament of some idea*.[40] (my italics)

The second defining aspect of this emblematic process lies in the aesthetics of reader engagement and what Russell describes as 'an implicit (or explicit) dialogue between author and reader, in which the reader plays a newly dynamic questioning role.'[41] This reading process necessarily relates, Russell contends, to the appropriation and integration of visual motifs from a multitude of disparate sources and their junction with a text offering interpretive strategies.

> The emblem is a world of allegorical fragments; it is a landscape cluttered with the debris of a collision of sign systems. Lacking the narrative framework of a complete allegory, the structure of the early emblem picture provides no context to guide the viewer's understanding of the signs before him. The sense of the sign is then initially polysemous because of its tacitly acknowledged place in more than one sign system. *So, its intended meaning remains undecidable without some interpretive text* […] *to the extent that the reader hesitates over the meaning of the motifs, or sees multiple possibilities for interpretation, he is becoming conscious of himself as a reader, and hence begins to prepare himself for a more active, and eventually freer and more creative role, as a reader*. For any reader of an emblem is, as I have argued elsewhere, potentially a maker of emblems since the deciphering of an emblem entails the realization that the emblem motif could have been used differently.[42] (my italics)

Seen from this angle, the reader becomes the third constituent element in a communicative procedure involving word and image. They must negotiate their way through the various connoted meanings of a polyvalent *pictura* and accompanying text. There is perhaps a certain affinity between Russell's conceptualisation of the

[40] Ibid, pp. 237–240.

[41] Ibid, p. 164.

[42] Ibid, pp. 165–67.

emblem and Bath's rhetorical approach to emblematic composition. Both reflect specifically upon the use of visual/verbal allusion and creative recycling of traditional motifs. Likewise, both acknowledge the emphatically active role that the receiver is implicitly asked to play not only in recognising sources of diverse origins, but also in calculating how the motifs relate to the attached interpretive text. In so doing, the receiver, as Russell would suggest, determines which sign system is brought to bear upon the work in question and decodes the hidden meaning.

As such, redefining the Renaissance emblem both in terms of a process and as mode of communication takes us from the narrow confines of the canonical *emblema triplex* — popular as it may have been — to a flexible *emblema multiplex* that accounts for structural fluctuation and highlights the emblem's uniquely interactive and/or interpretative qualities. Furthermore, this definition also allows us to move beyond the original *corpus emblematicum* and provides a fertile ground for comparative approaches that take into consideration artistic works from a range of cultural contexts and time periods, not least of all those of the twentieth century. In that regard, this foregoing section on emblem theory should be understood as a sampling of key breakthroughs, rather than a comprehensive enumeration of all known theoretical studies to date, but more pertinently as a primer for the exploration of emblematic tendencies in modern-day culture.

1.3 Emblematics and Modern Visual Culture: Previous Transhistorical Comparisons

To say that today hybrid or mixed media creations are newly in vogue is not so much a statement of the obvious as is it an outmoded point of view. The modern revival of hybridity might conveniently be taken back to the 1930s and the onset of mass industrial production, where art, culture, and commerce coincided in unprecedented fashion. This was also a socio-cultural and technological development that gave rise to a re-interpretation of the modernist principle of the *gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art, in the context of mass media.[43] In other words, it bore witness to the liberal

[43] Matthew Wilson Smith explores in detail the history and uses of the *gesamtkunstwerk* in his book *The Total Work of Art: From Bayreuth to Cyberspace* (Taylor & Francis, 2007). While the notion of the total work of art was traditionally linked to the history of opera, Smith stresses its importance in the context of mass culture of the early-twentieth century and compares the Bayreuth festival to Disneyland, the Crystal Palace to the Bauhaus Totaltheatre, and ultimately mass media to high art.

mixing of pictures, texts, and sound, as well as the intermingling of high and low culture (more on this and the early context of album covers in Chapter 2).

That said, if not since the beginning of the twenty-first century, then at least over the course of the last two decades, it has been virtually impossible not to encounter some form of hybridity in nearly all instances of contemporary 'communication'. This is nothing new. Even allusions to the Digital Age perhaps now appear outdated, given that discussions have recently been taking place on so-called 'post-digital aesthetics'. This generally involves either the emergence of popular mass culture born of and entirely native to digital culture, or the revival of old analogue media, such as vinyl records, which thus views the digital turn in historical terms.[44] Of potentially emblematic significance, however, is Florian Cramer's observation on the digitally native form of mass cultural expression that is the imageboard meme:

> Imageboard memes are arguably the best example of a contemporary popular mass culture which emerged and developed entirely on the internet. Unlike earlier popular forms of visual culture such as comic strips, they are anonymous creations — and, as such, even gave birth to the now-famous Anonymous movement. Other important characteristics of imageboard memes are: creation by users, disregard of intellectual property, viral dissemination among users, and potentially infinite repurposing and variation (through collage or by changing the text).[45]

Scholars of the emblem tradition will already be well acquainted with the notions of repurposing, varying, and recycling existing images and texts in order to produce new contexts and meanings. Perhaps the sense of innovation, therefore, lies not in pointing out the hybrid nature of modern culture *per se*, but rather in making unexpected connections to other cultural and historical contexts that may offer fresh perspectives on our accepted mixed media artistic practices. The contemporary phenomenon of text/image memes thus stands as but one example of the new comparative work that could be carried out between the bi-mediality of the emblem tradition and the hybrid aesthetics of digital forms of cultural expression.

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[44] A comprehensive overview of post-digital culture, its origins and impacts, can be found in David M. Berry and Michael Dieter's (eds.) *Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2015). Specifically, Florian Cramer's chapter 'What Is 'Post-digital'' is a particularly useful guide in this regard.

[45] Ibid, p. 12.

With that being said, the idea of 'contemporary emblematics' remains relatively novel; there are still many areas of twentieth-century (and therefore pre-digital) visual culture that await a first critical discussion in terms of their emblematic resonance. This, as we shall see, is the primary concern of this section on previous approaches to emblems and their modern analogues.

1.3.1 Setting the Stage: The Tenth Volume of Glasgow Emblem Studies

At this stage in the evolution of emblem studies, scholars appear to be less reluctant in adopting comparative approaches that deal with time periods and cultural contexts outside of when and where the original emblem corpus was in vogue.[46] Initial attitudes predominantly reflected the belief that the most pressing, or even legitimate, topics for investigation were those exclusively rooted in Renaissance and Baroque culture. A watershed moment, however, was the publication of the tenth edited volume of the seminal and widely respected Glasgow Emblem Studies publication series, entitled *Emblematic Tendencies in the Art and Literature of the Twentieth Century*.[47] While previous studies of the emblematic quality of modern cultural works did already exist, as we shall see, these transhistorical comparisons had hitherto never been the unique subject of an entire edited volume whose primary concern was in 'identifying and analysing tendencies which stand in a meaningful relationship with emblematic text/image combinations'.[48]

In the introductory passages of this volume, editors Anthony J. Harper, Ingrid Höpel and Susan Sirc reflect on the reasons why this topic had been generally neglected in this first place. Firstly, they draw attention to basic yet fundamental differences in cultural assumptions between the Early Modern and modern-day periods. They assert that a general adherence to a rhetorical system, to prescriptive thinking, and to the view that art of all kinds should imitate nature — the concept of *mimesis* or *imitatio* — have been generally much less prevalent in our current way of life.[49] Secondly, they contrast our modern audiences, readerships and publics with the Early Modern notion

[46] It should be recognised, however, that at the most recent emblems conference in Coimbra, Portugal (2022), there were (at the most) three papers out of a full week's program that covered the topic of emblematic aspects of modern culture.

[47] Anthony J Harper, Ingrid Höpel, and Susan Sirc (eds.) *Emblematic Tendencies In The Art And Literature Of The Twentieth Century* (Glasgow Emblem Studies 10, 2005).

[48] Ibid, p. XXII.

[49] Ibid, p. XXIII.

of an *Interpretationsgemeinschaft*, or a 'community of people able to relate instantly to each other's mode of thought, often in personal contact through correspondence, which existed up to the end of the eighteenth century'.[50] The same point is echoed in Manning's observation that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, even 'common' people had taken up the habit of writing '*emblematicè*'.[51]

This cultural distinction in reception and/or interpretation can be understood in the broader context of the de-symbolisation process that modern culture underwent and the (re)definition of the linguistic sign. In 1916, Swiss linguist and semiologist Ferdinand de Saussure's pioneering *Cours de linguistique générale* was posthumously published in which he developed the notion of a linguistic sign which is comprised of *signifiant* [signifier] and *signifié* [signified].[52] In essence, the signifier can be understood as the sign's literal form, whereas the signified represents the concept to which the sign refers. Taking the example of 'tree' as a linguistic sign, here the signifier is simply the amalgam of four letters that together spell the word in question, whereas the signifier is the tall perennial woody plant with a trunk and branches to which 'tree' refers. Crucially, however, Saussure argued that there exists a purely arbitrary or conventional link between signifier and signified. That is to say, there is nothing inherently 'tree-like' about the word 'tree', certainly no more so than 'arbre' or 'albero'. Taken a step further, there is nothing inherently amorous about the word 'heart', 'coeur' or 'cuore', but rather was arbitrarily, or through convention (religious or otherwise), assigned this interpretation over time in Western contexts. This perspective thus stands in stark contrast to the multitude of accepted cultural interpretations and assumptions that formed the basis of the emblematic mentality.

Nevertheless, these editors of the tenth volume move past such caveats to point out that scholars had already felt that emblematic tendencies could be 'meaningfully detected and analysed in a variety of modern cultural contexts'. These previous approaches involve such areas as those of advertising, tattoos, and modern visual art, which will be discussed here in due course. The introduction concludes with a summary of the volume's contributions that cover such topics as photomontage, the

[50] Ibid.

[51] Manning, *The Emblem*, p. 80.

[52] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course de linguistique Générale* (Payot, 1916). A more recent version, translated into English, is Albert Riedlinger and Albert Sechehaye's (eds.) *Course in general linguistics* (Open Court, 1986).

art of Gustav Klimt, Ian Hamilton Finlay's modern emblems, as well as emblematic gardens and modern theme parks like Disneyworld. Likewise, several of these models will be reviewed here, but the broader point is that *Emblematic Tendencies* placed unprecedent emphasis, and therefore bestowed legitimacy, upon the analysis of emblematically resonant works of modern cultural production.

1.3.2 'Contemporary Emblematics' and Cultural Studies

The re-mapping of Renaissance and Baroque emblematics within our modern culture also requires us to carve out a different analytical space from which one might comparatively approach works of a distinctly hybrid, and very often popular, nature. This is where the notion of 'contemporary emblematics' may correspond particularly well with the broad field of Cultural Studies.[53] At a broad level, Cultural Studies refers to the analysis of culture that is popular, produced and manipulated for the masses, as well as the rejection of traditional subject boundaries and divisions that have long influenced the canon of academic syllabi. This is particularly well suited to the study of popular hybrid works that often require an interdisciplinary approach and, much like modern perspectives on the emblem, may involve concepts from art history and literary criticism, but also media studies, communications theory, semiotics, new historicism, and sociology to provide but a few examples.[54]

Likewise, Cultural Studies also proposes the analysis of specific 'texts' issuing from everyday contexts (a given book, piece of music, film and so on) as well as broader cultural phenomena (spending tendencies, linguistic developments, representations of gender and race etc.). One can therefore imagine how the emblematic or text/image study of theme-parks, comic books, and album covers — all examples of cultural 'texts' — as well as the evolution of mixed media artistic practices in popular music marketing, for instance — a cultural phenomenon — could well find its home in Cultural Studies.

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[53] Among the most accessible and influential studies on the nature of Cultural Studies is Simon During's (ed.) *The Cultural Studies Reader* (Routledge, 1999).

[54] See for instance Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff's (eds.) chapter 'Word and Image' in *Critical Terms for Art History* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 51–61. They refer to the 'border police' of art history and the 'art-historian's reflex' to defend against the 'colonization by literary imperialism'.

1.3.3 'Contemporary Emblematics' and Barthesian Textual/Visual Rhetoric

It should be known that the critical study of both the everyday, and modern text/image culture more generally, dates to before the height of Cultural Studies of the early-1990s. While there are several points of entry to this debate, the work of French cultural critic and structuralist Roland Barthes is doubtless as valid as any. Barthes' *oeuvre* is as eclectic as the field of Cultural Studies itself and there is certainly no need to rehearse the monumental impact of his thinking upon various aspects of twentieth-century Western scholarship. That said, in the light of 'contemporary emblematics', his consistent preoccupation with the status of the image in modern popular culture, as well as the manner in which its communicative properties are often manipulated by means of interpretative texts, is of particular interest.

In *Mythologies*, Barthes began asserting that aspects of everyday culture could be the object of intellectual debate.[55] Drawing on the theoretical work of Saussure and the linguistic sign, he deconstructs the connotations (or signifieds) of a weekly news magazine *Paris Match* cover that depicts an African-American child dressed in French army uniform performing a military salute. Encoded in this representation, Barthes contends, is some form of apology and indeed justification for French imperialism. Similarly, his essay *Le Message photographique* looks at the way in which the picture-taker can still be seen to express a point of view, despite conveying a message seemingly 'sans code' [codeless], and therefore manipulate bias.[56] Furthermore, he writes that the press photograph is frequently adorned with accompanying textual matter, from caption to main body of text, which accordingly enters into a form of text/image interaction to convey particular connotations to the reader.

It is, however, in his ground-breaking essay *Rhétorique de l'image* that Barthes elaborates fully on the formal communicative principles that govern visual/verbal advertising.[57] As we shall see, this has significant resonance with our topic of the contemporary emblem. The main object of discussion in his essay is an Italian illustrated advertisement for Panzani pasta. Through the application of concepts from linguistic theory, Barthes contends that there exist three messages in this form of advertising: the linguistic message, the denoted image, and the connoted image. With

[55] Roland Barthes and Anette Lavers, *Mythologies* (Noonday Press, 1989).

[56] Roland Barthes, 'Le message photographique' in *Communications*, Vol. 1 (Seuil, 1961), pp. 127–138.

[57] Roland Barthes, 'Rhétorique de l'image' in *Communications*, Vol. 4 (Seuil, 1964), pp. 40–51.

respect to the advert's pictorial content, he places emphasis on the polysemy of all images insofar as they present a 'floating chain of signifieds' among which the observer may focus on certain meanings and ignore others. In the corporate world of advertising, where clarity of information is paramount, the polysemous image presents a significant challenge and constitutes a 'terror of signs' that must be combatted. This is where the linguistic function of *ancrage* [anchorage] comes in. Given that words can specify where images cannot, the verbal component may serve to limit the communicative potential of the image; on a literal level, an advert's text might effectively respond to the question 'what am I looking at?' and on a symbolic or cultural level, the text may aid interpretation by acting as a sort of vice that prevents connoted meanings from proliferating towards undesirable or dysphoric values. It is not hard, therefore, to note certain affinities with the way emblematic verses / titles can direct interpretation of a polyvalent *pictura*.

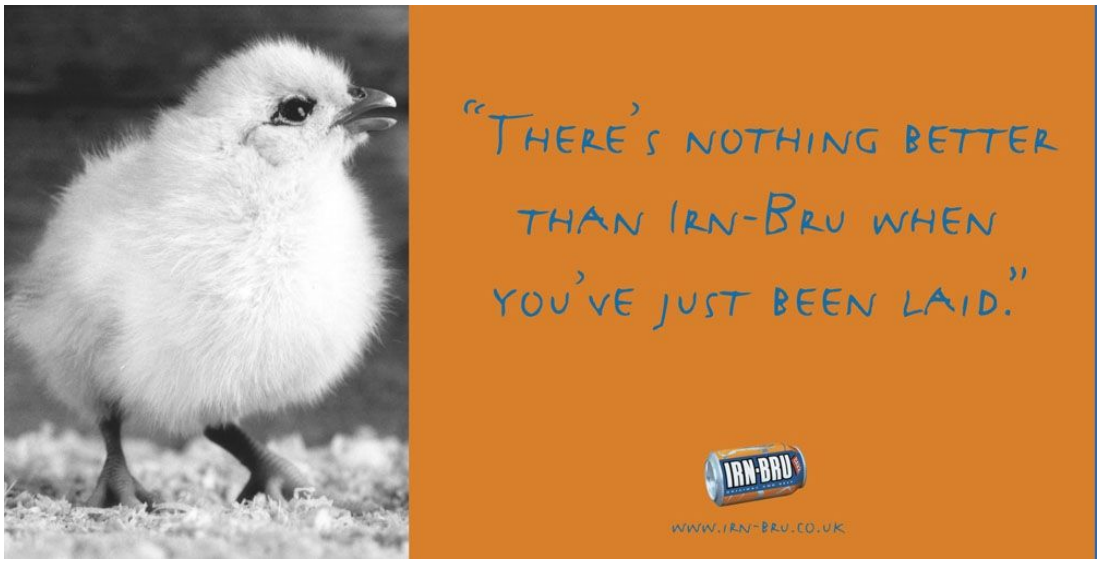

Figure 3: Irn-Bru advert (ca. 2015), visit www.irn-bru.co.uk for further information.

Indeed, photographic journalism and advertising are particularly representative examples of popular culture and mass media that relies upon hybridity for its widespread appeal and concision. This makes them ideal subjects for the emblematic study of modern-day culture. Indeed, illustrated advertising, as we shall see, formed the basis of the earliest known identification and analysis of contemporary emblematic variants. In that regard, to complement the now-somewhat-dated Panzani advert, one might look to a more recent Scottish Irn-Bru advert (fig. 3) that juxtaposes the image

of a new-born chick with the caption 'there's nothing better than irn-bru when you've just been laid'. The interplay of word and image play a central role in the exploitation of advert's double entendre, which not only amuses consumers but also attracts attention to value of the product itself. What is this if not a contemporary variant of emblematics?

1.3.4 Pierre Vinken and Peter Daly: Emblematics and Modern Illustrated Advertising

Thus far, the object of our discussion has chiefly been the ways in which modern cultural perspectives might correspond with, and shed light upon, the broad theme of 'contemporary emblematics'. It is now pertinent to review more closely the previous attempts to identify and analyse emblematic aspects of specific artefacts of modern cultural production. A historical-chronological approach is not necessarily advantageous here, given that most studies of this kind appeared sporadically until the aforementioned Glasgow Emblem Studies tenth volume. However, it does feel important, even essential, to draw attention to the early work Peter Daly carried out in the 1980s and his developing the subject of emblematic advertising in a contribution to the important edited volume *Word and Visual Imagination*.[58] It is curious to note that Daly begins by crediting Pierre Vinken, not a scholar of emblems but in fact of medicine with a wide range of interests in the Arts and Humanities, as the first to have analysed the emblematic quality of illustrated advertisements. Vinken, whose work dates to the 1950s, draws almost exclusively upon the theories of William Heckscher and the canonical tripartite structure so as to analyse (then) contemporary advertising.[59]

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[58] Peter Daly, 'Modern Advertising and the Renaissance Emblem: Modes of Visual and Verbal Persuasion', in *Words and Visual Imagination: Studies in the Interaction of English Literature and the Visual Arts*, eds. Karl Josef Holtgen, Peter M Daly and Wolfgang Lottes (Universitätsverbund, Erlangen-Nüremburg 1988), pp. 349–371.

[59] P.J. Vinken, "The Modern Advertisement As An Emblem", *International Communication Gazette*, Vol 5.2 (1959), pp. 234–243 <https://doi.org/10.1177/001654925900500202>. It is also worth noting that, alongside his emblematic interests, Vinken had published a monograph, entitled *The Shape of the Heart: A Contribution to the Iconology of the Heart* (Elsevier, 2000) which examines the evolution of heart depictions from the Classical period when anatomists correctly observed the pine cone shape of the heart, to the early years of fourteenth-century Italy when visual representations of the heart appeared inaccurately as having a dent in the base and a sharp underside.

In 'The Modern Advertisement As An Emblem', he argues that in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century advertisements, small woodcuts would illustrate the text and acted as no more than a ploy to attract attention to the message. The image therefore played a secondary role. He draws upon two examples in particular to demonstrate this kind of non-emblematic text/image dynamic: that of a hair dressing saloon/bathing house, whose illustration consists of a minute bathtub from which a nude woman arises, and painter J. Wilson's article in an 1850s newspaper whose illustration consists of a simple silhouette of himself.

The form of text/image advertisement whereby the illustration, as Vinken describes it, 'has ceased to be an element in second rank to the advertisement proper' and 'has emancipated itself to form, in conjunction with the verbal communications, and integrated whole'[60] is probably most reminiscent of the emblematic form. While he considers this advertising, which closely resembles the Renaissance emblem in terms of formal structure, to be among the most 'advanced' of its kind, we should nevertheless bear in mind that he was writing in the 1950s. As for his definition of the emblem's tripartite structure, which he rediscovers in certain adverts, there are significant parallels with Heckscher's studies; Vinken likewise maintains that motto and picture represent two complementary themes while the epigrammatic stanza pulls the two together, illuminating the symbolism of the representation and justifying its juxtaposition with a potentially cryptic motto.[61]

In terms of close analysis, he considers the example of an advertisement whose motif is that of the opossum with an accompanying caption that reads 'An Answer to Prematurity'. What might be deemed the epigrammatic part of the advertisement reads:

> The opossum, born 'prematurely' must spend weeks in its mother's pouch to become fully viable. For the human infant, unlike the opossum, prematurity is not normal. But when it threatens, even a few weeks in the uterus can make the difference between survival and death.

The title played off against the image comes to form a sort of miniaturised narrative whose symbolic message remains mysterious until considered in light of additional verbal material, completing the canonical tripartite emblem structure. The final

[60] Ibid, p. 234
[61] Ibid, pp. 237–238.

message appears to be that the dangers of prematurity may come to bear on a human infant in similar ways to the opossum.

Similarly, he considers an advertisement displayed on the cover of an issue of *Seminar International*, a publication of an American pharmaceutical firm. It features an especially cryptic illustration of a glass of water, balancing on a coin, against a background of concentric circles. Here, Vinken takes the title of the publication as an equivalent to the emblematic motto, and on the following page appears an interpretive text in relation to the visuals:

> The cover symbolizes the consummate delicacy of the body's water an electrolyte balance, maintained by the new diuretic agent (*i.e. the advertised drug)*. The concentric circles suggest the relationship with arterial pressure.[62]

The notion that the front cover remains indecipherable without the explanatory text — a text/image relationship that Vinken regards as particularly emblematic — not only echoes Heckscher's characterisation of the emblem, but also runs parallel to Barthes' notion of 'anchorage' whereby the text performs a de-limiting function. And while these examples bear a significant resemblance to some of Alciato's more ekphrastic models of text/image interaction, Vinkin does, in fact, proceed to argue an interesting comparison between a medical advert, without explanatory text, and a selected emblem by Roemer Visscher, featuring an arrow piercing an apple. While the advert features the same motif of the arrow piercing the apple, there is no explanatory text in his chosen advert beyond the title 'Medrol hits the disease but spares the patient'. The advert's effectiveness relies upon the assumption that most reader/viewers would already know the story of William Tell. Visscher's emblem does contain a third epigrammatic element, although it does not go as far as to explain the motto/picture combination and so likewise assumes prior knowledge on the part of the reader/viewer who will grasp the work's *sous-entendu* or double meaning.

Vinken concludes that the genesis of the so-called 'emblematic advertisement' is psychologically-motivated, insofar as consumer resistance has indicated the need for more sophisticated communication. Overly direct messages can appear vulgar and unpersuasive. Again, Vinken was writing in the 1950s, but given that psychological

[62] Ibid p. 239.

persuasion remains a key ingredient of twenty-first century advertising, the point is broadly well-taken.

So much for Pierre Vinken, what then of Peter Daly's contributions to the subject of 'emblematic advertising'? This research had its origins in two lectures that formed part of the series on 'The Telling Image' at Glasgow University.[63] Daly differs from Vinken in his approach by rejecting a generic theory of the emblem or *emblema triplex* against which modern advertisements may be compared and/or contrasted. Rather, he proposes to discuss illustrated forms of advertising that 'operate via mutually supportive combinations of text and image in their own right', and stand as a modern rhetorical counterpart to the Renaissance emblem.

Daly draws chiefly upon samples from *Vogue*, *En Route* by Air Canada, *Cosmopolitan*, *Time* and *Der Spiegel*, all of which represent relatively expensive publications aimed at a middle-class audience with a certain educational background.[64] Daly argues that just as emblems may employ a symbolic picture to make visual and concrete the abstract idea of a *motto*, so the advertisement may render an abstract statement visual via illustration. He points to the representative example of an advert from Canadian newspapers in November 1984, whose slogan reads 'If you've got a bright idea, there is still time to make it happen'. The central image involves an hourglass and the glass is made from two electric lightbulbs. Through the juxtaposition of text and image, one can note how the work exploits the metaphorical gap between textual references to 'bright idea' and 'time' and visual allusions to the lightbulb and hourglass which are commonplace and recognisable *topoi* in Western popular culture. Indeed, for the advertisement to achieve its desired effect it relies upon the reader/viewer's knowledge of the conventional associations attributed to each of the motifs. It does not, however, take a great deal of cultural knowledge or specific baggage to decipher the logic behind the juxtaposition. The prose-like text printed below further expands the relationship between caption and illustration and even finishes by stating 'Even the best ideas run out of time', emulating the typical feature of the final line of an

[63] Daly gives a brief account and the origins of his work on this topic in his article 'Adam and Eve in the Garden of Advertising', *European Iconography East and West,* ed. György E Szőnyi (Brill, 1996), pp. 77–84.

[64] Daly, 'Modern Advertising and the Renaissance Emblem', p. 353.

emblematic verse. It is therefore by means of text/image rhetorical criticism that Daly considers this advert to be a modern counterpart to the Renaissance emblem.

Another example of modern illustrated advertising that Daly identifies as particularly emblematic is one that appeared in the *Los Angeles* magazine of 1985 seeking to promote Grand Marnier liqueur by exploiting the Biblical theme of Adam and Eve. Paradise is depicted as a perfect garden, filled with flowers, plants, birds, and butterflies. The central figures — Adam and Eve — are elegantly dressed and holding glasses of Grand Marnier. Daly notes the absence of the tree or serpent in this depiction. The bottle of liqueur itself is pictured hovering on clouds over the couple, suggesting a connection with the Divine, and a single orange is perhaps an allusion to the fruits of the tree. While the tradition notions of good and evil are not clearly expressed here, the exaltation of Grand Marnier is certainly apparent. The two-word caption 'Paradise found' helps to decode the pictorial motifs while drawing an equivalence between buying/tasting Grand Marnier and reaching the Divine. Once again, therefore, it is through a rhetorical critique of the advert's textual and visual components that Daly come to conclude that this is an emblematic form of advertising.

1.3.5 Sabine Mödersheim: Emblematics and Tattoo Art

The work of eminent emblem scholar Sabine Mödersheim has predominantly focussed upon the German and Dutch emblem traditions, in particular the emblem literature of Daniel Cramer and Otto Van Veen,[65] and the use of emblematic motifs/structures in Early Modern architecture.[66] However, she has also made a significant contribution to the debate on the 'afterlife' of emblematics in modern culture, both through her edited volume for the Glasgow Emblem Studies series on art and propaganda and through her paper on emblematic parallels in modern tattoos

[65] Sabine Mödersheim, 'Theologia Cordis: Daniel Cramer's Emblemata Sacra in Northern European Architecture' in *The Emblem in Scandinavia and the Baltic*, eds. Simon McKeown and Mara Wade, Glasgow Emblem Studies Vol. 11 (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2006), pp. 295–329 and 'Vaenius in German: Raphael Custo's Emblemata Amoris for Philip Hainhofer' in *Otto Vaenius and his Emblem Books*, ed. Simon McKeown, Glasgow Emblem Studies Vol. 15, (Droz, 2012).

[66] Sabine Mödersheim, 'The Emblem in Architecture' in *Emblem Scholarship Directions and Developments. A Tribute to Gabriel Hornstein*, ed. Peter Daly (Brepols, 2005), pp. 159–177.

for the Imago Figurata Series.[67] Of chief interest here is the latter. She prefaces her paper by stating that 'at least a rudimentary understanding of the allegorical mode seems to have ensured the continued existence of some emblematic images.'[68] She also calls our attention to what she finds to be the overriding function of many modern tattoos: a way to 'express a self-understanding or membership in a specific group such as a motorcycle gang or street gang',[69] which is not far removed from the purpose of early *imprese* or devices that distinguish the bearer.

The common thread of Mödersheim's argument is that certain groups of motifs that were popular within the text/image tradition of the Early Modern era are also recirculated in modern contexts, although for the most part they appear to be significantly simplified or popularised. More specifically, Mödersheim references the work of Hamburg-based tattoo artist Christian Warlich, in which she identifies emblematic parallels.

Indeed, Warlich seems to have simply copied patterns from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century engraved sheets, as Mödersheim's figures show. Upon closer inspection, Mödersheim notes the reappearance of Alciato's open eye in palm pattern at a Tattoo Convention. At such events, artists' pattern books are generally used to attract new customers with samples of their designs, and one portfolio piece contained a photograph showing a hand with an open eye tattooed in the middle. Whilst it was apparent that neither the artist nor client was aware of the rich tradition of symbolism behind this motif, it proved striking and eye-catching enough to merit being tattooed onto their body. While this instance in particular may seem anomalous, Mödersheim details the process by which old motifs common to Renaissance emblematic culture have made their way into contemporary culture.

These motifs, Mödersheim posits, tend to be those that are most easily deciphered; they are divested of their original context and readapted for modern use. An example of this process can be seen in the evolution of the anchor motif; in past centuries, it acted as a Christian symbol of hope but has now become a symbol of seafaring and navigation, as well as the modern association with the proverbial meaning of casting

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[67] Sabine Mödersheim, 'Skin Deep – Mind Deep, Emblematics and Modern Tattoos' in *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18-23 August 1996,* eds. Peter M. Daly, John Manning, Marc van Vaeck (Brepols, 1999).

[68] Ibid, p. 309.

[69] Ibid.

the anchor. Likewise, one frequently depicts the abstract idea of death via the motif of a skull (often featuring a snake), the grim reaper, or indeed other general skeletal figures with gambling cards or dice as a reminder of mortality. In tattoos featuring such deathly motifs, one often finds an accompanying generic moral maxim. Indeed, Mödersheim even reports having seen the inscription 'memento mori'.

Furthermore, what she terms 'The Authority of Images'[70] provides a particularly useful insight to why such ancient motifs not only survive but are employed time and again. While it has been shown that the significance and meaning of these emblematic motifs have become independent of the original source context, Mödersheim has suggested that 'in a very trivialized manner they still carry some of the earlier intention and implication, even though they express new ideas and concepts'.[71] For instance, she maintains that in coining new political iconographies, such as those of the French Revolution, 'old images were provided with new content because the old images proved to be stronger than newly invented images, especially if the new meaning could be set against the old context.' Consequently, the effect of these images is twofold; whereas the old values are evoked and brought to bear (depending on the individual's recognition), the new significance is linked to the 'authority' of the older image and has a stronger impact in being contrasted against it. According to Mödersheim, one of the most striking examples is the reorientation of the sun image, once famously linked to Louis XIV as 'le roi soleil', which then came to signify the enlightenment and the light of knowledge directly opposing the notion of an absolute monarchy.

The trend of adorning tattooed images with mottoes or maxims is of course distinctly emblematic. According to Mödersheim, however, it does tend to be more elaborate tattoo images that are provided with inscriptions in this way; an example might be the recognisable and commonly used image of a flaming heart, surmounted by a crown of thorns with five arrows pointing at the heart.[72] Already, the suggestive juxtaposition of symbolic patterns recalls emblematic composition. However, the addition of the inscription that reads 'Obsession' gives a new context and through the readily perceptible intersection of meaning between the text and image, an emblematic narrative emerges. While, as Mödersheim suggests, the deeper

[70] Ibid, p. 316.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid, p. 311.

significance is far from religious as per tradition, it demonstrates our modern-day fascination with ancient motifs. Another example of emblematic tattoo imagery is that of a flaming and bleeding heart surrounded by a wreath of thorns bearing the inscription 'Help Ever, Hurt Never', which reveals the image's message to be a reference to true friendship and love. Regarding the themes of love and passion, roses are also a common motif in tattoo art.

Mödersheim's argument appears at its broadest level in the conclusion, where she reflects on the general form and function of visual and verbal symbolism in modern tattoo art. The practice of isolating an object or motif from its naturalistic context so that it may stand metaphorically for a transferred meaning is pertinent to the production of both emblems and tattoo art.[73] A single element is depicted while the accompanying text focuses on a specific meaning, which is then connected symbolically or allegorically. Another procedural similarity, Mödersheim argues, is that of combining several different motifs or images to form a complex picture. As a result of their juxtaposition, these symbols mutually explain and re-contextualise each other, forming a type of visual grammar akin to that which comprises a complex image. Indeed, background and foreground are said to relate to each other not unlike motto and epigram. The addition of an inscription or explanatory text plays upon an otherwise polyvalent complex *pictura* capable of conveying a broad range of abstract notions. The result is a playful and enigmatic text/image combination whose component parts must be united and cross-referenced to decode the pictorial motifs and arrive at the final hidden message.

1.3.6 'Reinventing the Emblem': Contemporary Emblems Exhibition

Another defining moment in the development of the theme of 'contemporary emblematics' was the exhibition at Yale University Art Gallery, entitled 'Reinventing the Emblem: Contemporary Artists Recreate a Renaissance Idea' (1995) curated by Allison B. Leader. It consisted of a museum experiment whereby sixteenth- and seventeenth-century emblems were juxtaposed with contemporary works directly inspired by the emblematic tradition. Many artists did not adhere to the standard *inscriptio-pictura-subscriptio* threefold structure, yet the majority of works do play with

[73] Ibid, p. 320.

context in combining text and images to evoke ideas about social, political, natural and spiritual worlds.

Leader and Richard S. Field also noted in the accompanying exhibition essays that in contemporary society, the lack of ordered systems predicated on the belief that the world's knowledge could be 'codified into sets and series' demands that we acknowledge the absence of a formal entity we might call the modern emblem.[74] Indeed, while today many artists combine words and images in enigmatic and suggestive ways, there is no adherence to any prescribed format. This demonstrates that the 'contemporary emblem', if we may label it as such, cannot be characterised by the transmission of a fixed idea through received ideas and accepted knowledge, but rather by the idea of discursive provocation through semantic tension. An important parallel remains, however, in the active and comparative reading strategies that these hybrid forms encourage.

The so-called 'contemporary emblems' featured in the exhibition do echo the previous tradition in that they hinge upon the exploitation of existing sources, many of which are concerned with social life and are juxtaposed in unexpected ways reminiscent of collagist strategies. In keeping with their time, several of the 'contemporary emblems' broach the topic of technological advances and an increasingly fast-paced lifestyle. For instance, Mariona Barkus' composition, entitled *Do You Know Too Much?*[75] makes explicit references to these issues through the depiction of a young woman hands grasping ears and head surrounded by a variety of textual matter denoting several technologically-oriented items such as 'CD-Rom', 'Cyberspace', 'Pixels' and 'Internet'. The text underneath the visuals resolves much of the semantic tension by suggesting that 'You may be suffering from excess access'. This is therefore a fairly unambiguous emblematic construction and, while it is hard to imagine that any modern reader/viewer would have difficulty grasping the symbolic significance, the text/form's effectiveness relies upon a shared belief that technology can cause just as many harms as benefits.

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[74] Alison B. Leader and Richard S. Field, 'Contemporary Emblems' in *Reinventing the Emblem: Contemporary Artists Recreate a Renaissance Idea. With Essays by Allison B. Leader and Richard S. Field*, Lesley K Baier ed. (Yale University Art Gallery, 1995).

[75] Mariona Barkus (American, b.1948), *Do You Know Too Much?* (1994)

Another example might be Mark Kostabi's *Survival for Everyone and Bonuses for the Fittest*.[76] Kostabi's composition might be considered more enigmatic than Barkus'. The motifs he employs are taken from an office setting and include common objects such as a keyboard, computer monitor, ruler, a collection of pens and telephone, all of which surround a figure portrayed in a defensive, somewhat helpless stance. Equally intriguing are the illegible sentences, faintly sketched out, towards the bottom of the composition, which add a further layer of mystery. While Kostabi's work is not an entirely open-ended metaphor — the title, which plays on the proverbial phrase 'survival of the fittest', and image together convey something about the stresses of corporate or working life — we cannot claim that it carries a univalent meaning. The key point, however, is that the associative thinking that this text/image juxtaposition invites is a counterpart to the Renaissance emblem.

1.3.7 Piotr Rypson and Daniel Russell: Emblematics, Modern Visual Art and the Problem of the Sign

Following on from the topic of emblematics and contemporary art, art historian Piotr Rypson has noted that the rise of the abstract art movement signalled a growing resistance to copying nature and exploiting existing visual source material. [77] In general terms, one could argue that abstraction in art is in fact typified by its rejection of intertextuality, which has contributed to severing relations between the signified world and the world of images and signs. Rypson makes explicit what is at stake in the following:

> The words of Vassily Kandinsky from his book *The Spiritual in Art* that 'the work of art is its own subject', provide in fact one of the fundamental criteria — and perhaps the most important one — for modernist art in the twentieth century […] references to the "outside world" are simply no longer made in the same way they were in the past centuries, where divine scripture and the biblical hermeneutic tradition provided clear guidelines as to how the world of forms and images was to be interpreted and meaningfully applied […].[78]

[76] Mark Kostabi (American, b.1960), *Survival for Everyone and Bonuses for the Fittest* (1994).

[77] Piotr Rypson, 'The Emblematic Mode in Twentieth-Century Art' in *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18-23 August 1996,* eds. Peter M. Daly, John Manning, Marc van Vaeck (Brepols, 1999) p. 340.

[78] Ibid, p. 340.

It follows that, if the work in question has no representational content able to be manipulated into a narrative form, then it is already detached from anything resembling the emblematic compositional mode. That said, Rypson has observed emblematic tendencies in surrealist collages and photomontages. With specific reference to collages that Max Ernst often produced to illustrate Paul Eluard's books of poetry such as *Répétitions* (1922) and *Les Malheurs des Immortels* (1922), Rypson debates the emblematic character of the visuals in relation to the text. While he doubts whether Ernst's collages provide any real sense of intelligible correspondence between image and text, the act of producing a fragmented mosaic of interrelated motifs and images, which not only encourage some form of figurative meditation on the text (and vice-versa) but also appear to mimic motif traditions from the original Renaissance emblem, does evoke the emblematic mode. Of taxonomical interest is Rypson's decision to term this a 'neo-emblematic style'.

Russell has also contributed significantly to our understanding of the broader context of emblematics in contemporary art.[79] In effect, his take on modern-day text/image interaction is in close rapport with Rypson's observations. He makes a clear distinction between the aesthetics of high modernism (which he considers roughly to fall between the years of 1848 and 1950) and postmodernism, maintaining that the separation between text and image is canonical and absolute in many facets of modernist aesthetics.[80] Romantic 'modernist creation', Russell suggests, displays a considerable detachment, not just from any accompanying text (for instance in Dali's illustration of 'De la phisionomie'), but from the social and political realities of everyday life.[81] Preferable to modernist aesthetics is abstraction, urging the reader/viewer to make a considerable leap of imagination to interact with the work.

If the emblem is, at its core, both a social and rhetorical form, then it is diametrically opposed to typical high modernist artworks indicative of the 'l'art pour l'art' mentality.[82] Russell suggests that the playful aesthetic of postmodernism does not withdraw from society, seeking refuge in the ivory tower, but rather is 'in and of the

[79] Daniel Russel, 'Icarus in the City: Emblems and Postmodernism' in *Emblematica* Vol. 13 (AMS Press, 2003) p. 335.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid, pp. 336–337.

[82] Art for art's sake is to be understood in relation to Théophile Gauthier's famed quote from his book Mademoiselle de Maupin (1835).

city'.[83] Not only does postmodern art seem more rooted in socio-political realities than modernist works, but it is also seen to resume appropriating and reworking known themes in new and surprising contexts.[84] Indeed, reference is made to the works of Ian Hamilton Finlay and Edward-Lucie Smith, which may be considered postmodern emblems,[85] since they conform to a compositional method that includes three salient features reminiscent of the emblematic tradition: borrowed materials, engaged in the everyday, and exists in a playful relationship with its component parts.

1.5.8 Laurence Grove: Emblems, Comic Strips and *Parallel Mentalities*

Since the turn of the century, Laurence Grove has established himself as a leading authority not only on the subject of French emblematics but also on the modern Francophone text/image form of the *bande dessinée*.[86] Grove has perennially questioned accepted ideas on the proposed 'start date' of the *bande dessinée*, a debate which was revolutionised by his claim that the first comic book was not in fact the work of Swiss schoolmaster Rodolphe Töpffer, but rather that of Glasgow-born William Heath, entitled *Glasgow Looking Glass* of 1825.[87] His work has also served to develop a distinct 'culture of comics' in Glasgow, with numerous exhibitions and new

[83] Russell, 'Icarus in the City', p. 337.

[84] Ibid, p. 338.

[85] It should be noted that Michael Bath has provided the most comprehensive analytical reading of the visual/verbal works of Ian Hamilton Finlay, which uncovers a historical connection to the emblem tradition. Indeed, it would appear that Finlay was aware of emblem books and drew significantly on their *topoi*. His work, entitled *Heroic Emblems*, is also an allusion to Claude Paradin's *Devises Heroïques* of 1551 (Lyon: de Tournes, Gazeau). 'Mobilising the Gap: Hamilton Finlay's Inheritance' in *Emblematic Tendencies in the Art and Literature of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Anthony J. Harper, Ingrid Höpel and Susan Sirc, Glasgow Emblem Studies Vol. 10 (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2005), pp. 113–129.

[86] His first monograph broke new ground in exploring the influence of emblematics upon the literature of seventeenth-century French literature. See *Emblematics and Seventeenth Century French Literature* (Rockwood Press, 2000). Likewise, some of his earliest work on the *bande dessinée* was pioneering in the comparative and transhistorical lens through which he studied the origins of the form. See 'Visual cultures, national visions: the ninth art of France' in *New Directions in Emblem Studies* ed. Amy Wygant, Glasgow Emblem Studies Vol. 4 (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 1999), pp. 43–58.

[87] William Heath, *Glasgow Looking Glass*, Richard Griffin & Co/John Watson (1825–26). Available to view at special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/june2005.html.

forms of comic scholarship at the forefront of Text/Image Studies.[88] On the question of the origins of comics, however, Grove acknowledges that attempts to identify the first comic or *bande dessinée* could well 'take the form as far back as the Bayeux Tapestry, medieval illuminated manuscripts and illustrated Bibles'.[89] This perspective is based upon what has become a major concept in his work: that of *parallel mentalities*.

Grove's *Text/Image Mosaics*, published the same year as the tenth volume of Glasgow Emblem Studies, remains the only sole-authored book-length project to have adopted a cohesive methodology for exploring parallels between emblems and modern cultural forms. That said, he does point out in the preface that his book is above all an analysis of the mentalities behind such forms of cultural production, which therefore means there was no need for his study to be focussed upon emblems and *bande dessinée* than any other historically distinct text/image forms. This leads him to pose the central question of his work: 'What is it about the mindset of the Early Modern age that can help us understand the way we think today, the things we take for granted, the impact of culture around us?'. In this regard, Grove's book can already be distinguished from other emblematic studies of modern visual culture that consider how formal and functional elements specific to the Renaissance emblem also crop up today.

Divided into four chapters — 'Theoretics', 'Production', 'Thematics' and 'Reception' — this work follows a methodology that Grove terms 'Parallelism'. 'Theoretics' explores the extent to which these text/image forms existed *de facto* before any attempts to theorise them appeared. Furthermore, he reviews contemporary analytical approaches to both the emblem and *bande dessinée*, revealing much about the intrinsic nature of hybrid productions of this kind. 'Production' then brings to the fore the impact of technological contexts and developments upon the text/image composition of the emblem and *bande dessinée*. In analysing production methods, Grove also touches upon questions of authorship that pertain to hybrid phenomena. Indeed, we have already established that in hybrid works it is often the case that several

[88] The exhibition entitled *Comic Invention* (18th March-17th July 2006) took place in Glasgow University's Hunterian Art Gallery. It offered insights into a variety of well-known word-image works by the likes of Lichtenstein, Warhol, Picasso and Rembrandnt while contrasting them with early text/image medieval manuscripts and Renaissance picture books. Central to the exhibition was the suggestion that the world's first comic originated in Glasgow.

[89] Laurence Grove, *Text/Image Mosaics in French Culture: Emblems and Comic Strips* (Ashgate, 2005), p. 18.

individuals are involved in the production process as each component part (text and illustrations) may require specialist input.

'Thematics' concerns itself with the diverse range of themes presented in both the emblem and *bande dessinée*, as well as the multifarious uses to which they are put. According to Grove, 'themes presented in any artistic forms of expression might be arranged into two categories: those which are specific to time and/or place and those one might class as "eternal".'[90] In respect of the former, he includes the examples of political events, current fashions or societal shifts, while 'eternal' themes centre around the afterlife, love or other abstract notions such as happiness and justice. Furthermore, Grove also warns that any theme can be manipulated and that '…in works of artistic creation, a theme is generally a pretext. A pretext for the display of artistic and creative talent, a pretext for the dissemination of the work's underlying beliefs.'[91]

The analysis of his chosen samples are framed with this in mind; for *bande dessinée,* he draws upon mainstream publications from 1934 onwards, with particular focus on *Le Journal de Micky*, that can be seen to sit within the broad categories of views of everyday life and visions of fantasy existence. For the emblem, Grove begins by referencing the plethora of subject matter variations in Andrea Alciato's *Emblematum Liber* alone and in many of the works by those that came immediately after. We already know that thematic continuity is first found most significantly in Georgette de Montenay's *Embleme ou devises chrestiennes*, whose unifying thread is Montenay's Protestant faith. As such, the visual components of her emblems, such as the boat sailing through stormy seas or the building of a wall, receive a textual interpretation that manipulates the subject matter and guides us towards a new reading.

In his chapter on 'Reception',[92] Grove takes account of the way in which audience expectations from both our era and the Early Modern period came to shape the roles of the text and of the image. Implicit within his analysis, then, is the notion that reception and production frequently become intertwined, as creators will draw upon cultural expectations of particular audiences in order to gauge the direction in which the production process should proceed. This ultimately leads into Grove's conclusion,

[90] Grove, *Text/Image Mosaics*, p. 93.

[91] Ibid, p. 118.

[92] Ibid, p. 123.

which reasserts the argument that the *bande dessinée* and the Renaissance emblem are the result of a creative mindset shaped by social and technological change — the print/manuscript overlap of the Early Modern period and the surge in visual stimuli resulting in an image-based culture at the start of the twentieth century. These mindsets may be regarded as analogous since the convergence of visual and verbal modes of expression brought about by the technical advances of the time has led to their manifesting themselves in hybrid productions.

1.3.9 Wim Van Dongen: Emblematic Tripartite Structures in American Paperback Covers

To some degree, the methodology of 'Parallelism' also finds echo in Wim Van Dongen's important contribution to the 'contemporary emblematics' debate — though he does not formally label his study as such — which focuses on the emblematic quality of the American paperback covers.[93] Van Dongen opens his article with a discussion of Pocket Book's publication of James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1939) which revolutionised the industry by marking the start of the paperback era and mass media publishing. Although paperback bound books were appearing as early as ca. 1837 in Europe and ca. 1839 in America, *Lost Horizon* is associated with the ushering-in of the paperback era in much the same way as Alciato's *Emblematum Liber* of 1531 marked the beginning of the emblem genre despite the presence of various 'proto-emblematic' forms.

This study then looks at the socio-cultural and technological context in which early paperbacks would have appeared — thus evoking the concerns of Groves 'Production' chapter — with specific reference to the dime novel, story magazines and pulp fiction. Van Dongen suggests that just as these popular forms of literature contributed to the climate in which paperbacks appeared, so the collections of epigrams, *imprese*, devices, and hieroglyphs shaped the environment for the birth of the Renaissance emblem. Another production-based observation that Van Dongen makes is in relation to the canonical tripartite structure of *motto*, *pictura* and *subscriptio* that not only characterises the emblem but other related bi-medial genres such as illustrated fables, pamphlets, as well as early political and humorous cartoons. What

[93] Wim Van Dongen, 'A Torrid Threesome: Investigating Form and Function of the Tripartite Emblem Structure in Mid-Twentieth-Century American Paperback Covers', in *Emblematica* Vol. 15 (AMS Press, 2007), pp. 111–124.

follows is a brief enumeration of the average paperback's main elements: cover image (the publisher typically contracted an artist to make a painting and later had in-house art designers), title, author, publisher, title blurb, author blurb, and cover artist's name. He singles out what he deems the three most important elements of the image, the title, and the title blurb. Together these form a sort of tripartite structure of their own and distinctly resembles the *emblema triplex*. Furthermore, the relationship between cover image and title might not always be comprehensible, and so the blurb may fulfil a similar function to the explanatory *subscriptio* by clarifying this juxtaposition.

Further similarities are discovered in the development of visual tropes and motifs — much like Groves chapter on 'Thematics' — that change according to the genre of paperback or emblem book. Van Dongen reminds readers of how emblems can be categorised by theme (religious emblems, love emblems, heart emblems, realistic emblems, and humanistic emblems), and that each group often possesses its own visual attributes and use of symbols that feature in the *picturae*. The example of love emblems is given, which make liberal use of cupids and hearts. Van Dongen therefore notes a similarity in the way in which paperbacks may also be categorised into groups that also have their own visual motif traditions. He draws attention to 'westerns' featuring cowboys, horses, and rifles on the cover, and 'thrillers' picturing detectives, murder weapons, corpses, hoodlums, and gangsters, as well as 'sci-fi' showing spaceships, exotic planets, and monsters. Clearly, there are more examples and the point is well taken. While the intended outcome of adorning these paperbacks with such visual material is ultimately the purchasing of the product itself, thus distinguishing it from the emblem, the techniques of visual and verbal persuasion are, Van Dongen argues, broadly analogous.

While insisting that 'there is neither a direct nor indirect link between seventeenth- and eight-century emblem book and mid-twentieth-century-paperbacks',[94] Van Dongen concludes that 'the tripartite structure, familiar to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century emblem genre, also occurs in contemporary ads and on paperback covers from the mid-twentieth century. He even suggests that 'some modern ads can be regarded more or less as present-day emblems'. In the absence of any close textual analysis then, Van Dongen uses a broad comparative lens, much like that of Grove's

[94] Ibid, p. 123.

'Parallelism' methodology, to argue for the emblematic resonance of book covers. Given that the primary object of study in the thesis is mid-twentieth century album cover art, as we shall soon see, there is much to draw on in this forward-thinking article.

1.3.10 Modern Emblematics Beyond the Page

Today the notion of 'Applied Emblematics' is no longer new, that is to say the use of emblems as an aid to understanding and interpreting certain architectural tendencies of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.[95] Of transhistorical significance, however, is the potential analogy between emblematically designed spaces of the Early Modern age and current-day cultural spaces. Most notably, Grove has explored formal parallels between André Le Nôtre's showpiece gardens with specific reference to the *Divertissements de Versailles* of 1674 and the modern phenomenon of the theme park through the case study of Disneyland Park near Paris.

The *Divertissements* took place in celebration of the conquest of Franche-Comté and Grove provides a summary of what would have been on offer for guests, together with a description of the pertinent themes and iconographies:

> Included in the entertainments were Quinault's *Alceste*, "une piece en Musique accompagnée de Machines", Molière's *Malade imaginaire*, performed in the Grotte de Thétis, Racine's *Iphigenie*, other musical performances, numerous feasts in the gardens, including one in the menagerie for the ladies, elaborate fountain displays, gondola trips on the canal, midnight illuminations and fireworks. Much of the accompanying décor was related to the iconography of Apollo or drew directly upon the King's "nec pluribus impar" (above all men) device.[96]

For Grove, this may be compared with the visual themes of Disneyland Paris; just as the theme-park of *Versailles* took inspiration from mythological knowledge with which visitors would have already been familiar, so Disneyland could draw upon a

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[95] See the section entitled 'Applied Emblematics' in Russell and Grove's previously cited *The French Emblem: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources.* A publication that considers the interface between the emblematic mentality and that which drive architectural production is Judi Loach's 'Architecture and Emblematics: Issues in Interpretation' in *Emblems and Art History* eds. Alison Adams and Laurence Grove, (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 1996).

[96] Grove, 'Multi-Media Emblems and their Modern-Day Counterparts' in *Emblematic Tendencies in the Art and Literature of the Twentieth Century*, eds. Anthony J. Harper, Ingrid Höpel and Susan Sirc (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2005), p. 174.

written tradition that formed part of the public's cultural baggage. The flashiness of American culture, references to specific Disney-related *bande dessinée* that would appeal to the indigenous population, and the rides and attractions themselves based on highly recognisable characters and narratives (e.g. Alice's Curious Labyrinth or an interactive tour of Blanche-Neige et les Sept Nains fantasy land) both attracts and bewilders audiences.[97] In both the *Divertissements* and Disneyland, a common thread is the invitation of participants to draw upon their knowledge of the sources to which these places make frequent reference in order to make sense of the experience, as well as establish how each component element relates to a unifying concept or idea. In the case of the *Divertissements*, Grove has suggested an underlying apology for the Sun King's sovereign power, while it is the 'Disney dream' of theme-park-goers from different places coming together through a will to identify, overcome evil and the application of traditional family values that characterises its modern analogue. Arguably, it is this aspect that has most resonance with the emblematic tradition.

This is of course one of many possible parallels that could be found in considering modern 3-D emblematic forms. Further possibilities could be a critical evaluation of street art, such as the social commentary produced by the anonymous England-based artist and political activist Banksy. His politically charged artworks range from tongue-in-cheek comments on contentious aspects of social life to intellectual criticisms of broader socio-political topics such as the monarchy, capitalism, war and (mal)treatment of animals.[98] Often his street art is strategically placed so as to interact with neighbouring monuments or surroundings of particular significance, such as the Eiffel Tower or dilapidated buildings of impoverished areas.

1.4 Concluding Remarks

It should be reiterated that the foregoing chapter did not, and indeed never intended to, provide a fully comprehensive account of emblematic discourse of the Early Modern era. In that regard, the following up of relevant footnotes should result in far more detailed treatments of this area. Rather, it is hoped that this chapter has provided a representative picture of where current scholarship stands on the notion of

[97] A full list of attractions and characters now featured in Disneyland Paris is available to view via their official website: https://www.disneylandparis.com/en-gb/ .

[98] For a comprehensive visual catalogue of Banky's work, featuring introductory and explanatory comments from the artist himself, see Banksy, *Wall and Piece* (Century, 2006).

'contemporary emblematics', where this term is understood in connection with the study of modern mixed-media artefacts that replicate the communicative strategies of Renaissance emblems.

The chapter opened with a cursory introduction to the historical context of the Renaissance emblem, including basic definitions of what 'emblem' and 'emblematic' mean in comparison with current-day parlance, followed by a broad survey of recent attempts to theorise the form and function of emblematic text/image structures. This initial section thus laid the foundation for identifying modern-day text/image productions that could be considered emblematic analogues, which became the focus of the second key section. As such, a review of the existing literature on emblematic advertisements, *impresa*-like tattoo art, parallel mentalities as seen through the lens of emblems, comics and paperback covers, and finally 3-D contemporary emblematics has sought the bring together the core elements of an emerging subfield of emblem studies.

Thinking ahead, this chapter will also be seen to form a crucial part of the overall 'mosaic' created by the unlikely juxtaposition of emblems and album cover art. The terminological clarification of what constitutes an 'emblematic' work, together with leading definitions of what *form* and *function* look like in emblematic text/image combinations, shall determine the direction of our analysis of text/image tendencies in mid-twentieth-century album cover art. As such, the following chapter will move beyond what commonplace and contemporary parlance describes as 'emblematic album covers', to a new category that resonates with this rich and centuries-old tradition of visual and verbal symbolism.

Chapter 2

Album Cover Art: Text/Image Origins, Previous Criticisms and Emblematic Comparisons

2.1 Album Art and the Academy

The reappraisal of album cover art as an object of critical study inevitably raises issues of intellectual value, or simply neglect, all too familiar to scholars of popular culture: how might one transcend the perspective of the fan, consumer, or aficionado? Is this even possible, let alone desirable? Subsequently, by which means might one apply a critical gaze to seemingly sub-scholarly objects and phenomena designed for, and shaped by, mass culture? While the consumer-turned-pop culture enthusiast of the present situation might be the record collector, just as much could be said of the comic book-reader, the cinemagoer, the online streamer, the scrapbook-maker, the social media-user, or the magazine-subscriber, to provide but a few (albeit prevalent) examples.

Then again, these questions could now be regarded as somewhat obsolete, resolved even, given the longstanding ubiquity of the broad field of Cultural Studies (see Chapter 1), as well as the more recent so-called 'aca-fan' culture.[99] The latter refers to academics who themselves acknowledge their role and participation in the fandom of a popular phenomenon which in turn acts a catalyst for scholarly research on the same topic. Indeed, media theorist Jason Mittel has drawn attention to the rise of important 'aca-fan'-inspired publications such as *Slayage: The International Journal of Buffy Studies* and recently the edited volume *Lego Studies: Examining the Building Blocks of a*

[99] Thanks are due to Laurence Grove for this particular observation by way of a conference plenary lecture, entitled 'Why Read Tintin?' at Villa Nova University in 2021, available to view at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad4utqserLs&t=3535s&pp=ygUObGF1cmVuY2UgZ3JvdmU%3D.

Transmedial Phenomenon.[100] On the social perception and broader understanding of popular culture, the progress made since Pierre Bourdieu's essential publication *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* in 1979, and his outlining of the process through which distinctions between high and low culture are made by those with 'cultural capital', as well as how favourable economic circumstances and class-based privileges such as education determine who can define 'good taste', has been as ground-breaking as it has been diverse. [101]

It is clearly not the purpose this thesis to rehash the full extent of how far the debate on the intellectual value of, and critical perspectives on, popular culture has advanced, not to mention that this undertaking is doubtless beyond the scope of a prefatory note such as this one. However, the fact that the field of album cover art and LP culture have remained largely undiscussed in recent scholarship accords a new sense of relevancy, perhaps even urgency, to aspects of these longstanding debates, as we shall see.

2.1.2 Barthes' Quandary over Expressive and/vs. Critical Modes

If another, however related, comment on the critical study of popular culture is permitted, scholars have been perennially faced with issues of language and

[100] The first volume and issue of *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, edited by David Lavery and Rhonda V. Wilcox, appeared in 2001. The journal is now on its twentieth volume, which was published in Spring 2022. Furthermore, see Mark J. P. Wolf's (ed.) *Lego Studies: Examining the Building Blocks of a Transmedial Phenomenon* (Routledge, 2016).

[101] There exists now a wealth of publications on the position of popular culture within academic contexts, particularly with the respect to the rise of Cultural Studies, which is also a topic of discussion in the previous chapter of this thesis. One of the most comprehensive and ground-breaking coverages of the theoretical concerns regarding popular culture can be found in Jonathan Fiske's *Understanding Popular Culture,* (Routledge, 2010). A key notion developed in Fiske's work is a distinction between mass culture, which he views as the products disseminated by an industrialised and capitalist society, and popular culture, which he defines as the ways in which people exploit and subvert these products to produce their own meanings. In other words, mass culture represents production and popular culture represents reception. It is also notable that Fiske frames such commonplace objects and phenomena as jeans, shopping malls, tabloid newspapers and gameshows as cultural artefacts worthy of critical study. For a wide-ranging overview of Cultural Studies that brings together a panoply of ideas and critics that have come to define this broad field of study, see Chris Barker and Emma A. Jane's (eds.) *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice,* (Sage, 2016).

nomenclature concerning the analysis of popular forms.[102] Even if this tends to be an exceptionally broad and complex field, it was a topic of particular importance in Barthes' *La chambre claire* [Camera Lucida]. Barthes opens the discussion by lamenting that he is « un sujet balloté entre deux languages, l'un expressif, l'autre critique; et au sein de ce dernier, entre plusieurs discours, ceux de la sociologie, de la sémiologie et de la psychanalyse » [a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semiology, and of psychoanalysis].[103] This observation was born of his reactions to looking at various photographs and pondering their content; the specific example is given of a photographic image featuring Napoléon's youngest brother, Jérôme (1852), in response to which Barthes recalls his singular astonishment at looking directly at the eyes that glanced upon the Emperor. Seen through a wider lens, the pleasure one might derive from perusing records and 'studying' their cover art, the thrill one might feel in thumbing through the pages of the latest volume of a cherished *BD* series, or the nostalgia one might experience upon rediscovering the contents of an old photo album, are all responses that belong to the expressive domain, which is characterised by emotional subjectivity. For Barthes, this phenomenon prompted a « désir ontologique » to learn what photography was in itself, and according to what specific traits it could be distinguished from « la communauté des images »[104].

Part of the problem, specifically in relation to photography, is addressed in the parallel Barthes draws between the status of a photographic image and the childlike gesture of pointing to indicate an object or person. That is to say, the photograph is often indistinguishable from its referent. He points out the commonplace practice of showing photographs, typically contextualised by such comments as 'this is my brother' or 'this is me as a child', which would naturally elicit the same process of photograph-showing from the beholder. *La Chambre Claire* is, essentially, then a corrective to this issue and forms part of Barthes' thought-provoking, and fundamentally structuralist, proposition: « pourquoi n'y aurait-il pas, en quelque

[102] The following reflections are much indebted to the observations of Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes (eds.) in their introduction to the critical anthology *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics* (Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), which is considered in detail at a later point in this chapter.

[103] Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire*: *Note sur la photographie,* (Cahiers du Cinéma, Gallimar Seuil 1980), pp. 20–21.

[104] Ibid.

sorte, une science nouvelle par objet? Une *Mathesis singularis* (et non plus *universalis*)? » [why mightn't there be, somehow, a new science for each object? A *mathesis singularis* (and no longer *universalis*)].[105]

As such, album art analysis necessarily involves a major shift from the expressive mode, typical of the plethora of coffee-table books on the subject,[106] to the critical mode. Furthermore, it would not seem illogical that one seeking to apply literary awareness to the field of album cover art would likewise draw significant inspiration from the same intellectual tradition. As stated in the previous chapter, Barthes' semiological deconstructions of the everyday are simply indispensable and constitute essential reading for any scholar of text/image and popular culture. Among a plethora of analytical essays, largely appearing in his distinguished *Communications* journal, the most relevant to the field of album cover art might be those on magazine covers for *Paris Match* (*Le mythe, aujourd'hui*), text/image commercial advertising (*Rhétorique de l'image*), press photographs with accompanying journalistic copy (*Le message photographique*) and the act of performing music *versus* listening (*Musica Practica)*, several of which are explored in the previous chapter of this thesis.

2.1.2 Comparisons with Academic Perceptions of *Bande Dessinée* and Comics Studies

As aforementioned, there is a possible connection between the status of what might be called 'album art studies' and the academic plight of the *bande dessinée* or comic strip — an analogous text/image form of mass production with considerable popular appeal — a number of decades ago. Comic art, in Anglo-American contexts at least, had for some time been relegated not only to the sphere of 'nerd-dom' or child's play in commercial contexts, but also deemed unworthy of academic examination.[107] The

[105] Ibid.

[106] A selection of representative examples include Michael Ochs *1000 record covers* (Taschen, 1996), Storm Thorgeson and Aubrey Powell, *One Hundred Best Album Covers* (DK, 1999), Francesco Spampinato, *Art Record Covers*, (Taschen, 2017) — though Spampinato does provide incisive introduction that contains learned allusions to Theodor Adorno, John Berger, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol and others —, Ben Wardle and Johnny Morgan, *The Art of the LP: Classic Album Covers 1955-1995*, (Sterling, 2010), Jacques Denis, Antoine de Beaupré and Jean-Baptiste Modino *Total Record: Photography and the Art of the Album*, (Aperture, 2016).

[107] This is explored by Laurence Grove in the opening passage of his essay 'Visual Cultures, National Visions: the Ninth Art of France' in *New Directions in Emblem Studies*, *Glasgow Emblem Studies Vol. 4*,

former point of view seems in general to have stemmed from the medium's well-known association with the American superhero universe,[108] Marvel and DC, while the latter speaks to its inherently 'bastardised' and popular nature — a hybrid of words and pictures for the uncultivated masses. In other words, comics could never be on a par with the purely text-based format of the novel, the golden standard of literature. Of course, in the Francophone world, the development and reception of the *bande dessinée* proved quite different; the artform has long been recognised among the likes of poetry, architecture, painting, and sculpture, having enjoyed the *appellation* of 'neuvième art' since the 1960s.[109]

It should be said, however, that the current situation is very different; there now exists an abundance of publications and academic fora of international provenance that fall within the purview of the field known as Comics Studies, such as: Roger Sabin's *Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art*,[110] Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*,[111] Laurence Grove's *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context*,[112] and Ann Millar's *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip*,[113] as well as the plethora of publications issuing from the *International Journal of Comic Art*, *European Comic Art* and *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship*, to cite but a mere handful. Yet, there exists very little, if anything, resembling a monograph-length critical introduction to album covers, a companion to cover art aesthetics, or a comprehensive reader in LP record culture.[114] Likewise, we await the launch of any

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Department of French, University of Glasgow (1999), p. 43. It is also a topic that could span several monographs and the point is purely intended to provoke reflection as to the general complexities of studying of popular culture.

[108] This is reminiscent of Umberto Eco's work on superman, where the distinctly popular nature of his chosen text provoked the contemporary intelligentsia. 'The Myth of Superman' in *The Role of the Reader* (Indiana University Press, 1979) pp.107–125.

[109] Grove, 'Visual Cultures, National Visions', p.43.

[110] Roger Sabin, *Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art* (Phaidon Press, 2001).

[111] Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2001).

[112] Laurence Grove, *Comics in French: The European Bande Dessinée in Context* (Berghan Books, 2010).

[113] Anne Millar, *Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-language Comic Strip* (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[114] On this last point, see forthcoming references to Richard Osborne's *Vinyl: A History of the Analogue Record* (Ashgate, 2012) as a rare monograph-length treatment of the analogue record from a historical perspective, punctuated by certain aesthetic and interpretative considerations.

scholarly platforms or journals exclusively dedicated to LP records and their bespoke art.

2.1.3 Roadmap of the Chapter

While the contention of this thesis is not to deal entirely with the dearth of album art scholarship and general status of this discipline, it does hope to set forth some new perspectives while bringing to the fore aspects of previously documented album cover history that merit formal discussion. The beginning of this chapter endeavours briefly to retrace the origins of recorded music packing design from a text/image perspective, starting from the primitive labels of Thomas Edison's wax cylinders to its metamorphosis into the album cover format, pioneered by Columbia Records and art director Alex Steinweiss. The middle section will review the handful of publications that have, over the past two decades, broken new ground by taking album art as an object of critical study. The final part of this chapter has an explicitly visual/verbal and transhistorical orientation. Both a deconstruction of its typical component parts and text/image structure provide the essential basis for drawing transhistorical comparisons between cover art, as a potentially amalgamated composition, and bi-medial emblematic expression of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Put forth are three main visual/verbal criteria through which it is possible to draw formal parallels between album art design and the emblematic mode. These criteria are then applied to a case in point that compares text/image interplay in the cover art of Metallica's fourth studio album …*And Justice For All* (Elektra, 1988) and a selected example from Herman Hugo's popular religious emblematic work *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp: Aertssens, 1624).

2.2 Text/Image Forerunners of Album Cover Art

While the genealogy of the textual components — the sleeve notes — of album art are generally thought to date to the nineteenth-century tradition of the descriptive or analytical programme note (commonly found in the libretti of classical operas), the front cover image itself is a more recent phenomenon. As Nick de Ville points out in his book on style and image in sleeve design,[115] to study the relationship between visual communication and music before the 1940s is, for the most part, to study sheet

[115] Nick de Ville, *Album: Style and Image in Sleeve Design* (Mitchell Beazley, 2003).

music covers and the paratextual material of vaudeville, music halls and musicals. In the case of the latter, such material included billboards and advertisement posters that combined verbal and visual elements to promote an event or product that would also go some way to suggesting aspects of the musical style, aesthetic fashions, as well as more logistical details like venue locations and ticket prices. Specific examples included by de Ville range from illustrated posters advertising the Edison Triumph Phonograph and performances by French actress-singer Mistinguett at the Casino de Paris (1931), or a rendition of *La Revue Nègre* (1925) musical at the Music Hall Des Champs-Élysées, to visually embellished sheet music covers for Charlie Chaplin's *There's Always One You Can't Forget* (1920) or Frank Stafford's original jazz-band's *Banjo Song* (1917).

2.2.1 Promotional Packaging for Thomas Edison's Wax Cylinders

Notwithstanding such early examples of image-based musical paratexts, the first iteration of visual culture in direct contact with music in a pre-recorded format is likely the promotional wrapping used for Thomas Edison's wax cylinders. These cylinders were to be used as part of Edison's key invention of the phonograph, first patented in the United States in 1878. This preliminary relationship of visual, verbal, and sonic elements is in fact noted by Steven Jones and Martin Sorger in their important article *Covering Music*.[116] There is, however, remarkably little discussion of the text/image specifics not only of the cylinder packing, but of later cover design in general. That being said, some format-based observations on Edison's invention of the phonograph and wax cylinders form part of Richard Osborne's detailed, and first-of-its-kind, historical study of the analogue record in *Vinyl: A History of the Analogue Record*.[117] Osborne points out that the phonograph is distinguishable by its ability to reproduce sound *audibly*, whereas the earlier attempts, for instance that of Léon Scott's phonautograph, could only reproduce sound *visually* in a stenographic manner.

[116] Steve Jones and Martin Sorger, 'Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design', *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, Vol. 11-12 (2006), pp. 68–102. This article should be recognised as an important early attempt to acknowledge album cover art as worthy of scholarly attention. By their own admission, the authors' aim is 'not to present a content analysis of album covers, but rather to begin to recover the history of their development as a form of art and commerce, and as an integral part of the production and consumption of popular music.'.

[117] Osborne, *Vinyl*, pp. 8–9.

Figure 4: Logo and title of promotional packaging of *Edison Gold Moulded Record* (1902-1912). Image taken from V&A London Exhibition (2009)

Figure 5: Photographic portrait of promotional packaging of *Edison Gold Moulded Record* (1902-1912). Image taken from V&A London Exhibition (2009)

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the phonograph is believed to have been launched without any particular commercial or practical application in mind, and rather functioned as a curiosity that illustrated the miraculous phenomenon of recorded sound. The apparatus offered to the public, which toured America and Europe by way of organised exhibitions, showcased the invention's novelty and was accompanied by wax cylinders that occasionally featured an assortment of music selected by Edison himself, but mostly contained a 'burlesque or parody of the human voice'.[118] Given that Osborne's interest is above all the recording format, it is unsurprising that he should not spend time critiquing the visual communication side of this new technology.

It is, however, interesting from a historical text/image point of view; the packaging design for these cylinders was composed of the red and gold-coloured title 'Edison Gold Moulded Records' and slogan 'Echo All Over The World', accompanied by a monochrome photographic portrait of Edison (fig. 4 and fig. 5). Other textual matter consists simply of contractual obligations by which authorised dealers must abide,

[118] Ibid.

such as the prohibition of duplicating and re-selling recordings, as well as notes on its patented status as a product of the National Phonograph Company Limited and the name of the recording on the cylinder's underside accompanied by the revolutions per minute at which it is to be run (160rpm). What Jones and Sorger do note, however, is the fragility of the wax cylinders, which necessitated a rigid and felt-lined packaging to avoid any damage during the shipping process.

2.2.2 Insipid Packaging of Early 'Tombstone' Records

Despite the innovation of Edison's phonograph and wax cylinders, it is generally accepted that the immediate forerunners of the vinyl discs that entered into the market in the mid Twentieth Century, and remain in circulation today, are the records developed by Germano-American inventor Emile Berliner, patented in 1887. In 1901, his Victor Talking Machine Company's sale of flat disc phonographs and discs themselves set in motion a listening trend on which Columbia Records, initially a furniture store that also happened to sell phonographs, capitalised shortly after with the introduction of their disc gramophone. From a technological standpoint, these years represent a moment of capital importance to the history of pre-recorded, and in some instances popular, music. Seen from a text/image perspective, however, this period is characterised by insipidity; if flat disc records were packaged at all, they were housed in plain grey and tan-coloured Kraft paper sleeves, whose main features consisted of the name of the recording company and occasionally the store at which they were to be sold (standalone record stores were a rarity at the time). The imitation leather and gold stamping on the spine in which the records were often wrapped led stores to stock them sideways rather than front-facing, from which the term 'tombstones' originated — a common way these records were referred to in the trade. It perhaps unsurprising, then, that the visual extravagance of the jukebox, combined with the well-established presence of radio and economic hardship of the Great Depression, meant that record sales were at a considerable low in the 1920s.

2.3 Alex Steinweiss and the Album Cover Revolution

In the midst of an economic recovery following the Depression years, which spanned approximately 1929–1939, the recording industry's marketing strategies underwent an artistic and creative revolution. This period of radical transformation was in large part spearheaded by New York-born, second-generation Polish immigrant, Alex

Steinweiss (1917–2011). Comparatively speaking, it would not stretch credulity to consider the importance of Steinweiss' contributions to the field of album cover art as akin to those of Spielberg to film, Shakespeare to theatre or Sartre to philosophy. Indeed, upon Steinweiss' passing in 2011, graphic designer Paula Scher reflected on his career for commercial design historian Steven Heller's eulogising article in the *New York Times* by commenting that 'When you look at your music collection today on your iPod, you are looking at Alex Steinweiss's big idea'.[119]

2.3.1 Steinweiss' Formative Years

As documented by eminent art director Kevin Reagan and Steven Heller in their book on the life and work of Alex Steinweiss,[120] the cover designer began his career with a design apprenticeship, after graduating from Parsons School of Design, under the tutelage of Viennese poster artist Joseph Binder. It was during this period that he learned essential techniques such as airbrushing and the use of colour for commercial posters and advertisements. Naturally, this European school of communication design frequently involved the combining of visual and verbal elements to attract attention by way of visual *éclat*, but also to convey important information about a product or event. In the subsequent years, Steinweiss developed his freelancing credentials and a visual-typographic style of his own, which led to his contributing to an art publication (as well as producing the front cover design), entitled *PM* (*Production Manager)*, which was an offshoot of Robert Leslie's typographic composition company The Composing Room. As noted, it was Leslie, with his wide-ranging industry connections and desire to support fledgling graphic artists, who made Steinweiss aware of Columbia's art director vacancy (the first of its kind, since Columbia existed as a broadcasting service, known as CBS, prior to their acquisition of a new record company based in Bridgeport, Connecticut) and helped to arrange the meeting that would ultimately lead to his employment.[121]

In his chapter 'Visualizing Music' as part of the same publication, Heller states that Steinweiss was originally hired by CBS to produce promotional displays and visual

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[119] Steven Heller, Alex Steinweiss, Originator of Artistic Album Covers, Dies at 94, *New York Times* (2011):https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/20/business/media/alex-steinweiss-originator-of-artistic-album-covers-dies-at-94.html

[120] Steven Heller and Kevin Reagan, *Alex Steinweiss: The Inventor of the Modern Album Cover* (Taschen, 2009).

[121] CBS still exists but is no longer referred to as Columbia Broadcasting System.

advertisements for the newly purchased and eponymous record company. Upon realising that the manner in which records were sold did not match the quality of their musical content, Steinweiss pitched the idea of composing visual-typographic designs that reflected and referenced the music held within the packing to a seemingly reluctant management team. The prospect of investing more funds for printing costs would have doubtless felt like an impossibility to executives working in an industry that was all but decimated following the extreme economic difficulties of the 1920s and early 1930s. Even the original purchase of the Bridgeport record company may have appeared as risky; it is estimated that Ted Wallerstein, formerly an executive of RCA Victor, persuaded CBS president William Paley to invest around eighty thousand dollars in this up-and-coming record business.

2.3.2 First Bespoke Album Art

Despite the increased manufacturing costs, Steinweiss was given the opportunity to design a handful of covers, the first of which being for a Rodgers and Hart collection, entitled *Smash Song Hits* (1940, Columbia Records), which effectively now stands as the first credible example of bespoke album art (fig. 6). The design partly features a monochrome photographic shot of New York City's Imperial Theatre on West 45th Street while the additional graphic elements evoke the 78rpm records that were held inside, both of which entice and inform the record-buying public of the product by way of text/image interaction. Here, the text is actually contained within part of the image itself, rather than artificially juxtaposed, as Steinweiss and his photographer reportedly persuaded the owner of the theatre to change the marquee lettering to display the album title and performers' names. Generally, the shellac discs could only hold around four or five minutes of music per side and so were typically packaged in groups of three to five discs, forming a book-like album bound between these newly designed pasteboard covers. As noted by Jones and Sorger, the resemblance of this format to the that of the photo album is what previously led to this kind of collection of records to be known as an album, and therefore the front design as album cover.

The success of this new design strategy and form of cultural enticement was such that Paley's investment was returned within a year. Among subsequent cover designs was that of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* conducted by Bruno Walter (1942, Columbia Masterworks), which according to a *Newsweek* report, experienced an 895 percent sales increase over the same record in undecorated packaging. Seen from this perspective, Richard Osborne's description of Steinweiss as simply 'the first sleeve designer to

achieve individual credit and recognition' may appear restrained to the point of downplaying a significant historical and socio-cultural moment.

Figure 6: Alex Steinweiss' front cover art of Rodgers and Hart's *Smash Song Hits* (Columbia, 1940)

2.3.3 The Steinweissian Design Logic

Given that Steinweiss is to all intents and purposes the paternal spirit of the album cover as an artistic conceit, it is unsurprising that other writers interested in the visual history of popular music, beyond Heller and Reagan, have commented upon this area of his artistic output. Peter Frank, for instance, considers the formal characteristics of Steinweiss work, encapsulating much of what could be regarded as the Steinweissian design logic. This compositional mode, as Frank notes, can be charted across the variety of jazz, broadway, classical, folk, and pop records for which he came to provide bespoke artwork:

> [Steinweiss] sought to bring the experience of the music itself to the package, as if illustrating the liner notes or even the sounds themselves … His earlier cover designs were blocky, luminous, and vertiginously angled … lightly rendered, and studded with symbols and references that might not be picked up on at first … Steinweiss' design genius lies not only in the self-possession of his innovative drive … but also in

> his ability to say so much about the music, its history, social resonance, and aural experience in an information-rich but visually uncomplicated manner.[122]

Additionally, Frank notes that Steinweiss was a product of one of propaganda art's liveliest moments, particularly in view of the all-pervasive poster art, placards and murals sponsored by the WPA (Works Administration Progress) that featured persuasive designs encouraging non-formally educated Americans to take on public work projects. Likewise, he draws attention to the earlier European models on which many of these 78rpm covers were based, including the important Art Deco and Art Nouveau works of such French painters, lithographers and print makers as Jules Chéret and Toulouse-Lautrec. There are also, Frank contends, design aspects of clear Bauhaus derivation in Steinweiss covers, inspired partly by the artistic works of iconic Swiss-born and Russian painters Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky respectively.

Many of these points are in various ways echoed in Heller's chapter, insofar as similar observations are made with respect to 'the application of flat colours and the use of isolated symbolic motifs for metaphoric effect [and the belief that] rather than […] a portrait of the recording artist, musical and cultural symbols would stimulate the audiences interest'.[123] Likewise, Heller draws attention to the progressive design epoch in which Steinweiss was operating. It is worth noting, however, that he points specifically to the socio-cultural changes brought about by the advent of Modernist design principles and a new wave of industrial mass-production, which prompted a radical response among artists, designers, and writers across Europe who felt that visual art would go hand in hand, even the driving force behind, this process. This shift in mindset, owing to the impact of technological and industrial advances upon art and design, arguably provided the basis for Steinweiss to pursue a career in commercial art; if at first commercial design was largely a derided profession, the advent of the Modernist concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, according to which fine and applied art could be considered of equal importance, meant that graphic design ascended the ranks in the overriding cultural hierarchy.

Frank does, however, remark upon Steinweiss' ability to adapt to novel technologies and increasing demand for innovative entertainment formats, given that he also

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[122] Peter Frank 'Cover Song: A Brief History of Alex Steinweiss, the Inventor of Album Art', *Art on Paper*, Vol. 12 (2008), pp. 59–60.

[123] Heller and Reagan, *Alex Steinweiss*, p. 77.

designed the 33⅓ LP single cardboard slipcovers, housing the new vinyl discs, which would remain the industry standard until the introduction of the CD jewel-case in 1989. From that point of view, it may seem odd that Steinweiss should have retired around the late 1960s or early '70s, given that what can be referred to as the golden era of cover design approximately spanned the years between 1968 until 1980. The reason for his withdrawal from the field of album cover art, however, seems largely tied to an increasingly personality-driven record industry in light of the new photographic design tendencies. That photography was becoming an integral part of cover art aesthetics did not in and of itself pose a problem to Steinweissian design, given that he himself had occasionally made use of photography-based collages. Rather, it was the obsession with putting people and faces, not ideas or concepts, on album covers. Such an approach ran contrary to Steinweiss' artistic responses to and reinterpretations of the record's musical material; in the concluding words of Frank, '[Steinweiss] could hear with his eye what his ear saw'.[124]

2.4 Previous Scholarly Approaches to Album Cover Art

The scarcity of previous attempts to intellectualise or offer critical discussion of album cover art, alongside the highly sporadic manner in which those existing efforts have appeared, means that there is no particular advantage to reviewing these publications in strictly chronological order. There are no intellectual waves of album art studies to speak of, and all attempts thus far form part of the same precarious and unpredictable situation of nurturing the emergence of a field in its nascent years. What *would* constitute a useful point of departure, however, would be a panoramic view of the present circumstances, a suggestion of how to make general progress, and a number of forays into new possible avenues of investigation that bring a range of critical and theoretical perspectives to bear on the cultural object of the album cover.

2.4.1 *Coverscaping* and the Breaking of New Ground

The aforementioned is exactly what is on offer from Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes in their important edited volume *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics*.[125] Also inspired by the manner in which a record collector, described here as a 'heavily

[124] Frank, 'Cover Song', p. 61.

[125] Grønstad and Vågnes, *Coverscaping*.

mythologized figure of popular culture', may desire to write about album covers but encounter the complex task of moving from the expressive to the critical mode, their anthology views album art as a field in an embryonic state, poised to be engaged with intellectually. Album art, being a product of popular music history and visual culture in equal measure, is in their view 'deserving of a phenomenology of its own' and so their book constitutes in some way a search for the 'science' of album art. The difficulty lies in determining whether cover art can be considered a postructuralist 'text' unto itself, perhaps at least equally part of the main 'text' involving the musical material, or whether it is relegated to something approaching Gérard Genette's notion of paratexts, whereby the album cover is ultimately external to the central work.[126] Grønstad and Vågnes' position is staked out early on, in that a record is a composite medium comprising not only music, but also graphic content and printed text.

The collection of essays in *Coverscaping* broach, therefore, an exceptionally wide range of issues pertaining to album cover aesthetics, ranging from semiotic analyses, sociological readings, and abstract philosophical discussions to explorations of aesthetic nature and value, art-historical perspectives and iconographic studies. Colleen Sheehy, for instance, applies a knowledge of art history to the analysis of the album cover for Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A* (1984, Columbia) considering the significant juxtaposition of the dorsal pose (called 'contrapposto' in art-historical studies) adopted by Springsteen with the backdrop of a superposed American flag. She contends that this socio-politically charged combination of images creates various strata of ambiguity with regard to notions of patriotism, masculinity, and the blue-collar experience in (then) contemporary American culture.

From another perspective, Anne Galperin considers how digital technology has impacted the production, representation, and consumption of music, as well as the nature of music/image interaction. While album art as a printed artform may have experienced its heyday in the late 1960s and 1970s, the advent of digital aesthetics has, Galperin suggests, revitalised the visual aspect of music with the appearance of fan websites, online label marketing strategies and other artist-to-fan engagement. Of course, Galperin was writing in 2010 when social media was at a distinctively different stage in its evolution; these platforms have now become a salient feature of album

[126] Ibid, p. 1.

release promotion and all of the above regularly take album art beyond its usual confines of the printed sleeve into digital contexts and in increasingly hybrid ways.

By way of a final sample, Jeffrey A. Weinstock explores how album art may serve as a vehicle for shocking iconoclasm and provocative critiques of serious topics like religion and social paradigms, with particular reference to gothic imagery. Weinstock suggests that self-styled 'goths' can be considered a subculture that rely on expressive forms and rituals to signal a rejection of the status quo and convey symbolic changes to a symbolic order. As noted, one manner in which goth subculture subverts and wreaks havoc on mainstream values is by producing iconoclastic images that 'profane the sacred by linking religious icons to crass commercialism and/or perverse sexuality'. Weinstock draws attention to such kinds of images that have been presented on album covers, involving the depiction of nuns and angels in sexually provocative poses as well as debased visual representations of saints, priest and Christ himself.

Doubtless, *Coverscaping* stands as a thought-provoking incursion into album cover aesthetics whose heterogeneity in terms of approach can be seen as a strength, particularly in such an underexploited field as this. It is also, inevitably, one of its weaknesses as scholars hoping for anything akin to a generalising theory or deconstruction of the governing principles of album art's structure and inner functioning will be left disappointed. All of the analytical methodologies in *Coverscaping* apply an external perspective to cover art rather than focusing on the medium itself, its structural conventions, and formal poetics. This is, in part, the very nature of edited volumes and anthologies.

2.4.2 Osborne's Historical and Critical Reflections on 'The Sleeve'

In Richard Osborne's above-mentioned *Vinyl: A History of The Analogue Record*, a final chapter is dedicated to the record sleeve. While the majority of this chapter has a historical orientation, as the book title itself would suggest, there are some critical reflections on the design practices of album art. Osborne makes some interesting observations with regard to the sleeve's apparent 'struggle for definition' in the LP's nascent years of the 1950s, immediately followed by a severe reduction in typography and focus on personality in 1960s, then to a complete 'abandonment of self' that entailed both allusive and elusive cover imagery in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

There is also a section on the 'associative properties' of the record sleeve, detailing the manner in which LP cover art became 'an essential and entwined part of the listening experience'.[127] At this stage, an intriguing discovery is posited of a potential link between the development of stereo sound and the newfound centrality of album art; the move from mono to stereo sound is thought to have abstracted the location of music and as such listeners would have required a new focal point to replace the mono speaker which functioned as the main source of music. As such, Osborne states that 'the large expanse of the LP sleeve provided one outlet', that 'designers deliberately worked upon this space so that it would sustain attention for the duration of the record', and that 'if the sleeve art wouldn't suffice, there were always the texts to occupy your time: sleevenotes and, in particular, the lyrics would keep you attached to the sleeve while the LP's music unfolded'.[128] It is notable that Osborne is effectively suggesting that text/image interaction is the key component to these artistic strategies of listener enticement. It is also worth mentioning that he introduces a temporal element to the reception of sleeve art by alluding to the way in which the listener's musical journey would be accompanied by the visual and verbal aspect of the sleeve design, forming a fully cohesive aural and visual experience. Less original, but nevertheless, important are his comments upon the intertextual quality of sleeves that reference aspects of popular culture and even other previous sleeve artworks.

2.4.3 Inglis, The Beatles, and Cover Art as Readerly/Writerly Texts

In reviewing the history and design practices of twentieth-century album cover art, it is inconceivable that the artistic works of The Beatles should not at some point become a subject of discussion. Popular music scholar Ian Inglis published an important article on the album covers of The Beatles, but in so doing sought to 'offer some observations which may be applicable to an investigation of the dynamics of album art in general'.[129] Indeed, he begins his article by considering 'what it is that album covers actually *do*' and enumerates the various roles and functions they fulfil. These range from protecting the record held within the sleeves and advertising the product for sale by way of identificatory text/image combination, to offering an accompaniment to the music via a photograph of the performer or a pictorial representation of the lyrics or

[127] Osborne, *Vinyl*, pp. 176–177.

[128] Ibid.

[129] ''Nothing You Can See That Isn't Shown': the album covers of the Beatles', *Popular Music*, Vol. 20 (2001), pp. 83–97.

musical material, as well as being a commodity that is bought and sold as an art object of value.

The main section of Inglis' discussion is dedicated to exploring issues of image and identity, as well as the impact and influence, of The Beatles' twelve album covers. The former is discussed firstly in terms of the personality-driven cover design trend that is exemplified in *Please Please Me* (1963, EMI), then with respect to the group's complete re-invention of their identity for the cover art of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967, EMI), which reflected the concept behind the musical material. Concerning impact and influence, Inglis begins by alluding to the (highly problematic) assertion that album art 'did not have much of a life before The Beatles' and the pervasive opinion that The Beatles single-handedly instigated the explosion of innovative cover design. An awareness of the medium's historical origins and evolution reveal that there is ample reason to challenge this position, without rehearsing the details of Alex Steinweiss and his disciple Jim Flora's remarkable bespoke artworks for those early records of the 1940s and 1950s. Of course, it cannot be denied that the album art of The Beatles did have a hugely significant impact upon popular culture, as Inglis reminds us that the Klaus Voorman's cover design for *Revolver* (1966, EMI) and that of Peter Blake and Jann Haworth for *Sgt. Pepper's* both won the Grammy award for best album cover in their respective years. Inglis then proceeds to enumerate the various album covers that have since drawn (at times direct) inspiration from the aesthetics of The Beatles' album art, including The Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (1967, Olympic) and Mothers of Invention's *We're Only In It For The Money* (1968, Verve).

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Inglis' article is a theoretically oriented section in which he draws upon the Barthesian notions of 'readerly' (*lisible*) and 'writerly' (*scriptible*) texts, which were originally set forth in the seminal *S/Z* featuring an analysis of Balzac's short story *Sarassine*.[130] There are, according to Inglis, album covers that transparently present the group's name, their likeness (by way of photography) and album title, as well as promotional details; the commercial imperative to sell the product dominates and the result is a cover design that presents little to no ambiguity for the beholder, thereby leading to passive reader responses and no work/receiver interaction. This would therefore be categorised as 'readerly'. On the other hand, Inglis refers to cover designs such as those of Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, which

[130] Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, (Éditions du Seuil, 1973).

often dispense with any reference to the group's name, album title, likeness of performers or any other identificatory elements. These are purposefully enigmatic artworks which generate multiple meanings during the reception process, and as such can be seen as 'writerly'.

Undoubtedly, this is a fruitful application of critical theory to album art. However, readers would presumably have benefitted from a close analysis that applies Barthes' theoretical constructs to a chosen artwork, which is where Inglis regrettably stops short. More generally, these reflections could have been furthered through the inclusion of Jonathan Fiske's analogous notion of the 'producerly text'. In short, Fiske likens the producerly text to readerly text in that it is generally accessible and does not challenge the receiver to make sense out of it, but, like the writerly text, has a potential openness that allows the receiver to recreate new meanings as they see fit, but does not require them to do so. It would therefore be interesting to consider whether album cover art may also be seen to function as a popular and producerly text, one that can be enjoyed and understood *per se,* whilst also allowing for other interpretations.

2.4.4 Dougherty and the Cover Aesthetics of Jazz Records

The aesthetics of jazz album cover art, particularly those of the Blue Note label, have over time acquired legendary status. In similar fashion, Carissa Kowalski Dougherty has examined the hitherto largely uncharted territory of jazz album art, which she deems the main commercial counterpart to jazz-inspired visual art.[131] Dougherty writes that the album cover medium became an essential part of jazz culture, especially with the introduction of the LP in the late 1940s and early 1950s. While she notes that there was a sense of racial ambiguity in 1950s and 1960s' jazz album art conveyed by the use of abstract designs and neutral photography, the advent of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the 1970s prompted both sonic and visual shifts in jazz culture. She explores how during this period various cover designers began incorporating African motifs, African American hairstyles, and other symbols of black pride. Dougherty's analysis, however, leads her to the conclusion that this new racial visibility was more linked to the commodification of black culture than an increase in African American participation in the field.

[131] Carissa Kowalski Dougherty, 'The Coloring of Jazz: Race and Record Cover Design in American Jazz, 1950 to 1970', *Design Issues*, Vol. 23 (2007), pp. 47–60.

2.4.5 Nicholas Cook and Record Sleeves as Musical Multimedia

From another critical perspective, album art analysis has notably been the subject of pre-eminent musicologist Nicholas Cook, both in his monograph *Analysing Musical Multimedia* and his book chapter contribution to *Composition, Performance, Reception: Studies in the Creative Process in Music*.[132] In general terms, Cook exploits album cover art as a means of probing the value of musical analysis from the point of view of reception, moving away from the 'music itself' approach. In so doing, he redresses commonplace conceptions of musical aesthetics as well as the ways in which musical meaning is constructed in contrast with various aspects of mid-Twentieth century musicology. The production-oriented perspective is derived from the belief that meaning is simply deposited into the notes by the composer at the time of writing and is seamlessly delivered to the audience at the moment of performance. Cook's reception-based approach, facilitated by the interpretation of album covers as more than just optional accessories, acknowledges that the music alone rarely poses clearly articulated questions and has always relied on formal text-based analysis to stabilise its reception. Whereas others adopting a similar position have pursued listeners' responses, a method that closely resembles aspects of psychological studies, Cook argues for the value of studying the communicative context of a music's creation, performance, and reception.

Initially concerned with arranging covers into formal categories, Cook differentiates between album art that enters into the 'discursive framework' of a record, through which the music is consumed and understood, and those that are purely promotional. The latter is referred to as the 'basic semiotics of packaging', or sleeves that serve only to render visual a particular performance of the music via artist portraiture or live shots. The particularity of this form of cover art lies in their facilitating a process of identification with the star, an aesthetic construct that overshadows all possible questions of musical interpretation. Seen from this perspective, it is the star who is bought and sold rather than their music, and so the album cover is essentially transformed into an 'object of vicarious possession' in the eyes of the consumer.

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[132] Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford University Press, 1998), and 'The Domestic Gesamtkunstwerk, or Record Sleeves and Reception' in *Composition - Performance - Reception: Studies in the Creative Process in Music*, ed. Wyndham Thomas (Ashgate, 1998), pp. 105–117.

Of particular interest, however, are album covers that do have some bearing on the creation of musical meaning and from these Cook finds two main categories whose nomenclature he derives from Peircian semiotics. That is to say, such album art can be classified via either their iconicity or symbolism in relation to the music, where the former has a literal sensorial connection and the latter a purely cultural one. In both cases, the covers serve as an interpretative aid for the encoding of attributes of aesthetic and cultural significance to the music, therefore operating as 'active agents in the cultural process, sites where meaning is negotiated through the act of consumption'.

Specifically in *Analysing Musical Multimedia*, Cook states that coupling sound with image has the effect of drawing attention to the attributes they share — a reception-based process which he labels the *enabling similarity*. The notion of two disparate items placed in juxtaposition whose relation to one another is determined by the active viewing/listening subject has, as Cook notes, strong affinities with the functioning of the literary metaphor. This theoretical synthesis likewise finds echo in his 'Domestic *Gesamtkunstwerk*' chapter wherein he states that 'in order into enter into an aesthetic relationship with the music, the image must possess qualities that are intelligible when transferred to the music'. These reflections are applied to the analysis of classical music records to demonstrate iconic and symbolic variants of cross-media interaction and the metaphorical transference of attributes that underpins them.

Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.2 'The Little Russian', for instance, features a painting of nineteenth-century artist S. A. Mokin. On the broadest level, there is an immediate factual justification for their pairing. Cook notes that they are both resultant from nineteenth-century Russia and both evoke national sentiment, Mokin through the representation of a distant event of heroism while Tchaikovsky incorporates conventional elements of Russian folksong. That said, the coupling functions on a deeper level since the juxtaposition of image and sound serves to encode not only Russianness but various other aesthetically relevant attributes such as 'the evocation of a perhaps spurious national identity; a flattened perspective that throws emphasis onto the picture plane; a pullulating surface of minute, calligraphic decoration, full of repetition and with a complete absence of *chiaroscuro*'. As Cook states, these are attributes that may not be as readily perceptible were the music not transmitted within the same communicative context. Cook's work is, therefore, of fundamental importance to album art studies in that he has attempted to establish a set of general

principles that govern the interaction between sight and sound in the context of cover art.

2.5 Album Cover Art and Emblematics: Beginnings of a New Transhistorical Comparison

Notwithstanding these existing models, the relationship of album cover art to text/image interaction and the framing of cover art as a text/image form represent a gap in contemporary scholarship. Album artwork may be thought of as a relatively amorphous form of artistic expression, something that can likely be attributed to the multifarious and subcultural design contexts from which the artworks originate. However, cover design does arguably possess something akin to textual and visual conventions of its own, if not a distinct artistic language. Just as one might provocatively accept that anything could be considered cinema that professes itself to be so,[133] or that anything could be labelled comic art that describes itself as such, there exist nonetheless filmic conventions and a comics-based language that operate as a set of formal artistic 'rules' (and subsets of genre-specific rules) that will either be followed or subverted. Of course, the question of who sets the rules, why and for how long, is essentially a reiteration of the various artistic canon debates,[134] in which this thesis does not intend to intervene directly.

2.5.1 A Text/Image Inventory of Album Art and the Threefold Structure of Title-Cover Image-Liner Notes

The same observations can be applied to the medium of album cover art. Consequently, while recognising that heterogeneity may at times be more the rule than the exception when it comes to design practices and techniques, we should

[133] Here, readers might recall the provocative claim made by Martin Scorsese during an interview for *Empire* magazine in 2019, that the recent waves of films issuing from the Marvel Cinematic Universe resemble more the experience of theme parks than 'real cinema', which, in his view, should be that of 'human beings trying to convey emotional, psychological experiences to another human being'. His reflections, which have now entered contemporary discourse, implicitly bear upon the question of definition and limitations regarding the medium of cinema.

[134] For a comprehensive treatment of this issue, as it pertains to the literary canon and its wider applications, readers should consult Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, (Harcourt Brace & Company 1994).

nevertheless be able to enumerate (in no particular order of importance) what are considered to be the text/image conventions of album cover art:

- Name or pseudonym of the artist(s) or group
- Title of the album or other recording format (EP, 45rpm singles etc.)
- Name of recording label
- Name of composers, arrangers, producers, sound engineers, mixers and masterers.
- Front cover image
- Track listing
- Liner notes — chiefly comprising either some form of biographical and socio-historical commentary, or a printed reproduction of the album's lyrics. Other component elements of the liner notes may include the artists' acknowledgements.
- Date of release
- Secondary visuals (images not displayed on the front cover but on the inner or back sleeves)
- Legal, particularly copyright-related, items (e.g. all rights reserved and unauthorised copying, lending, public performance, and distribution prohibited).
- Catalogue number

It should be borne in mind that the foregoing serves only as a provisional inventory and that not all will agree with what has been included/excluded. That said, it should provide a representative sampling of what listeners would find when looking at most mainstream album cover designs.

Of these visual and verbal elements, three could be seen to emerge at the forefront of the design: album title, front cover image and the broad area of liner notes. This may seem like an arbitrary observation to some. However, for the cultural and text/image historians conversant with the compositional principles of the *Aetas Emblematica*, this visual/verbal structure can be seen to evoke what is now referred to as the 'model emblem', inspired by the works of North Italian jurist Andrea Alciato (see Chapter 1) whose *Emblematum Liber* of 1531 set the text/image trend that would form part of an all-pervasive mentality. The previous chapter of this thesis noted that the Alciatian emblem concept can be seen as a microcosm of Renaissance early print culture and a

mindset that favoured the liberal mixing of literature and art. However, of particular relevance here is the use of a threefold structure. Alciato's emblems and those of many other emblematists, as previously stated, typically consisted of the tripartite structure of *motto*, *pictura* and *subscriptio*, canonically known as the *emblema triplex*. Questions of functioning and the interdependent mixing of text and image are another matter, but for now we may note this preliminary structural parallel between album cover art and emblematics. Indeed, Peter Daly has noted,[135] as this thesis has also suggested, that if the emblem did indeed involve both an *artform* and *mode of thought* that was all-pervasive in Renaissance culture, helping to shape most forms of visual and verbal artistic expression of the period, then it would be surprising if it had disappeared without a trace.

2.5.2 Towards an Emblematic Reading of the Album Cover's Aesthetic Structure

It is difficult, nigh on impossible, to posit historical continuity between album covers and Renaissance emblems. However, the aforementioned threefold structure that is pervasive in album cover aesthetics may, as we have pointed out, be regarded as a modern-day reworking of the emblematic tripartite structure — album title becomes *motto*, front cover image replaces *pictura* and liner notes reduplicate *subscriptio*. It is also possible that such a novel perspective could provide the basis for drawing other significant parallels between the two modes of expression, such as the (re)use of visual motifs and the nature of the visual/verbal interplay. Formally, the transposition of *motto* to album title and *pictura* to front cover image is perhaps an obvious one. However, the notion of liner notes as a contemporary variant of the *subscriptio* raises an interesting conceptual/interpretative question: since the liner notes are so often in conversation with the music by way of a contextualising commentary, or perhaps even directly summon the music by way of a printed reproduction of the album lyrics, does this contemporary *subscriptio* function as an inherently cross-media component? This is also the moment to discuss the limitations and parameters of our forthcoming studies.

In response to the particular issue of how to interpret this modern *subscriptio*, there are two possible avenues of inquiry that one could pursue: the first is a scenario wherein one considers the album cover to function simultaneously as an entryway

[135] Peter Daly, *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe: Contributions to the Theory of the Emblem* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 8–11.

paratext and a text unto itself, while the second is to view the album cover as one, however important, element in a broader composite medium involving the musical material. The former scenario is founded on the premise that the prospective listener has not yet heard the music record and as such the album cover art acts as a literal and metaphorical 'threshold' while fulfilling the paratextual function of directing reception and constructing expectations in the listener's mind to facilitate a more pertinent 'reading' of the main text (the music), as originally theorised by Genette.[136]

In the same scenario, the album cover is also the sole object of the prospective listener's attention, whether the individual finds themselves in the record store or in a domestic setting, and so in some way becomes a text unto itself. This perspective finds echo in Ian Chapman's iconographic analysis of Kiss' *Alive!* (Casablanca, 1975) record,[137] which takes as its point of departure that suspenseful moment where the record collector is titillated by the cover art for a record of which they have no prior knowledge. To explain this process of cultural enticement, Chapman draws upon Erwin Panofsky's art-historical method of the three-strata of meaning.[138] His analysis therefore sits firmly within the tradition of pictorial exegesis. Seen from this perspective, then, the modern *subscriptio* would remain a verbal component, even if references are made to various musical and cultural contexts therein.

The second scenario, wherein the liner notes and by extension the album art itself cannot be analysed in isolation from the music, introduces a cross-media orientation to this contemporary *subscriptio* variant. Indeed, this sets off the old from the new; this modern *subscriptio* exists beyond the confines of the printed page and reflects the twentieth-century music recording technology. It would then be tempting to find parallels between this conception of the record as a composite medium and that of Nicholas Cook; after all, he refers to rhetorical figures like analogy and syllogism, as well as evoking the interplay of diverse visual, verbal, and musical fragments whose

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[136] Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Éditions du Seuil, 1987).

[137] Ian Chapman, 'KISS: *Alive!* An Iconographical Approach' in *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aeshtetics*, eds. Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes (Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), pp. 133–145.

[138] Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1939). His canonical three strata of meaning are centred upon 1) primary or subject matter, which involves a naturalistic reading of the artefact in question, 2) secondary or conventional subject matter, which aims at connecting artistic motifs to known themes or concepts perhaps issuing from a particular cultural context, and 3) the intrinsic meaning or content, which aims at interpreting the work by asking how it resonates with its time, place, authorship, and viewership.

shared attributes of aesthetic significance form a cohesive unit, a process which is distinctly reminiscent of emblematics. Of course, Cook is a musicologist, and for various aspects of this analytical method one must be fully conversant with music theory and the formal analysis of (popular) music if points of similarity and divergence across this multimedia spectrum are to be discovered. Even if the multimedia method is designed to move away from the 'music itself' approach, his analysis of the music video for Madonna's hit song 'Material Girl', for instance, still involves sustained references to rhythmic, tonal, timbral and harmonic elements of the music. This presents, thus, significant challenges to critics whose work falls chiefly within the purview of literary and art-historical studies.

2.5.3 A Note on the Limits of Scholarly Expertise

At this point, some caveats of our own must be attached to this discussion. Given that the present thesis is founded upon text/image scholarship and derives much of its theoretical inspiration from literary and art-historical theory, the same challenges and limitations must be recognised. As shall be made apparent, a study of this kind — the drawing of text/image parallels between album cover art and Renaissance emblematics — perceives the album cover as an entryway paratext and text unto itself, rather than a musical multimedia object. While formal analysis of the musical material falls therefore beyond the purview of this thesis, it is inevitable that in examining album art, one will encounter visual and/or verbal allusions to socio-cultural issues that are rooted in the history of popular music. This will necessarily form an integral part of the critical discussion.

2.5.4 Visual/Verbal Criteria for the Transhistorical Comparison of Renaissance Emblems and Album Cover Art

Let us now elaborate further upon the transhistorical dimensions of this particular study. If we are working on the assumption that album cover art has the potential to stand as a modern-day counterpart to emblematic composition of the Early Modern era, then we shall have to consider specific issues and parameters around structure, function, and content. Questions of definition in relation to what is/is not emblematic are notoriously problematic, as set forth in the previous chapter. Daly has also expressed reservations about the simple application of an emblematic reading to the context of modern works without the quotation of emblem books or manifestations to

support the critic's assertions.[139] While Daniel Russell's theoretical construct of the emblem as a process and mode of thought has proved ground-breaking, it must not be interpreted in complete isolation from the original *corpus emblematicum*. We must also re-emphasise that any parallels are above all formal and thus synchronic rather than chronological; we should remember Dieter Sulzer's warning of creating anachronistic comparisons through the misguided notion of a continuing popular emblem tradition that is historically tied to the original literature. Bearing that in mind, it is possible to propose three principal criteria through which one could draw formal parallels between particular examples of album art and Renaissance emblems:

(1) Visual Topoi: the cover art re-invents and adapts visual motifs that also figure in Renaissance emblematic manifestations. Various emblematic *topoi* may be seen to have survived in modern cultural contexts, though they are often 'trivialised' or re-contextualised within new iconographic traditions.

(2) Bi-Medial Structure: the cover art consists of a text/image structure that also features in Renaissance emblems, be it the canonical *emblema triplex* or its many variants.

(3) Interactive Hybridity: the cover art's album title, still image, and liner notes function interdependently and draw attention to shared attributes forming an amalgamated composition that requires decoding by the recipient. This would parallel the text/image hybridity of Renaissance emblems, whereby *motto*, *pictura* and *subscriptio* simultaneously interact with one another to produce a homogenising whole that likewise invites a process of decoding.

There are several advantages to using these criteria for comparative readings of album covers and emblems: firstly, they appeal to aspects of recent emblem theory, namely the significant relationship of text to image that exploits referentiality, connotation and/or metaphoricity, as well as reader engagement. Secondly, they hinge upon the use of primary materials taken from the original emblematic corpus, thereby avoiding any reliance upon purely theoretical conceptions of what an emblem is and how it

[139] This objection is expressed in response to Sonja Lagerwall's paper that sought to apply a similar emblematic reading to segments of Michel Butor's novel *La Modification*, with a particular emphasis on the aesthetics of reception and reader engagement. He notes the absence of quotations of emblems to support Lagerwall's argument and that, on a purely compositional level, novels comprise hundres of pages of prose which differs from the most of the emblems' *subscriptiones*. *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 8–11.

works. Again, it should be made clear at the outset that any method has its limitations and that scholars could well question which criteria should/should not be used for the discovery of emblematic parallels, or indeed whether another approach altogether should be adopted. This strategy, however, seems just as valid in light of the relative scarcity of any cohesive methodological precedent.[140]

2.6 Case in Point: The Cover Art of Metallica's *…And Justice For All* and a Selected Emblem of Hugo's *Pia Desideria*

A convenient way of illustrating the efficacity of these criteria is through a brief analysis of an album cover that relies heavily on text/image interplay: Stephen Gorman's visual design for the fourth studio record *…And Justice For All* (Elektra, 1988) of American heavy/thrash metal icons Metallica.[141] We shall first seek to demonstrate the manner in which this album art juxtaposes text and image to the extent that they function interdependently, thus creating an effect that supersedes its individual elements. It shall then be argued that the cover art, across the given criteria of *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure,* and *hybridity*, lends itself to formal comparison with a particular manifestation of the emblematic mode in Jesuit scholar Herman Hugos's *Pia Desideria* of 1624 (Antwerp: Aertssens).

…And Justice For All was the first release since Metallica had lost their bassist Cliff Burton during a severe road incident involving the toppling of their tour bus. As such, there seems to have been a degree of public suspense around artistic direction and conjecture over whether this would constitute a 'statement' record. Roger Gorman, brother of Stephen Gorman, was the founder of Reiner Design Consultants at the time

[140] As stated in the previous chapter, the closest thing to a set of blueprints for a cohesive approach to the drawing of transhistorical parallels between contemporary cultural production and emblematics can be found in Laurence Grove's *Text/Image Mosaics* (Ashgate, 2005). His notions of *parallel mentalities* and methodology of 'parallelism' revolve around the broad theme of technology as a catalyst for cultural and artistic change. The main parallel operates therefore at the macro level of works that are entirely hybrid, and devoid of any text/image hierarchy, rather than close comparative analysis of text/image structure and functioning.

[141] Emphasis should be placed on the brevity of this analysis. The three extended case studies presented in this thesis will delve into the socio-cultural, design and technological background to each record in a way that we shall have to forgo here. This overview serves simply as a way to test the appropriateness of this threefold criteria method to discovering formal parallels between Renaissance emblematics and album cover art.

and had a prior relationship with the band, having produced the photographic cover for *The $5.98 E.P.: Garage Days Revisited* the previous year. If the expectation were ever that this previous cover would serve as a template for the following record, then we can certainly speak of a major directional shift in artistic vision. It would seem that drummer Lars Ulrich, following various creative discussions with guitarist and frontman/singer James Hetfield, approached Gorman with the album title along with a clearly defined concept for the artwork (fig. 7).

Figure 7: Stephen Gorman's cover art of Metallica's *…And Justice For All* (Elektra, 1988)

2.6.1 Analysis of Title and Cover Image of *…And Justice For All*

Historians and well-informed readers will observe that the title '…And Justice For All' is borrowed from the context of the American Pledge of Allegiance:

> I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty *and justice for all* (latest version as of 1954, my italics).

As regards the main pictorial component, this can be seen to function as a reworking the motif of blindfolded lady justice (*Justitia* in Latin) so as to include ropes violently

pulling her statue from the plinth.[142] *Justitia* is, of course, a widely recognised allegorical personification in Western culture that has its origins in Ancient Roman art, and so inevitably has greater 'authority' due the motif's evocation of multifarious past meanings and implications. A further added detail are the dollar bills that fall from her scales. The violence of this scene appears further accentuated by the cracked marble backdrop, an aesthetic detail that also plays upon the classical associations of *Justitia*, into which is also carved the group's name. It is conceivable that the group were in search of a design that would simultaneously shock, provoke, and entice the prospective listener with an enigmatic image that is nonetheless loaded with meaning. The connection between cover art and title is therefore an obvious one, that of justice, but this is a wide concept. As such this text/image juxtaposition, while teasingly ambiguous, thus far delivers no specific message.

2.6.2 Analysis of Liner Notes of *…And Justice For All*

It is not until we consider the third, longer verbal element, that of the liner notes which chiefly take the form of album lyrics (fig. 8), that we can hope to uncover the specific context and a glean a more nuanced meaning. Due to the length of each of the nine songs — no track is under five minutes — this release was transformed into a double record over two vinyl discs. Accordingly, the liner notes begin by categorising these songs into four discrete parts through the use of roman numerals (another Classical association). The following sleeve then presents us with a full reproduction of each of the songs' lyrics and attributes writing credits to the individual members that participated in their composition. Part I is composed of 'Blackened' and the title track '…And Justice for All'. The former track, the first of the album, can be generally seen to address the particularly dark topic of Armageddon. Lines that are notably striking include those of the first verse, 'Death of Mother Earth, never her rebirth… Blackened is the end, winter it will send', those of the chorus, 'Fire to begin whipping dance of the dead', and those of the third verse, 'Smouldering decay, taker her breath away'. The second, title track of the record instead harbours anti-establishment sentiments and is underpinned by themes of wealth, power, and corruption. Representative examples can be found in lines such as those of the first verse, 'Halls of justice painted green, money talking… Power wolves beset your door, hear them stalking', those of

[142] These interactions are documented in Ramon Martos' book *…And Justice for Art: Stories about Rock and Heavy Metal Album Covers* (Ramon Martos Dark Canvas, 2014).

the pre-chorus, 'The ultimate in vanity… Exploiting their supremacy', and the particularly shocking chorus line, 'Justice is lost, justice is raped, justice is gone'.

Figure 8: Liner notes of *…And Justice For All*, notably featuring the motif of the hammer of justice

Part II comprises the tracks 'Eye of the Beholder' and 'One'. The former is seemingly concerned with the broad notions of freedom of expression and censorship. This is reflected in lines such as those of the first verse, 'Truth is an offense. Your silence for your confidence… Limit your imagination, keep you where they must… Who decides what you express?' and those of the chorus 'Freedom of choice is made for you… Freedom of speech is words that they will bend. Freedom with their exception'. The latter track — 'One' — can be said to engage with the themes of warfare, suffering and assisted living. Of particular significance are lines such as those of the first verse, 'Now that war is through with me… there's not much left of me. Nothing is real but pain now', those of the second verse, 'In pumps life that I must feel… Fed through the tube that sticks in me… Tied to machines that makes me be… Cut this life from me', and those of the chorus, 'Hold my breath as I wish for death'.

Forming Part III are the tracks 'The Shortest Straw', 'Harvester of Sorrow' and 'The Frayed Ends of Sanity'. The first of these three sets of song lyrics contains overriding themes of persecution and ostracism. Lines of particular importance are those of the first verse, 'Suspicion is your name. Your honesty to blame. Witch-hunt modern day… The public eye's disgrace', those of the second verse, 'The accusations fly… Discrimination, why?', those of the pre-chorus, 'Channels Red. One word said, blacklisted', and those of the chorus 'Live in infamy… Witch-hunt riding through… The shortest straw has been pulled for you'. It is also worth noting that 'Channels Red' is a possible intertextual reference to the *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* document, published in 1950 by the ring-wing journal *Counterattack*, which provides the names of 151 actors, writers, musicians, and broadcast journalists, among others, accused of Communist manipulation within the entertainment business. The second track of Part III — 'Harvester of Sorrow' — confronts issues of personal and childhood trauma, which can be seen in lines such as those of the first verse, 'My life suffocates, planting the seeds of hate… Been cheated of my youth', those of the second verse, 'Drink up, shoot in, let the beatings begin. Distributor of pain, your loss becomes my gain', and those of the pre-chorus, 'Anger, misery, you'll suffer unto me'. The final track of Part III is preoccupied with ideas of madness and paranoia, with lines such as those of the first verse, 'Now the candle burns at both ends. Twisting under schizophrenia', those of the second verse, 'I'm the slave of fear, my captor. As I wait for the horror she brings', those of the third verse, 'Into ruin I am sinking. Hostage of this nameless feeling. Life, death, want, waste, mass depression', and those of the chorus, 'Everyone's after me. Frayed ends of sanity. Hear them calling me'.

The final two sets of lyrics for the tracks that constitute Part IV are, entitled 'To Live Is To Die' and 'Dyers Eve'. The first of these is instantly distinguishable from the other songs on the record by virtue of the writing credits that feature the late Cliff Burton. It is also notable that there are only four lines in the lyrics, which suggest that the track is mostly instrumental: 'When a man lies, he murders some part of the world. These are the pale deaths which men miscall their lives. All this I cannot bear to witness any longer. Cannot the kingdom of salvation take me home?'. Upon inspection, the informed reader will recognise the heavily intertextual quality of these lyrics — this is a direct borrowing from a dialogue scene in John Boorman's 1981 feature film *Excalibur*, starring Helen Mirren, Liam Neeson and Patrick Stewart, which in turn borrowed from seventeenth-century German Lutheran theologian and poet Paul

Gerhardt. As such, we bear witness to a subtle form of blending the sacred with the secular. The final track of the record — 'Dyers Eve' — features perhaps the most personal lyrics of all others. It provides both the point of view of a child and an individual reflecting upon a troubled childhood while directly addressing their parents, as can be seen in the first verse, 'Dear mother, dear father. What is this hell you have put me through? … Pushed onto me what's wrong or right … Curator, dictator', in the bridge 'I'm in hell without you. Cannot cope without you two. Shocked at the world I see', and in the chorus, 'Innocence torn from me without your shelter. Barred reality, I'm living blindly'.

2.6.3 Decoding the Enigmatic Text/Image Hybridity of *…And Justice For All*

Seen from a more general perspective, the lyrical content of *…And Justice For All* could be arranged into two broad thematic categories: that of the personal and that of the socio-political. The former embraces lived experiences and psychological states, whereas the latter takes aim at institutions and the Establishment. The question therefore becomes whether the cover art enigmatically plays upon the unification of the global image, album title and lyrics-based liner notes to form a text/image amalgam that must be decoded by the reader/viewer. It is perhaps unsurprising that the lyrics of the title track can be seen most readily to exploit the ambiguities of the front cover image; the money-hungry executives that are willing to pervert justice to satisfy their greed, as referenced in the lyrics, have a symbolically visual parallel in the toppling of *Justitia* and her money. Similarly, the themes of censorship and freedom, or lack thereof, explored in 'Eye of The Beholder' are perhaps reflected in the ropes and chains that constrain, manipulate, and violate the autonomy of *Justitia*, not to mention the oxymoronic juxtaposition of 'Eye' and the visual motif of a blindfold. A further significant relationship can be discovered in the socio-political themes of unjust persecution and ostracism present in 'The Shortest Straw', and the literal assault on justice as visually depicted in the cover art. References to 'honesty' and the 'public eye' have a certain resonance with the blindfold motif, given the blind justice is alleged to exalt fairness above all.

Perhaps a greater leap of faith is required if one is to establish a connection between the distinctly more personal overtones in the lyrics of songs such as 'Harvester of Sorrow', 'The Frayed Ends of Sanity' and 'Dyers Eve' and the visual/verbal art of the album cover in question. The fall, or indeed tearing down, of *Justitia* could in this sense be read as a visually symbolic representation of the unfair cruelty of the human

experience, whereby innocent individuals, such as the child, the madman, or war-veteran referred to in album lyrics, are unjustly subject to the physical and emotional pains of existence. Granted, this may seem like an against-the-grain interpretation, but the fact that these text/image combinations allow for such associative thinking is itself noteworthy.

It may well be difficult to defend the idea that the cover art of …*And Justice For All* produces a univalent meaning or conveys a distinct moralising message. However, it seems entirely plausible to maintain that the abstract notion of justice is manipulated and adapted to varied, but interrelated, contexts. From the socio-political point of view, a unifying trait could be that of the broad critique of the American Establishment, perhaps even Western capitalistic society as whole, where financial interests are not only prioritised above all else, but also come at the expense of global peace and/or justice. However, what is clear here is that text and image operate via a symbiotic relationship, whereby each component part plays upon the other's ambiguities and associated meanings. The altered image of *Justitia* and title - …*And Justice For All* — create a general, yet striking, impression, while the underlying significance is given a more specific context and expanded upon through the printed lyrics. It is for these reasons that we can justifiably describe Gorman's album art as a text/image hybrid.

To sum up, we have discussed the use of the visual motif of *Justitia* in conjunction with the enigmatic yet heavily intertextual title, as well as the threefold text/image structure comprising cover image, title, and liner notes. Our final point of discussion centred upon the amalgamated nature of Gorman's …*And Justice For All*'s cover design, wherein text and image enter into an interdependent relationship and serve to produce a connotative effect that surpasses the value of each component element. Drawing upon the three criteria previously set forth — *visual topoi*, *structure,* and *interactive hybridity* — , we shall consider the ways in which our cover art lends itself to formal comparison with Renaissance emblematics by arguing for an analogous text/image relationship in Herman Hugo's popular religious emblematic work of *Pia Desideria*.

2.6.4 The Context of Jesuit Emblems and Hugo's *Pia Desideria*

Critics have noted the importance of the role that emblems generally played in the spreading of religious doctrine throughout Medieval Europe.[143] In general, Jesuit emblem books represent a particularly significant subfield of religiously concerned emblematics. The Jesuits, members of the Society of Jesus and a Roman Catholic order of religious men, founded in the Sixteenth Century by Spanish theologian St. Ignatius of Loyola, were known for their educational and missionary works whose needs the emblem's concise and persuasive form would have suited perfectly.

Before joining the order of the Jesuits in 1607, Herman Hugo attended the University of Louvain where he became 'Magister Artium' (Master of Arts) and ordained as a priest in 1613, eventually finishing his studies of philosophy and theology in 1617. Hugo's religious work led him to travel across Europe, and at the time of the publication of his *Pia Desideria*, he was serving as a chaplain to the Spanish armies in southern Netherlands. The work can be generally thought of as an exploration of the tenets of Christianity, an outline of the limitations of our human existence and a form of guidance on living a fulfilled spiritual life. Beyond the individual text/image amalgams, *Pia Desideria* is at a macro level built around three main sections, each consisting of fifteen emblems, entitled: 'Gemitus animae poenitentis' [The Cry of the Penitent Soul], 'Desideria animae sanctae' [The Desires of the Sacred Soul] and 'Suspira animae amantis' [The Sighs of the Loving Soul]. As such, the sections trace the soul's path from desperation to its exaltation in the love of God. More broadly, the popularity of his emblem book can be attested to in the forty-nine reprintings and ninety translations/adaptions it underwent in subsequent years. In that regard, *Pia Desideria* stands as amongst the most popular and widely disseminated examples not just of Jesuit emblematics but of seventeenth-century religious literature more generally.

2.6.5 Analogous Visual *Topos* and Intertextual Title in Tenth Emblem

The emblems of the Hugo's publication are generally composed of *motto*, which operates as a Biblical allusion, *pictura* and *subscriptio* which takes the form of a lengthy poetic text, spanning several pages, that meditates upon the Biblical lesson. In the light

[143] This becomes an object of discussion in Laurence Grove's *Emblematics and Seventeenth Century French Literature* (Rockwood Press, 2000), pp. 12–14.

of Gorman's cover design, the tenth emblem that sports the *motto* 'Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo' [Enter not into judgment with thy servant] is of particular interest (fig. 9). Similar to *…And Justice for All*, this emblematic *motto* operates as an allusion to an external source. Whereas the referential quality of the album title is suggested by the ellipsis indicating an omission of the original context — the Pledge of Allegiance — at the start of the title, it is the inclusion of the 'Psalm 142' reference next to the *motto* that makes explicit the intertextual allusion to the Bible. The formal parallel also extends to the placement of the title/*motto* as both appear underneath the main image rather than surmounting it. In the case of the emblem, the *motto* is repeated just above the *subscriptio*. However, this is an abridged version, as the original also reads '…quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens' [for in thy sight no man living shall be justified].

Figure 9: Pictura and motto of Hugo's emblem 'X' in *Pia Desideria* (Antwerp: Aertssens, 1624)

The *pictura* of the emblem in question, akin to the central image of Gorman's cover art, exploits the visual motif of *Justitia*, complete with blindfolds (justice does not discriminate), scales (justice is balanced), and sword (justice is unwavering). In similar fashion, it is also the inclusion of the terms 'judgement' and 'justice' that helps to confirm her identity. Furthermore, just as the cover art bears witness to the adaptation of *Justitia* to a scene involving supplementary motifs that form the new interpretative context, so the motif of *Justitia* in the emblematic copperplate engraving is pictured alongside an anonymous figure adopting a reverential position before what appears to be an angel, made clear by the appearance of the wings and halo. In the context of the title, one could interpret these as symbols of the earthly soul and the winged Divine love or Amor. Indeed, it may be noted that most Abrahamic religious traditions, but particularly in the Christian context of Hugo's *Pia Desideria*, angels are generally recognised as being the heavenly servants of God. One can also observe that the angelic figure is depicted as being sat at the Bench of a courtroom, above which resides two stone tablets that both display the engravings of the Ten Commandments. These details further accentuate the juxtaposition of the wide concepts of justice and the Divine between *pictura* and *motto*.

2.6.6 Analogous Tripartite Structure and Intertextual *Subscriptio*

With respect to the initial Biblical reference, Psalm 142 is based upon the notion of Divine justice as superior to all forms of earthly experiences, and that no earthly individual lives without sin ('no man living shall be justified'). The key belief is therefore that no attempt to seek justice, personally or institutionally, in the mortal world could compare to the ultimate final judgement that is bestowed upon us by God. Not unlike the main verbal component of the *…And Justice For All* cover design, the *subscriptio* also offers more specific contexts and allows us to glean a more nuanced message from the *motto*/*pictura* combination. At this point, we may also note that both cover art and emblem are structurally analogous insofar as both operate by way of a clear threefold structure involving global image, title, and longer text.

A salient feature of this emblem's *subscriptio*, and one that perhaps also formally distinguishes it from the liner notes of our cover art, is the extent of its intertextuality. This passage, spanning almost eight pages, consists of frequent reference to the Holy Scriptures and provides the reader with the original source text in the margins. As such, intertextual reference can be interpreted individually and also as part of the broader context of the religious writings. Among the various allusions are: a reference

to chapter fourteen of the Book of Job,'Et dignum ducis super hujuscemodi aperire oculos tuos, et adducere eum tecum in judicium?' [And dost thou think it meet to open thy eyes upon such a one, and to bring him into judgment with thee?], a borrowing of the academic sermons of Thomas Aquinas, entitled *Beati qui habitant* which discusses what true happiness consists of, that it is found in heaven among the saints and not through earthly experiences, as well as a denunciation of corporal things, virtues (such as earthly justice) and science, but also that quarrelling with others in attempt to pursue one's own justice is futile in comparison to the judgement of the omniscient Divine being, 'Quid enim tam pauendum, quid tam plenum anxietatis & vehementissimæ sollicitudinis excogitari potest, quàm judicandum astare illi tam terrifico tribunali, & incertam adhuc expectare sub tam districto judidice sententiam' [For what can be thought so full of anxiety and intense concern, as to be judged to stand before him in such a terrible tribunal, and to await the uncertain judgment under such a district of the judge].

Amongst the plethora of Biblical allusions then is, on the one hand, the underlying theme of the limitations of what can be attained in the corporal realm as opposed to the true fulfilment that can only be arrived at in heaven. On the other hand, the broad notion of the judge, judgement, and justice (as attested to in the frequent use of the terms 'judicium', 'judicandum', 'judidice', and so forth) is a recurring motif in all sections of this *subscriptio*. However, they ultimately reproduce and expand upon the significance of the previously cited Psalm 142, that early judgement/justice cannot compare to that of the divine, and this is perhaps why this was selected as the summarising *motto*.

2.6.7 Analogous Text/Image Hybridity in the 'Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo' Emblem

Seen from a wider perspective, the global *pictura* of the emblem in question creates a general impression upon the reader and, by virtue of its reliance upon borrowed materials — the classical motif of *Justitia* and the religious symbols of the angel and the tablets of stone upon into which are inscribed the Ten Commandments — engages, from the outset, an associative thought process. The *motto*, as previously noted, has an immediately apparent resonance with the content of the *pictura* and serves further to highlight the importance of the themes of justice and the Divine. However, it is only through the addition of the third, longer prose element that a more specific meaning is developed. In discussing the various ways in which the heavenly experience is

beyond comparison with our corporal existence and that all earthly virtues, including that of earthly judgement/justice, are surpassed by Divine judgement, the *subscriptio* transfers a more expansive significance to the emblematic motifs. That is to say, in the light of the third textual element, *Justitia* and the figure over whom she towers come to represent all aspects of earthly virtues, but with a focus upon that of earthly judgement, and experiences, and the angel reflects the various contexts of the Divine and heavenly judgement evoked in the *subscriptio.* Similarly, the multifarious allusions to the process of, and steps towards, a contemplative life in the text may also reframe the emblematic image insofar as it could likewise be seen to reflect part of the three major stages to a Christian mystical life, which entail the purgative, illuminative and unitive stages respectively.

2.6.8 Cover Art of *…And Justice For All* as a Modern Analogue of the Emblematic Mode

That the *pictura* may or may not produce an entirely univalent meaning in the light of the accompanying text is not necessarily the point here. Of chief importance is the ample opportunity for text/image interplay insofar as we can label Hugo's emblem an amalgamated composition that centres upon unifying religious themes. It is furthermore in that regard that the cover art of *…And Justice For All* can be regarded, formally speaking, as a modern analogue of Early Modern emblematic expression. Whereas the cultural context differs drastically between cover art and emblem — the former representing a highly secular critique of twentieth-century American society and the latter being deeply embedded within the Jesuit culture and Christian tradition of the Renaissance period — both forms function via the interaction and interrelation of their textual and visual component parts which form a cohesive rhetorical unit. As such, the foregoing analysis has sought to draw particular attention to the analogous use of visual *topoi*, the reconfiguration of the tripartite text/image *structure* and a shared text/image *hybridity* between Hugo's tenth emblem and Gorman's cover art, evoking our previously set forth threefold criteria.

2.7 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

The emblematic resonance of album cover art, as this chapter shows, is a theoretical construct hitherto undiscussed in contemporary scholarship. From a wider vantage point, however, there are still several facets of album cover aesthetics that await a first

critical discussion and the text/image perspective that this thesis has sought to apply is but one of many new possible directions. The section on the historical context did not purport to provide an all-encompassing narrative of the history of album cover design, but rather to focus upon key historical developments in music packaging that are of text/image significance, as well as to enhance our appreciation of the role of Alex Steinweiss in the evolution of cover art as a widely recognised design practice. Developing an understanding of where album art may be situated in current scholarly debates is an essential part of the preparatory work for carving out a new analytical space from which to approach cover design, and this was the subject of our section on previous critical approaches.

Notably, the final section has offered a number of original insights to the text/image characteristics of album cover art and laid the foundation for the exploration of a wide-ranging analogy between the formal workings of cover designs that function as text/image hybrids and those of Renaissance and Baroque emblems whose defining characteristic is that of text/image interaction and the bringing together of seemingly disparate elements to form a cohesive unit. To do so, three principal criteria were proposed, centring upon *visual topoi*, *structure,* and *hybridity*, which were then applied to a comparison of the formal workings of Stephen Gorman's cover art for Metallica's *…And Justice For All* record and Herman Hugo's religious emblem book *Pia Desideria*.

What has emerged is that while the two forms are separated by their distinct historical and cultural contexts — the emblem is embedded within an Early Modern catholic context whose purpose is to promote religious contemplation and spiritual fulfilment, whereas the album art, which operates within the pluralistic context of twentieth-century capitalism, is designed to promote Metallica's music while captivating consumers by engaging them in popular cultural dialogues that extend beyond music itself — share fundamental principles of text/image communication. It should also be noted that not all album covers comprise text/image interaction, nor do they all have a formal resonance with emblematic mode of expression. However, foregoing has intended to provide the necessary tools to pursue such questions of form and function in more detail, which will be the subject of our extended case studies in the forthcoming chapters.

PART II

Chapter 3:

Refashioning Paradin: Alex Steinweiss' Cover Art of Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men* as a Heroic Device[*]

3.1 Steinweiss and Robeson in Context

The legacy of prominent African American cultural and political icon Paul Robeson (1898–1976) can, at least in part, be distinguished by the consistent cross-fertilisation of the liberal arts and political activism. Through the media of theatre, live musical concerts, pre-recorded albums, film acting, and public speaking, Robeson conveyed his unwavering support of social justice and human rights-based issues, as well as his condemnation of the moral deficiencies of political establishments — in their various guises — across a broad spectrum of twentieth century contexts, but particularly that of World War II. The significance of Robeson's career and cultural impact upon various aspects of world culture is incisively captured by Joseph Dorinson in his introductory passage to a collection of essays on the same topic:

> Paul Robeson is the greatest legend nobody knows. April 9, 1998, marked the 100th birthday of this brilliant, complex, athletic actor-singer-activist who was, arguably, the most prominent African American from the 1920s through the 1950s. […] It was Robeson's eloquence as a spokesman for human rights and social justice, however, that made him a true hero. Speaking twelve languages, he used his great bass-baritone voice and the lessons that he learned on the gridiron to break down barriers of race, class and ignorance. A natural ambassador of good will, he travelled the world over, championing peace and equality.[144]

[*] Aspects of this chapter have been adapted from a previous publication by the author of this thesis. Christopher Vezza, 'Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men*: The Cover Art of Alex Steinweiss as a Modern Emblem', *The Journal of Popular and American Culture*, Vol 5.2 (2020).

[144] Joseph Dorinson, 'Introduction', *Paul Robeson: Essays on His Life and Legacy* eds. William Pencak and Joseph Dorinson (McFarland, 2002), p. 8.

We will return to Dorison's observations in due course and through various lenses as we advance through this study. Conversely, the lifework of Alex Steinweiss, who we generally acknowledge to be the originator of bespoke album covers as an artistic conceit, was the object of study in the previous chapter and therefore requires little explanatory backdrop. That said, it is worthwhile reminding ourselves of Steven Heller's appraisal of Steinweiss' compositional method, in that he notes Steinweiss' aversion to simple portraits of the recording artist in favour of musical and cultural symbols, which he believed would best stimulate the audience's interest. If interpreting, and effectively translating, the socio-cultural resonance of music records was the preferred *modus operandi* of Steinweiss, then the works of Paul Robeson would doubtless have represented a wellspring of artistic inspiration. To our knowledge, there exist thus far no records of interactions or dialogue between Robeson and Steinweiss that could reveal more about the nature of their collaboration and its cultural significance. That said, the coupling of these two important figures of twentieth century cultural production is not only an obvious one, but entirely appropriate.

3.1.1 Robeson and the Art of Communication

Born in Princeton, New Jersey, Robeson typified pre-eminent American sociologist and social reformer W. E. Burghardt Du Bois's conception of the 'talented tenth',[145] that is to say the elite of the African American population forming an educated, professional class who constitute the main drivers of social progress and pave the way for other, more disadvantaged members of their community. Robeson was educated both at Rutgers College and Columbia University, one of the so-called Ivy League institutions, which would have doubtless helped him to develop the skills of oration and rhetorical persuasion that later saw him occupy a major role in public discourse and political messaging. Nevertheless, Lindsay Swindall places acute emphasis on the fact that Robeson came of age in the 1910s, an era in which 'racial segregation was sanctioned by the highest court in the land' and 'Booker T. Washington's philosophy

[145] Du Bois's essay 'The Talented Tenth' first appeared as a contribution to Booker T. Washington's *The Negro Problem* (J. Pott & Company, 1903), a publication comprising seven essays by prominent Black American writers and thinkers who reflect upon social, legal, economic, educational and political matters in relation to the African American experience.

of thrift, hard work, and accommodation had been embraced for a generation.'[146] The impetus for a younger generation of African Americans to protest more overtly and directly against racial injustice seems, as Swindall has noted,[147] partly connected to the increasing prominence of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), which offered a challenge to Washington's leadership at the time.

Subsequent to his move to the New York neighbourhood of Harlem, just as the interwar period of the 1920s began in full swing, Robeson, Swindall points out, developed a much keener interest in theatre, thanks to the burgeoning arts scene uptown. Indeed, the genesis of his renowned artistic career was in many ways his role within in the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem native Shannon King elucidates in her book *Whose Harlem is this Anyway?: Community Politics and Grassroots Activism during the New Negro Era* that between the turn of the twentieth century and the Great Depression, '…as Harlem transformed from a white community to a black neighbourhood… black's grassroots activism around local issues challenged various manifestations of racial injustice and raised the racial and political consciousness of the black community'.[148] This seems to have resulted in an intellectual, social and artistic explosion which encouraged participation in political and cultural activities, such as protests and theatre performance, which previously may have seemed entirely unfamiliar to Harlem's disillusioned and disadvantaged communities.

3.1.2 *Songs of Free Men* and Roadmap of Case Study

Let us now redirect our attention to the main object of analysis. Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men* (Columbia Records, 1941) is a collection of recorded songs of Russian, Spanish, German and American provenance, performed by the singer and his accompanying pianist Lawrence Brown. Historically, many of the songs formed part of Robeson's concert repertoire some time before the 1940s, though given the socio-historic context of their release on a pre-recorded format, it would seem plausible that then-contemporary audiences may well have ascribed new culturally resonant meaning to them. That is to say, the particular social messaging evoked in the lyrics

[146] Lindsey R Swindall, *Paul Robeson: A Life of Activism And Art*, 1st edn (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), pp. 1–7.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Shannon King, *Whose Harlem Is This, Anyway?*: *Community Politics and Grassroots Activism during the New Negro Era* 1st edn (New York University Press, 2015), pp. 1–7.

of what are largely folk songs, issuing from ordinary pockets of society and their quotidian struggles, may be read as a constructive response to the turmoil and devastation that war-time listeners may have both witnessed and experienced.

The case study will begin with an analytical close reading of the visual and verbal characteristics underpinning Steinweiss' cover art. Particular attention will be paid to the use of symbolic visual imagery and a thematically oriented title on the front cover, followed by a textual analysis of the liner notes, which shall then culminate in a wider critical reading of the cover design's text/image hybridity and/or interrelation of component parts. Drawing upon the threefold criteria set forth in Chapter 2, it shall subsequently be argued that in matters of *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure*, and *interactive hybridity*, Steinweiss' cover art lends itself to formal comparison with the emblematic mode as manifested in Early Modern French writer and emblematist Claude Paradin's *Devise Heroïques* of 1557 (Lyon: de Tournes and Gazeau). As such, while each analytical component serves its own purpose here, on a broader level this case study serves to illustrate the shared fundamental principles of text/image interaction between two distinct artforms and periods, which shall remain the main intellectual thread running through all chapters of this thesis.

3.2 Analytical Reading of *Songs of Free Men*'s Cover Art

3.2.1 A Note on the Aesthetics of Russian Futurism

Before concerning ourselves with the semiotic workings of our cover's visual imagery and title, the distinct visual aesthetics and/or visual language of this work should be noted (fig. 10). With respect to colouration and geometry, it deviates noticeably from the rest of Steinweiss' cover designs. He is seen here to adapt his visual language, of typically Art Deco or Bauhaus derivation, to a style more reminiscent of Russian Futurism, but more specifically the graphic art tradition associated with Soviet political posters. Of course, this aesthetic pairing makes sense against the backdrop of Robeson who, as a concert vocalist, also publicly espoused and celebrated Communist values (though he never actually joined American Communist Party).

Swindall notes that Robeson's move to London with his scientist wife Eslanda Cardozo Goode to pursue a career in the arts, which saw his popularity and celebrity increase dramatically on a global scale, also led to various trips abroad to Europe (particularly Spain) and above all the Soviet Union. Indeed, Robeson's international acclaim also coincided with the rise of Nazi Germany and the fascist movement.

Consequently, his concerts, tours, films and theatre projects also became a platform from which to address profound societal issues and resist publicly the fascist ideology. Following Robeson and Goode's return to the States, Swindall writes, he dedicated many of his talents to aiding an Allied victory, and upon conclusion of the war promoted colonial independence and peace with the Soviet Union.[149]

Works that could serve as the basis for aesthetic comparison with *Songs of Free Men* are manifold; the historical period between the October Revolution, a coup led by the Bolshevik Party of Vladimir Lenin, and the death of Stalin saw the emergence of several thousands of political posters that, Victoria Bonnell has found,[150] shared political art's common function of transmitting official ideas and values, here with a view to create a new *Homo sovieticus*. Furthermore, the role of these political posters in the symbolic representation of where power lies should not be underestimated, as Bonnell notes:

> The critical issue facing the Bolsheviks in 1917 was not merely the seizure of power but the seizure of meaning… In the turbulent months following the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks attempted to gain control over the sphere of public discourse and to transform popular attitudes and beliefs by introducing new symbols, rituals, and visual imagery.[151]

If we accept that the Russian graphic art tradition of the modernist period is difficult to define in terms of a normative model, but that broadly speaking it might be reduceable to two key opposing sides of a wide spectrum — the stylists of the *Mir iskusstva* [World of Art] group and the cubofuturists, from which emerged various integrations of these two divergent movements — then the findings of Nicoletta Misler are particularly relevant. Misler comments specifically on the intersections of these movements and the resultant amalgam of practical techniques and artistic approaches of diverse origins:

> But there were also various integrations of these two extremes, producing styles that acknowledged the importance of accurate craftsmanship, even of academic technique, and at the same time absorbed tendencies from cubism, futurism, and even suprematism. This amalgam was a characteristic component of the evolution of the

[149] Swindall, *Paul Robeson*, pp 1–7.

[150] Victoria E Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (University of California Press, 1999).

[151] Ibid.

> Russian graphic arts in the 1910s and early 1920s, especially in St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, and it is identifiable with an entire generation of important artists that included Boris Grigoriev, Alexandre Jacovleff, Vasilii Shukhaev – and Vladmir Vasilievich Lebedev (1891–1967).

Just as Lebedev becomes the key object of Misler's critical attention, so his artistic work may offer particularly representative examples to which the visual aesthetics of the cover for *Songs of Free Men* can be compared. Though he also worked for the Russian Telegraph Agency and The Department of Agitation, specializing in propaganda posters, Lebedev is perhaps best known for having produced images to accompany Soviet writer Samuil Marshak's children's poetry. As the Soviet state accorded new primacy to children's education and entertainment with a view to instil loyalty to the Communist project, Marshak being one of the better-known state-commissioned writers, visual identity was understood to play a central role in capturing the imagination of young minds. Together with illustrations of the main texts, Lebedev's cover art for Marshak's poems *yesterday and today* (1923) and *luggage* (1925) in particular seem an early Soviet anticipation of Steinweiss' aesthetic approach to *Songs of Free Men*.

3.2.2 Visual Symbols, Cultural References, and Thematic Title of Front Cover Art

Nevertheless, it is not the main objective of this study to provide a detailed aesthetic analysis of the cover art for Robeson's *Songs of Free Men,* nor is it to study in depth the fate of Robeson's career and historical reception of his life's work among various listening publics. What *is* of interest to us, however, is the formal workings of our cover art's visual-typographic juxtapositions and the manner in which they produce meaning. In order words, we shall explore the extent to which the cover design's communicative properties rely upon text/image interplay and therefore functions as a text/image hybrid. Let us in this section focus upon the combination of visual motifs and album title on the front cover.

The title 'Songs of Free Men' is at once a reflection of the cover art's literal *signifiant* — 'Songs' speaks to the product's self-evident status a collection of pre-recorded music — and connoted *signifié* insofar as 'Free Men' already introduces a thematic orientation. In other words, the title provides a contextual signal to the prospective listener that indicates what this product is and what it broadly might stand for. Of course, beyond its literal significance, 'free men' is itself a highly ambiguous concept. However, it would be tempting to argue that with the mere presence of Paul

Robeson's name on the record cover, combined with Steinweiss' choice of Russian Futurist aesthetics and the title 'Songs of Free Men', elements of a broader picture begin to emerge. That is, it raises the question of whether this record could essentially be a defence of Robeson's Communist values.

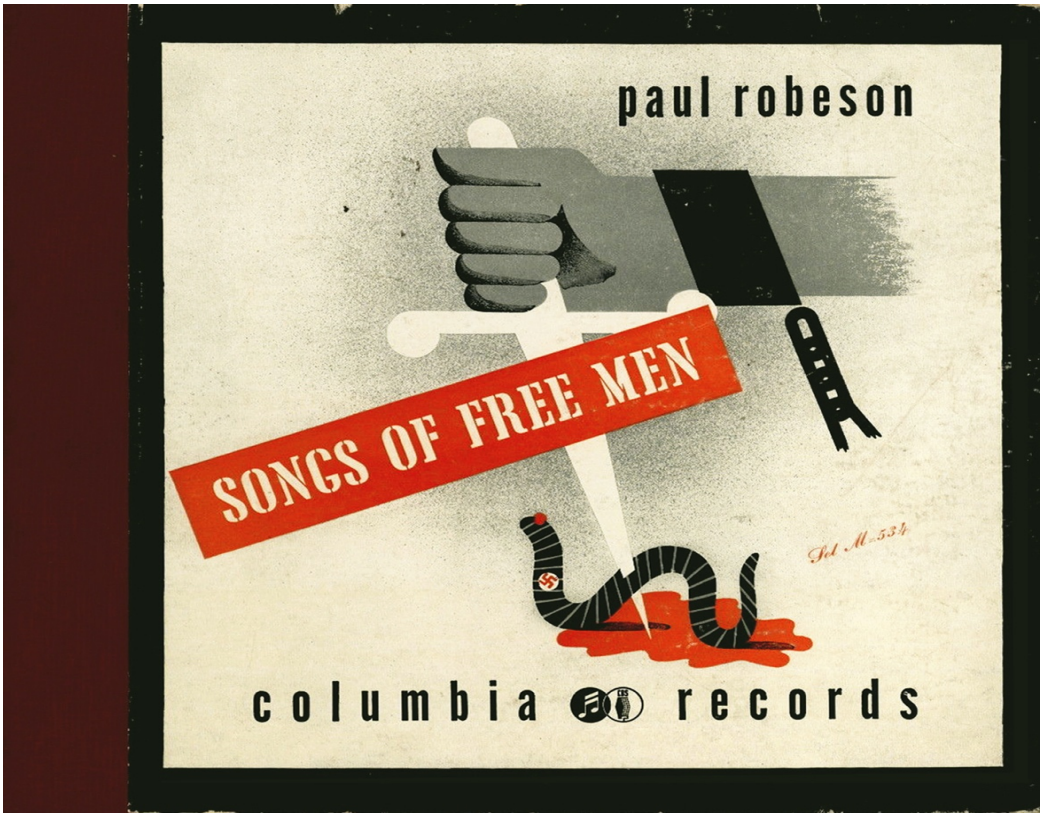

Figure 10: Alex Steinweiss' Cover Art for Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men* (Columbia, 1941)

As for the pictorial content of Steinweiss' cover, we encounter a highly unnaturalistic and fragmentary scene of action, which comprises a collage of isolated items of at least potential symbolic significance. Insofar as a superficial or 'innocent' reading is possible, the raised clenched fist wielding a white dagger — the dagger may well be a sword and the two motifs have a distinct shading — has broken free from its chains to slay a worm or snake-like creature bearing the swastika symbol. The ferocity and drama of the scene is clearly stressed through the impalement while red blood spills underneath.

Emphasis should be placed upon the 'artificial' or rhetorical nature of the pictorial component here. If the central image expresses itself through an unnaturalistic or symbolical organisation of motifs that could have collective significance and therefore

also have the implicit effect of mutual contextualisation, this resembles something akin to the grammar of a complex image. The fact that such a pictorial grouping is neither the result of a photographic action shot (thus cannot purport to be a naturally occurring phenomenon), nor revolves around an obvious naturalistic connection, is what makes this artwork characteristic of symbolic expression.[152] As such, the purpose of an image such as this one must be that of convincing the spectator of some idea or feeling in the broadest sense.[153]

Beyond the compositional layout, these pictorial motifs *per se* can be considered as representational and/or mimetic in nature, to the extent that they may be identified anthropologically or culturally; in other words, they belong to some set of codes or other in the Western cultural tradition.[154] More specifically, the raised militant fist is a common motif in Western socialist and — more broadly — protest art that can be traced back to the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Indeed, the history and socio-political resonance of this motif has been pursued by Gottfried Korff, who noted in his

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[152] One might have argued that rhetorical or persuasive dimensions are inherent in any form of visual expression since it necessarily involves human intervention. Visual content that is not photographic or cinematographic, however, does not purport directly to reproduce reality in the same way the fields of photography or cinema might. It has already been noted that Barthes deconstructed this notion in his seminal essay 'Le message photographique' in *Communications*, Vol 1.1 (1961) pp. 127–138. He proceeds from the idea of the photograph as a message without a code, thereby constituting recorded reality, with which he then takes issue in suggesting that photography is nevertheless the expression of a point of view. The photographer actively choses which shot to take, which to omit and whether to fabricate the *mise en scene* in the service of a particular agenda, not to mention post-production doctoring. As such, photographs, like drawings and paintings, can indeed belong to the plain of connotation and rhetoric.

[153] It may also be worth mentioning that there is inevitably always going to be some degree of rhetoric present in any form of visual advertising, given that it never exists in a vacuum but rather on the very real outer packing of a commercial and marketable product. In that regard, even the artist portraiture approach that offers nothing but a direct representation of the performer in question bears some rhetorical burden by virtue of its material placement.

[154] The evocation of 'collective cultural memory' as an interpretive tool suggests that certain groups of reader-viewers will inevitably have less difficulty in finding meaning than others. This is due largely to the specificity of their knowledge and experience, reminding us of Barthes' work on a similar notion and in his use of the term *idiolecte* to denote the cultural baggage and bodies of knowledge that one may invest in an image composed of linguistic, non-coded iconic and coded iconic messages from which one derives meaning. The discussion appears in the previously mentioned 'Rhétorique de l'image' in *Communications*, 4 (1964), pp. 40–51.

important article on the militant clenched fist and political metaphors for the worker's hand that in modern Western cultural production the clenched fist 'first became a spontaneous gesture of protest, discontent, and readiness to fight during the strike wave of the 1880s.'[155] He proceeds to explain that its widespread currency can be attributed to numerous reproductions of two paintings by German-born American artist, educator and arts organiser Robert Köhler (1850-1917), entitled *The Strike* (1886) (fig. 11) and *The Socialist* (1885) (fig. 12). Both works are heavily rooted in issues of Atlantic labour revolts, particularly within a Germano-American context, and accorded new primacy to the worker's struggle in the sphere of typically bourgeois-driven high culture.

Figure 11: Robert Köhler, *The Strike* (1886)

Both Christopher Phelps and James M. Dennis have engaged in considerable detail with Köhler's work, with particular emphasis on *The Strike*, which was first shown at the Spring Exhibition of the New York's National Academy of Design in 1886.[156]

[155] Gottfried Korff, "From Brotherly Handshake To Militant Clenched Fist: On Political Metaphors For The Worker's Hand", *International Labor And Working-Class History*, Vol. 42 (1992), pp. 70–81 <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0147547900011236>.

[156] James M Dennis, *Robert Koehler's The Strike: The Improbable Story Of An Iconic 1886 Painting Of Labor Protest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2011).

Describing it as 'a multivalent, powerful treatment of a labour uprising'[157], Phelps understands the painting essentially as a recreation of the American strike of 1877, 'a nationwide convulsion sparked by railroad wage cuts — and particularly events in Pittsburgh, a centre of iron and steel production where conflagration destroyed hundreds of train cars and buildings.'[158] He also addresses the potentially symbolic gestures, noting the evocative raised clenched fist of some of the conversing workers scattered across the yard under a dreary sky, having just appeared from the squat, dark factory.

Situating *The Strike* within its broader art-historical context, Denis writes that while criticisms of the harsh conditions of factory labour and portrayals of unrest within the industrial working class before the *The Strike* were fairly rare,[159] Köhler's work emerged from a wider genre of socially conscious painting called *Tendenzbilder* (tendentious pictures). Denis proceeds to tell of the relationship between *Tendenzbilder* and the exposés of reporter-illustrators in the newly launched *Illustrated London News*, citing Johann Peter Hasenclever's *Workers Before the Magistrate* (1848) as a key example of this form of cultural cross-pollination.[160]

Likewise, Phelps touches upon the significance of *The Socialist* in his assertion that it may well have been the first painterly depiction of a 'working-class political agitator' produced in Köhler's artistic field. Indeed, when *The Socialist* was first unveiled and exhibited at the National Academy of Design in New York in 1885, a year prior to *The Strike*, the *New York Times* were noted for having described it as '… a capital piece of character done from the life', a depiction of an '…apostle of equality…who has the fixed look of a fanatic expounding damnation for somebody, if not everybody.'[161] The title itself of the work is key to situating the painting within existing debates on workers' rights and their exploitation within increasingly rigged corporate systems. However, in reconsidering the broader context, one should also acknowledge the fact

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[157] Christopher Phelps, 'The Strike Imagined: The Atlantic And Interpretive Voyages of Robert Koehler's Painting The Strike', *Journal Of American History*, Vol, 98.3 (2011), pp. 670–697 <https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jar522>.

[158] Ibid.

[159] For examples that predate *The Strike,* see Bass Otis's *Interior of a Smithy* (c. 1815), John Ferguson Weir's *The Gun Foundry* and *Forging the Shaft* (1866) and Adolph Menzel's *Eisenwalzwerk* [Iron Rolling Mill] (1872).

[160] Denis, *Robert Koehler's The Strike*, pp. 58–59

[161] Phelps, 'The Strike Imagined'.

that, while the clenched fist was swiftly, perhaps unsurprisingly, integrated into the commonplace rhetoric of strikes and protests, it was not until circa 1917 that this generally threatening gesture was appropriated by the Industrial Workers of the World. Subsequently, it was transformed into a virtually universally recognised symbol of solidarity of workers from any and all backgrounds.[162]

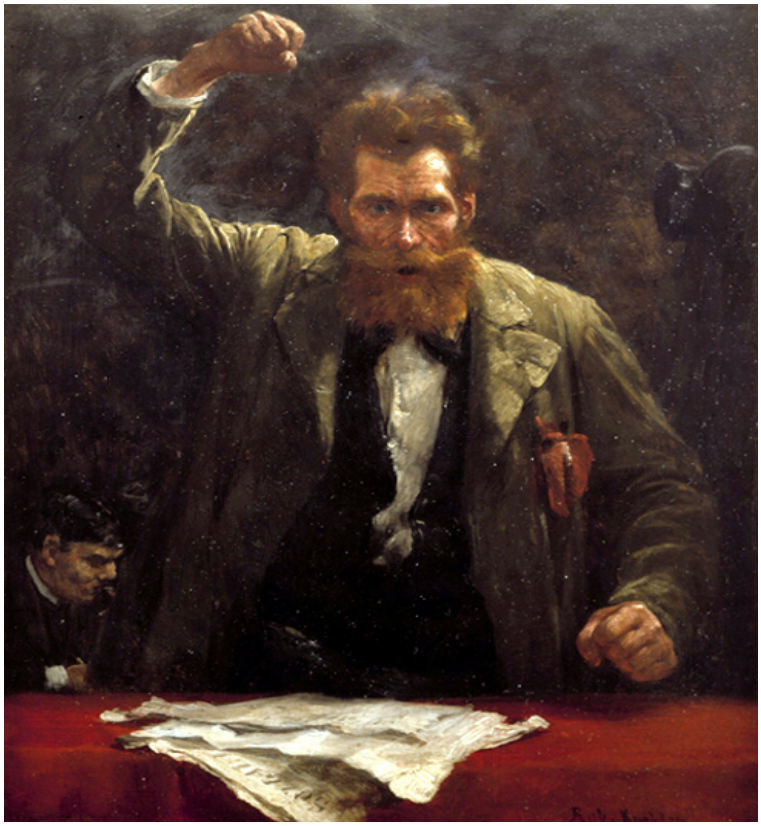

Figure 12: Robert Köhler, *The Socialist* (1885)

In that regard, Steinweiss' choice of symbolic motif perfectly befits the context of Paul Robeson and *Songs of Free Men*. Less clear, perhaps, is the swastika-bearing worm or snake motif and how it fits within the broader range of pictorial allusions. We can already note that the manner in which the swastika is superimposed upon the design fulfils a contextualising function for the reader: it is made clear that one is dealing with a form of visual personification of Nazism and, in the context of the visual rhetoric and grammar of the sleeve's composition, a sense of role reversal in the relationship

[162] Korff, "From Brotherly Handshake To Militant Clenched Fist", p70–81.

between the oppressor and the oppressed.[163] However, it is unclear whether this is an intertextual reference to a particular literary or wider artistic source.

One possibility, however uncertain or unlikely it may be, is the segmented snake motif that has its origins in the iconographic tradition of America's fight for colonial unity and independence from British rule and subsequently underwent a panoply of reconfigurations. Lester C Olson has published abundantly on the topic of rhetorical iconology and American community in the revolutionary era, particularly in respect of the sixth president of Pennsylvania Benjamin Franklin's vision of America. The principles of construction underlying the manner in which the snake motif came to be integrated into rhetorical compositions closely resembles the emblematic act of re-contextualisation. This is, in broad terms, due to the fact that Franklin is recognised by scholars of visual culture in particular as a highly inventive and powerful manoeuvrer of the rhetorical dynamics of images designating British America, as well as a deviser of emblematic designs. In fact, Benjamin Franklin was a central figure in the evolution of the more recent tradition of North American emblematics.

Following on from his article originally published in 1987, Olson draws particular attention to the image of the 'JOIN or DIE' segmented snake in his more recent book *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology*.[164] Franklin's 'JOIN or DIE' woodcut cartoon originally appeared in 1754 via the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and was the first of his five representations of the British colonies, the others being 'MAGNA Britannia' (1764), 'her Colonies REDUC'D' (1774), 'WE ARE ONE' (1776) and 'Libertas Americana', the latter famously depicting the United States as infant Hercules strangling two serpents. While the snake was intended here to promote unity among the British colonies during the French and Indian war, 'JOIN or DIE' was itself a re-adaptation of Nicholas Verrien's image of the snake in his 1685 publication *Livre curieux et utile pour les sçavants et artistes… Accompangé d'un très grand*

[163] Some alternative interpretive questions come to mind: has the Nazi-worm comparison been made so as deliberately to demeane the Nazi ideology? Is this a form of just revenge from the perspective of the communities they targeted? Without grasping at straws, does it implicitly resonate with figurative notion of spinelessness in relation to the atrocities of oppressive regimes? Could this comparison be reconciled with its apparent regenerative capacity? Some readings may be more credible than others, but the central point is the motif's ambiguity.

[164] Lester C Olson, *Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community* (University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

nombre de devices, emblêms, medailles et autres figures hieroglyphiques. Verrien had coupled his woodcut image of the snake with the analogous *motto* 'se rejoindre ou mourir', which later figured in two other Paris editions of the same book, first in 1696 then in 1724.

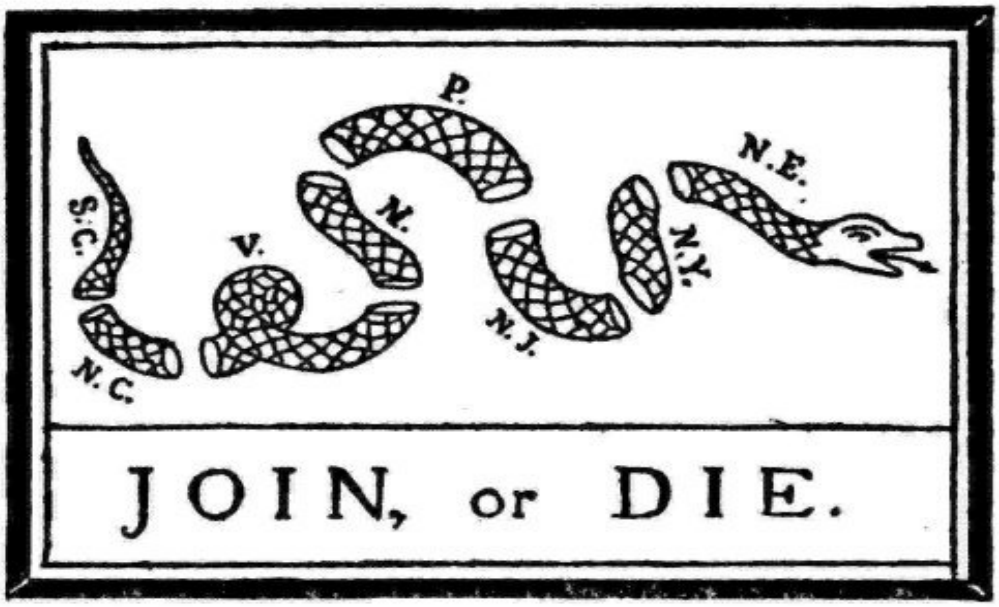

Figure 13: Benjamin Franklin's *JOIN or DIE* segmented snake (Pennsylvania Gazette, 1754)

Just as the *Pennsylvania Gazette* came to be one of the major newspapers of the colony, so Franklin's emblematic snake image gained increasingly widespread recognition amongst a growing number of his supporters and those of the cause of colonial unity. The snake consists of eight sections; the head represented New England while the other seven sections of the body each stood for a single colony identified by its initial letter. Olson is careful to note that Delaware and Georgia were omitted in this depiction, chiefly because the former shared the same governor as Pennsylvania and the latter was at the time a recently developed colony.

Likewise, Olson has emphasised that while the 'JOIN or DIE' snake image enjoyed an enduring significance, its interpretation throughout the decades before the American Revolution was also highly changeful. That is to say, its rhetorical application developed in opposition to changing adversaries: initially against France and then appropriated to urge colonial unity against British law, in particular the British

Government's Boston Port Act,[165] whereupon the *motto* was reworked to 'Unite or Die!'. Furthermore, there have been several charted instances of the motif's transmission and survival in modern popular culture, notably in accompaniment to the Philadelphia Union soccer team's *motto*.

The connection between the album title and the heavily symbolic visual motifs of the militant clenched fist, broken fetters — as well as Robeson's socio-culturally laden name — is thus an obvious and appropriate one. Between title and front cover design alone, the interplay of text and image already begin to reflect and play upon a range of discourses than span the purely abstract, such as notions of justice and retribution, as well as the socio-cultural. In the latter case, polysemous aspects explored by the text/image juxtaposition may be seen to culminate particularly around notions of political protest and oppression in the context of labour uprising and social empowerment. Perhaps the text/image interaction could also be seen to take place on an identificatory or descriptive level, whereby the invocation of 'free men' helps to clarify the motif as broken fetters. Despite this overlap of meaning, one may find it difficult to glean a specific message, which why we shall have to look at the third, lengthier verbal element of the liner notes.

3.2.2 Analysis of the Historicising and Biographical Liner Notes

Arguably, the very presence of the liner notes, in conjunction with album title and central image, is what gives Steinweiss' cover design a fundamentally tripartite text/image structure. Irrespective of where the prospective listener should decide to begin their 'reading' and 'deciphering' of the cover art, it is perhaps only natural to assume that main textual element of the liner notes will serve as an aid to resolving any ambiguities that the record may pose. If the combination of album title and visual imagery produces relatively enigmatic — but nevertheless thematically coherent — layers of meaning for the beholder, then we shall have to consider whether the main body of text offers interpretative closure. Before that, however, a close analytical reading of the notes themselves are required.

For context, it is important to note that, in the early years, it was common practice for Columbia Masterworks to have their sleeves adorned with contextual notes intended to inform the cover's reader/viewer — and the record's potential listeners — of the

[165] Ibid.

artist's background, contemporary preoccupations and the vision underpinning the musical material.[166] On occasion these notes were signed by their author, incidentally seldom the designer of the cover art, but *Songs of Free Men*'s text appears unattributed (fig. 14).

SONGS OF FREE MEN

PAUL ROBESON, Baritone
with piano accompaniment by
Lawrence Brown

COLUMBIA RECORDS

Set M-534

Paul Robeson's first Masterworks set is appropriately dedicated to "songs of free men"—songs of Russian, Spanish, German and American origin, which express eloquently the faith of free men everywhere, and their determination that ideals of freedom and good-will shall prevail throughout the world at whatever cost.

These records appear at an appropriate hour. The songs themselves have been a part — some of them, at least — of Mr. Robeson's concert repertory for years past. Their significance will perhaps be clearer to many of us today than would have been the case not so long ago, when complacency blinded nations still enjoying a dubious peace to the fact that wars and revolutions occurring elsewhere were very much their concern, were, in fact, the first bloody trial engagements between the forces of aggression and oppression and those of freedom. Mr. Robeson's awareness of the meaning of world events appears to have been keener than that of most musicians, as evidenced by his regular presentation of songs of the character of those comprising this collection on all his concert programs.

The present collection includes four songs of Russian, two of American, and one each of Spanish and German origin, as the following list indicates:

From Border to Border and *Oh, How Proud Our Quiet Don.* These are excerpts from Dzerzhinsky's Opera *Quiet Flows the Don*, based on the famous novel of Cossack life by Sholokhov. The novel, translated into many languages, is generally considered a literary landmark of the post-revolutionary period in Russia. Dzerzhinsky's opera, successful in Russia, has not yet ...ed production elsewhere except in abridged ...ms.

The Purest Kind of A Guy. Marc Blitzstein's "operas" *The Cradle Will Rock* and *No for an Answer* were products of the awakening social consciousness that accompanied the Great Depression. Shoe-string productions of both, under WPA auspices, were immensely successful and drew attention to Blitzstein's remarkable talent and originality. *The Purest Kind of A Guy*, otherwise known as Joe's Birthday Song, is an extract from *No for an Answer*.

Joe Hill by Earl Robinson and Alfred Hayes, is a song of the American labor movement. Joe Hill, a union organizer, has been shot by the bosses, but his soul goes marchin' on: "Says Joe, What they forgot to kill, Goes on to organize."

The Peat-Bog Soldiers. This is the famous *Moorsoldaten* of the Concentration Camps of Nazi Germany. Under what circumstances so subversive a lyric could be sung by prisoners constantly under the eyes of their brutal guards remains a mystery. The refrain runs, *Einmal werden froh wir sagen, Heimat, du bist wieder mein!* The arrangement here is by Eisler.

The Four Insurgent Generals. Of all the songs that came into being among the soldiers of Loyalist Spain during the years of the Spanish Civil War, this is one of the most celebrated. The lyric promises the hanging of the four insurgent generals who betrayed the Spanish people.

Song of the Plains and Donayevsky's *Native Land* are songs of Soviet Russia — the first a Red Army song, the second with the status of an unofficial national anthem. Both express that passionate love of their country that the Russians have so convincingly demonstrated during the past year and a half, in their relentless defense of it against Nazi invaders.

• • •

Paul Robeson needs no introduction to those who hear his voice on these records. He is and for years has been an outstanding figure on the musical and dramatic stage, one of our most gifted and able artists. Though he had prepared himself, at Rutgers University and at Columbia, for a career in the law, it was ordained that he should pursue this aim no further. "Discovered" by Robert Edmond Jones and Kenneth MacGowen while participating in an amateur theatrical production, Robeson was urged to make the stage his career. There followed triumphant appearances in *The Emperor Jones, Othello, All God's Chillun, Porgy*, and, finally, *Show Boat*. It was clear that his phenomenal success was to be attributed not alone to his abilities as an actor, but even more significantly to the wonderful quality of his speaking and singing voice. The development of this resource became Robeson's chief concern in the years that followed, and though today he still appears from time to time in dramatic productions, he now is, and considers himself, primarily a singer. His Columbia Records include, in addition to the present collection of Songs of Free Men, an album of excerpts from *Show Boat* (Set C-35) and songs by Gretchaninov and Moussorgsky.

As one brought up on the songs of my own people, who expressed in them their sorrows, protests and hopes, I early felt closer to that music which comes directly from folk roots.

The particular songs in this album have that folk quality and show in no uncertain way the common humanity of man. Beyond this, they issue from the present common struggle for a decent world, a struggle in which the artist must also play his part.

These songs are a very important part of my concert programs, expressing much of what I deeply feel and believe.

Paul Robeson

YOUR COLUMBIA RECORDS DESERVE COLUMBIA NEEDLES

Figure 14: *Songs of Free Men* liner notes (Columbia, 1941)

That being said, the liner notes open with a reflection upon the special significance and appropriateness of the record's title, insisting that Robeson's collection of songs '…express eloquently the faith of free men everywhere, and their determination that ideals of freedom and good-will shall prevail throughout the world at whatever cost.' Indeed, we read that the sentiments Robeson conveys in this music would have had a

[166] This should bring to mind Nicholas Cook's comments on this kind of text found on the back of or on the inner sleeves, who concurs in attributing its origins to the nineteenth century tradition of the descriptive or analytical programme note that would accompany concert-hall musical performance. Nicholas Cook, 'The Domestic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or Record Sleeves and Reception' in *Composition, Performance, Reception: Studies In The Creative Process In Music*, ed. Wyndham Thomas, 1st edn (Ashgate Publishing Group, 1998).

particular resonance with the listeners of the time, owing largely to the dark backdrop of the Second World War:

> These records appear at an appropriate hour. The songs themselves have been a part — some of them, at least — of Mr. Robeson's concert repertory for years past. Their significance will perhaps be clearer to many of us today than would have been the case not so long ago, when complacency blinded nations still enjoying a dubious peace to the fact that wars and revolutions occurring elsewhere were very much their concern, were, in fact, the first bloody trial engagements between the forces of aggression and oppression and those of freedom.

The listener is then provided with a cursory introduction to the content of each song. 'From Border to Border' and 'Oh, How Proud Our Quiet Don' are presented as excerpts from Ivan Dzerzhinsky's opera *Quiet Flows The Don* (1935), which in turn was an adaption of Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov's novel *And Quiet Flows The Don* (1928?). Regarded as one of the finest and canonical literary works of the post-revolutionary period in Russia, Sholokhov's novel spans four volumes that retrace the fate and the struggles of the Don Cossacks during the First World War, the Russian Revolution and Russian Civil War.

We are also introduced to 'The Purest Kind of Guy' by way of the role of its author, Marc Blitzstein, in the Depression years. As the commentary notes, his operas, *The Cradle Will Rock* and *No for an Answer* (featuring the song in question) were '…products of the awakening social consciousness that accompanied the Great Depression…', while 'Shoe-string productions of both, under WPA [Works Progress Administration][167] auspices, were immensely successful and drew attention to Blitzstein's remarkable talent and originality.' For the knowing reader, the social realism of *No for an Answer* in particular may strike them as especially pertinent in light of Robeson's ideological position and Communist affiliations. Set in the States, the opera deals with a club of Graeco-American workers who, after the working season, find themselves unemployed. Some of them succeed in finding new work in Atlantic City and Miami, but those who are forced to remain join the Diogenes Club. The opera throws light upon their camaraderie in the face of day-to-day struggles.

[167] For a comprehensive account of this programme's activities and output, see Harry L Hopkins, *Inventory: An Appraisal Of The Results Of The Works Progress Administration* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1938).

'The Peat-Bog Soldiers' is described in terms of its powerful association with the Concentration Camps of Nazi Germany, with specific emphasis upon the defiant verse 'Einmal verden froh wir sagen: Heimat, du bist wieder mein' [One day we will be happy to say: home you are mine again]. Scholar of musical policies in Germany during the Third Reich and after the war, Élise Petit has mapped the history and evolution of 'The Peat-Bog Soldiers' or 'Moorsoldatenlied',[168] tracing its genesis to the communist inmates at the camp of Börgermoor under Third Reich rule during the summer of 1933.

The important and complex role of musical practices in these concentration camps from 1933-37 has also, perhaps unsurprisingly, been the object of previous critical readings. Folklorist and ethnomusicologist Guido Fackler has closely examined the disturbing dialectic between empowerment and exploitation of the inmates.[169] Fackler notes that until recently music may have seemed irrelevant in the face of unimaginable atrocities and murder resultant from these camps, which stand essentially as symbols and incarnations of extreme crime. That said, there has been growing recognition of the importance of music to the running of these camps,[170] and Fackler takes care to stress that '…music has always been a constant and crucial component of the everyday life of the concentration camps, from their establishment in 1933 until the end in 1945'.

First prisoners of Börgermoor in 1933, Fackler records, were often 'greeted' on arrival with songs of ridicule and mocking welcoming ceremonies, indicating that music was in fact weaponised by the camp authorities as a form of torture. Likewise, with a view to belittle and dehumanise, authorities reportedly ordered detainees to sing and perform under duress, for instance during rollcall or punishment actions. On the other extreme end of the spectrum, voluntary musical activities undertaken on the communist prisoners' own initiative provided them with a means of psychological and spiritual resistance, in order to cope with extremely difficult camp life. Music making purely as a form of entertainment, Fackler points out, would have served to

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[168] Élise Petit, 'The Börgermoorlied: The Journey of a Resistance Song throughout Europe, 1933–45', *Einleitung: Entstehung und Entwicklung transnationaler Kommunikationsräume in Europa zu Kriegszeiten, 1914–1945, Comparativ*, Vol. 28 (2018).

[169] Guido Fackler, 'Cultural Behaviour and the Invention of Traditions: Music and Musical Practices in The Early Concentration Camps, 1933-6/7', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 45.3 (2010), pp. 601–627 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009410366704>.

[170] Ibid.

remind prisoners of the ethical, humane, artistic and aesthetic values beyond their life-threatening circumstances.

What Élise Petit has also considered is the cultural pertinence of 'Moorsoldatenlied' among the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War between the years of 1936 and 1939.[171] And just as the knowing reader may well be aware of the key position of 'The Peat-Bog Soldiers' in the political discourse of the loyalists during the Spanish Civil War, so they may recognise the relevancy of 'The Four Insurgent Generals' (or 'Los Cuatros Generales') to the broader sentiments of social justice incorporated within the sleeve design. While the printed passage reminds us that the song 'promises the hanging of the four insurgent generals who betrayed the Spanish people', a broader knowledge of the reference is helpful. That is to say, there is perhaps an implicit expectation that the listener should be conscious of the song's socio-historical associations with the libertarian socialists of the Spanish Republic.[172] As such, it becomes clear that the four generals in question are the key representatives of the Nationalist faction: Emilio Mola, José Sanjurjo, Gonzalo Queipo de Llano and Francisco Franco.

The final two songs on the record, 'Songs of the Plains' and 'Native Land', are introduced to us as songs of Soviet Russia, both of which are said to 'express that passionate love of their country that the Russians have so convincingly demonstrated during the past year and a half, in their relentless defense [sic] of it against Nazi invaders.' This may strike prospective listeners as particularly demonstrative of Robeson's noted Communist affiliations.

As a final note on the printed commentary, it is worth drawing attention to the significance of Robeson's self-reflective passage that accompanies his photographic portrait:

> As one brought up on the songs of my own people, who expressed them in their sorrows, protests and hopes, I early felt closer to that music which comes directly from folk roots. The particular songs on this album have that folk quality and show in no uncertain way the common humanity of man. Beyond this, they issue from the present common struggle for a decent world, a struggle in which the artist must also play his

[171] Petit, 'The Börgermoorlied'
[172] Ibid.

> part. These songs are a very important part of my concert programs, expressing much of what I deeply feel and believe.

The direct reference to Robeson's 'own people' appears as an invitation for the prospective listener to reflect further on those who share the singer's ideals of social justice and on his particular African American roots — in essence, the groups and sets of values with which he identifies. Robeson's reflections are therefore an exposition of the personal significance of *Songs of Free Men* and that the lyrical themes of each song should also be read as an expression of his beliefs.

From a wider angle, the compositional strategy that is discernible throughout the liner notes is that of intertextuality. Even though the lyrics themselves are not printed on the sleeve, the fact that these songs existed prior to the record's release — as made clear by the notes — imply that it is not necessary for us to listen to the record to understand their significance. In any case, the main themes of each song are elucidated in the commentary, which further supplements the interpretation process. An important function that these sleeve notes fulfil therefore is to historicise the songs of the record — they are all situated within their respective musical and socio-historic contexts — and to introduce a biographical aspect to the recording, in other words the personal resonance it has for Robeson.

3.2.3 Deciphering the Interactive Hybridity of *Songs of Free Men*

As regards text/image hybridity, the question thus becomes whether the cover design of *Songs of Free Men* may be said to exploit the interrelation and, ultimately, unification of album title, front cover image and liner notes. By now, it should now be apparent that the themes of the struggles of the Don Cossacks, the immense hardships of the concentration camp inmates, the political preoccupations of the Spanish libertarian socialists, and the Soviets' fight against the Nazis all have a visually symbolic parallel in the raised militant fist motif. All share the symbolic characteristics of protest, revolt, and resistance in some form or other. Similarly, Robeson's personal beliefs in relation to the protection and championing of human rights, social justice — possibly reframing the dagger as an equivalent of the sword of justice — and peace are also symbolically reflected in the cover's visual imagery of protest and heroism.

Of course, one may have difficulty in contending that Alex Steinweiss' cover art of *Songs of Free Men* is the bearer of a single, univalent meaning that transmits a clear moralising message. That said, the broad ideals of freedom, protest, justice and/or

global harmony are manipulated across various yet interconnected contexts. Furthermore, the principal semiotic mechanism through which these values are conveyed to reader/viewers and prospective listeners is that of the symbiotic relationship of text to image. Each constituent element resonates with and exploits the other's enigmatic qualities and symbolic value. The global image of the raised fist and broken fetters with the dagger stabbing the Nazi worm, alongside the album title, arouses our interest by way of visual *éclat* and symbolic ambiguity. A deeper significance is provided through a more precise, historicising, and biographical set of liner notes that help to stabilise our interpretation of the cover art's artistic totality. It is in this regard that, across the parameters of motifs, structure and interrelations of component parts, we can speak of the cover design of *Songs of Free Men* as a text/image hybrid. It is also for this reason that it will be shown to lend itself to transhistorical comparison with the compositional principles of the *Aetas Emblematica*.

3.3 The Context of French Devices and Claude Paradin

As has already been suggested in previous chapters, the device was another major emblematic form of the Early Modern era, particularly in France, and can be distinguished from the emblem's general significance by virtue of its applicability to specific individuals, organisations, or communities. That said, it has already been claimed that, while the device occupied a central role in Early Modern French culture, the form has its origins in the heraldry of the Middle Ages and, more recently, the *imprese* of the early Italian Renaissance. Structurally speaking, the device also differs from the emblem in that it comprises the bi-partite combination of *motto* and *pictura,* which generally would be sufficient to evoke the identity and values of the bearer. Another distinctive feature of the device is that it was, for the most part, used outside of printed works until the sixteenth century. It was common practice for members of the aristocracy to wear these devices and likewise for them to be incorporated into the materials of their homes and palaces. Indeed, Grove draws attention to the notable examples of Louis XII's porcupine device bearing the *motto* 'de près et de loin' or 'eminus et cominus' and François Ier's 'Nutrisco et extinguo' *motto* belonging to the salamander device, both of which adorn the walls of the royal chateau.[173] That said, it

[173] Laurence Grove, *Emblematics and Seventeenth Century French Literature*, Rockwood Press (2000) pp. 7–8

is clearly beyond the scope of these contextual remarks to explore in depth the history and formal nature of the emblematic device across various cultures and periods. [174]

3.3.1 Claude Paradin's Background

For most of his adult life, Paradin served as canon of the église collégiale in Beaujeu, outside of Lyon. Unlike his brother Guillaume Paradin, who is known to have been a prolific writer, Claude Paradin's literary output was limited to just three major works: the most popular was of course *Devises Heroïques* (Lyon: de Tournes, Gazeau, 1551) the other two being the *Quadrins historiques de la Bible* (1553) and the *Alliances geneaologiques des rois et princes de Gaule* (1561). The *Quadrins historiques* is an emblematically arranged version of the first section of the Old Testament whereby each episode is represented in a woodcut with accompanying narration of the form of French verses. The *Alliances* concerns itself with the closely related domain of heraldry, with illustrations of the shields of the kings and queens of France, alongside an overview of their genealogy. That being said, neither can compare to the success and popularity of Paradin's first publication; his devices underwent numerous reproductions and translations into the seventeenth century and accessible mass produced reprintings of it are available even today.[175] On a broader level, a consistent thread throughout his (albeit limited) literary work is the interaction of text and image, demonstrated that he too was profoundly influenced by the *air du temps* that favoured hybrid productions.

3.3.1 A Note on Devises Heroïques

Devises can be considered a key product of the *Aetas Emblematica* owing to the fact that it represents the first printed collection of devices. It is also worth noting in particular the publication of two separate editions by Jean de Tournes and Guillaume Gazeau in Lyon, the original appearing in 1551 and the second in 1557. It is specifically this second edition of *Devises Heroïques* that is remarkable for its text/image interaction. Containing an extra sixty-four devices, each illustration is now not only accompanied by an enigmatic *inscriptio*, but also an explanatory commentary-style *subscriptio* that

[174] For a full account of the origins and impact of the device in French culture, Daniel Russell's canonical *The Emblem and Device in France* (French Forum, 1985) should undoubtedly be consulted.

[175] Claude Paradin, *Les Devises Heroiques, De M. Claude Paradin [...] Du Seigneur Gabriel Symeon Et Autres Auteurs* (Hachette Livre - BNF, 2014).

reflects upon the significance of the (inter)relationship between woodcut and title. Consequently, the work takes on a far greater educational and moralistic dimension than the previous (1551) text-free publication, which resembles more closely the traditional emblem format whereby some are converted into universal moral lessons rather than correspond to the more socially specific function of the impresa.

3.4 Analytical Reading of a Select Emblematic *Devise* of Paradin

As has already been made clear, this study is not necessarily interested in the formal workings of Claude Paradin's emblematic output *per se*, but rather in connection with its formal and structural resonances with elements of popular culture of our modern times. In respect of Steinweiss' cover design for *Songs of Free Men*, then, a significant resemblance in text/image format can be discovered between our album cover and the eighty-seventh *devise*, entitled 'Vel in ara'. The following will therefore draw upon the threefold criteria of *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure,* and *interactive hybridity* to explore in greater depth a possible analogy between the two forms.

3.4.1 Analogous Visual *Topos* and Title in Paradin's Device

Much like the Steinweiss cover art, the central *pictura* of this emblematic device comprises the motif of a raised militant fist, dagger in hand (fig. 15). Also similar to the cover design is the highly unrealistic amalgam of pictorial motifs, shorn of their natural context, which sees the dagger stabbing a portrait of a hitherto ambiguous historical figure. There are, however, several obvious factors that help determine that we are dealing with a distinct iconographic tradition: the first is that this image dates to the pre-industrial period and so clearly cannot have any bearing upon the kind of labour disputes/struggles that we have previously seen in the paintings of Robert Köhler. The second is that the additional details of the clouds suggest that this is a reduplication of a common motif in Christian art, that of the *Manus Dei* or Hand of God which was particularly widespread in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval period.[176] This is due, it would seem, to the fact that in Western art before the twelfth

[176] See Michael Bath's reference to intertextuality, to the extent that he finds parallels between Ian Hamilton Finlay's appropriation of external sources and the emblem's use of borrowed fragments, a practice known as *copia* amongst Renaissance rhetoricians. He is led to view intertextuality as 'the very meat and drink of emblem studies.'. 'Mobilising the Gap: Hamilton Finlay's Inheritance' in *Emblematic*

century there were virtually no portraits of God the Father, and so the visual symbol of the hand issuing from the clouds served instead to indicate his presence.[177] It is also noteworthy that this supposed *Manus Dei* motif crops up in over twenty other *picturae* of Paradin's *Devises*, though not all have the specific text/image combination that lends itself to formal comparison with *Songs of Free Men*.

As for the manner in which the motif forms part of a symbolic juxtaposition with the portrait, the *pictura* evokes what might be considered a pseudo hieroglyphic mode of expression. In other words, emblematic works that feature *picturae* composed of speaking elements are, as emblem theorists have contended, *images sçavantes*; seemingly disparate motifs, placed in juxtaposition, mutually explain one another, thereby forming a sort of visual grammar. This, therefore, suggests to the spectator that they are encountering a form of 'writing through images'.[178] It is also in that

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Tendencies in the Art and Literature of the Twentieth Century eds. Anthony John Harper, Ingrid Höpel and Susan Sirc (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2005), pp. 113–129.

[177] It is also noted that the Hand of God may be presented in different ways to carry particular meanings. For example, when the hand is entirely open it may demonstrate bestowing, with rays emanating from each figure, and therefore signify benediction. The position of the hand may also have some bearing upon its cultural context, for instance in the Greek Church it is shown with the forefinger fully open, middle finger slightly bent, thumb crossed, and little finger bent, whereas the Latin form is depicted with the third and little fingers closed, with the thumb and other two fingers open and straight. Clara Waters, *A Handbook of Christian Symbols and Stories of the Saints As Illustrated in Art* (Cambridge Riverside Press, 1891), pp. 9–11.

[178] Central to a modern understanding of this emblematic form of visual rhetoric has been Pedro Leal's detailed and thought-provoking essay on the emblem as a writing-system in itself, resultant from the fascination but ultimately misinterpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphs at the time, a concern that occupied a central position in his doctoral thesis and partly found expression in the form of a book chapter, entitled '*Belles Lettres*: Hieroglyphs, Emblems, and the Philosophy of Images' in *The International Emblem: From Incunabula to the Internet* ed. Simon McKeown (Cambridge Scholars, 2010), pp. 97–112. Leal considers instances of 'hieroglyphic intuition' or 'inspiration' whereby a 'learned image' may arise from emblems that convey their intellectual appeal just as prominently through the visual component as through accompanying text by way of a symbolic juxtaposition of visual signs. He points out that Jesuit theorist Claude-François Menestrier may have recognised this at least in part through his evocation of '*images sçavantes*'. Leal argues that in light of the Renaissance (mis)understanding of hieroglyphs as a more general writing-system, as writing-system is understood in grammatological terms today and separate from motifs and signs of strictly Egyptian hieroglyphic repertoires, 'emblems subsequently appear as a sort of script in themselves, compounded by phonetic and ideographic devices; that is, different semiotic systems working under the same genre, or artistic practice.', p. 102.

regard that an interesting parallel may be discerned between this particular example of the *Devises Heroïques* and the cover art of *Songs of Free Men*.[179]

Figure 15: *Pictura* of Claude Paradin's 'Vel in ara' device, *Devises Heroïques* (Lyons: de Tournes and Gazeau, 1557)

The scene of the dagger-wielding hand issuing from the clouds and stabbing the portrait is accompanied by an enigmatic *inscriptio* that reads 'Vel in ara' [And that on the holy altar], which also parallels Steinweiss' cover image in that the title bears upon the thematic properties of the image (*signifié*) rather than a literal or descriptive one (*signifiant*).[180] The polyvalence of the *pictura* is exploited and it implicitly becomes the

[179] While this point draws on a specific parallel example of emblematics, this form of symbolic collage of visual motifs appears in many emblems, notably in Alciato's canonical *Emblematum liber*. See, for instance and most notably, 'Ex literarum studiis immortalitatem acquiri', 'Inviolabiles telo Cupidinis' and 'Ex bello pax' among several others.

[180] A formal element of the text that might be thought to contrast the emblem against the cover art is Paul Robeson's name as advertised in print at the top right-hand corner of the sleeve. Similar to what has already been said of the effect of an artwork's title upon its meaning, we adjust our expectations according to the cultural associations of Paul Robeson. That is to say, this record is part of a series of public-facing musical and theatrical productions, the cultural impact of which is rendered implicitly present simply by invoking the artist's name. The informed spectator may therefore appreciate the opening-up of ambiguities and questions around the implicit evocation aspects of Robeson's heritage as a social, intellectual and political interpretive framework.

reader-viewer's task to establish a meaningful connection between text and image. Of course, the very presence of the word 'holy' provides a contextual signal — in much the same way as 'free' does in the cover art of *Songs of Free Men* — which serves further to clarify the motif's relation to Christian iconography and by extension the *Manus Dei* symbol. Seen in the light of the title, then, the interaction of the hand, dagger and portrait may also be seen to conjure up connotations of Divine intervention in some broad sense. That said, the *motto/pictura* combination remains conceptually rather ambiguous.

3.4.2 Analogous Tripartite Structure and Contextual *Subscriptio* in the 1557 Edition

Not only in terms of title-image juxtaposition and interrelations does Paradin's 'Vel in Ara' run parallel to the text/image procedures in Steinweiss' cover design for *Songs of Free Men*, but also in the use of a third extended verbal element that one implicitly looks to in an attempt to piece together a mosaic of meaning. As stated, this component part is unique to the *Devises Heroïques*' second edition of 1557. The text, perhaps unlike other emblematic *subscriptiones* which would often comprise an epigram, consists of a much lengthier commentary written in French that perhaps resembles the function of Robeson's liner notes:

> Galeaz Marie, Duc de Milan, fils de François Sfor [M]
> ce, se laissa tomber en telle impudique lubricité, qu'il
> violoit & les filles vierges, & aussi que les dames d'hon-
> neur & de vertu. Vice qui le rendit tant odieus aus
> siens, & aus estrangers, ses sugets, que finablement lui
> en print mal. Car un Courtisan Milannois, nommé An-
> dré Lampugnan avec deus autres ses adherens, se sen-
> tans par lui trop ofensez, & mesmes ledit Lampugnan
> (qui d'ailleurs ne pouvoit porter paciemment le tort que
> ce Duc faisoit à un sien frere d'une abbaye[2]) conjurerent
> ensemble sa mort. Laquelle ayant entreprins Lampu-
> gnan entre les autres: & neanmoins n'osant aprocher
> ny ofenser la personne du Prince, duquel la grande beau-
> té le regettoit & estonnoit: s'avisa d'un moyen pour
> s'assurer. De maniere qu'il le fit peindre en un Tableau
> au vif, contre lequel il donnoit de la dague à toutes fois
> qu'il y pensoit. Et tant continua ses coups en cette façon

de faire, que un jour se voyant tout acoutumé & assuré
de l'aprocher et fraper, s'en va ensemble ses compli-
ces, trouver ce malheureus Duc dens une Eglise, entre
ses archers de garde, & la (ce nonobstant) s'avance
comme voulant parler à lui, & sur ce soudeinement le
frape de la dague trois coups au ventre si rudement qu'il
tombe mort en la place. Et ainsi fina ce vicieus Prince,
lequel n'avoit jamais bien entendu ce beau trait de Clau
dian: *Quil [=Qu'il] n'est meilleur guet, ny plus forte gar-
de, que fidele Amour, & estre aymé. Ores que
son fust environné de mile dards, ou halebardes.*
Et à la verité, notre Createur, Dieu des vengeances,
(tant recommandant l'amitié entre les hommes) trouve
bien ceus qui font le contraire, & qui l'ofensent: fussent
ils sur le propre autel.

[Galeazzo Maria, Duke of Milan, son of Francesco Sforza
Allowed himself to slip into such immodest lechery, that he
Violated virgin girls as well as ladies of honour and virtue.
A vice that made him so odious to his family, foreigners and
Subjects, for which he finally got his comeuppance. As a Milanese
Courtier called Andrea Lampugnani with two other accomplices,
Taking particular offence, (who besides could not peacefully bear
the wrong that this Duke had done by a fellow brother of the abbey),
together brought about his death. Having undertaken the task,
Lampugnani among others - despite not daring to approach nor
Offend the Prince's person, whose great beauty was to him
both regretful and astonishing — conceived of a way to reassure himself.
So he had him painted onto a tableau, which he would stab every time
He thought of it. And so he continued, until one day when he felt
Accustomed and assured about approaching and striking him, he went
With his accomplices to find this unfortunate Duke in a church, amongst
His archer guards and (this notwithstanding) approached as if to speak
To him, whereupon he suddenly struck him with the dagger three times
To the stomach so forcefully that he fell, dead on the spot. And such was

> The end to which the vicious Prince came, who had never heard the Beautiful Claudian quip: *That there is no better watch, nor stronger guard Than faithful love, and to be loved. Yet his was surrounded by a thousand spears, or halberds.* And to tell the truth, our Creator, God of vengeance, (as well as advocating friendship among men) finds those who act on the contrary,
>
> & are offenders, even though they be on their own altar].[181]

Paradin's commentary therefore operates chiefly in relation to the *devise*'s broader historical context, that of the Duke of Milan's crimes, the impact of his actions upon the surrounding Milanese communities, as well as the events that led to his death (or rather murder) and the revenge of Milanese courtier Andrea Lampugnani. This resembles the manner in which the liner notes of *Songs of Free Men* set the music record against the historical backdrop of the Second World War and Paul Robeson's biography which therefore also attempts to stabilise our reception of the cover image. Not only does the emblematic commentary entertain historical concerns that identify particular individuals and locations, but it likewise provides something akin to a religiously motivated moral lesson in the final lines. While the Duke of Milan eventually received his Earthly comeuppance in the form of a brutal stabbing, the text also suggests that it is God who will deliver the final retribution. The broad insinuation, complete with a reference to Latin poet Claudius Claudianus declaring the protective power of faithful love, is that wrong-doers and transgressors may succeed in evading the legal consequences of manmade societies, but one cannot escape the ultimate judgement of the divine Creator. As such, while the religious themes are not present in the liner notes of *Songs of Free Men*, one might draw a parallel in the way the cover's text conveys a moral tone through the appeal to the greater good and the fight for freedom against the forces of oppression.

3.4.3 Analogous Interactive Text/Image Hybridity in Paradin's 'Vel in Ara' Device

As regards the interrelation of the device's visual/verbal elements, we could begin by observing that, on one level, the textual commentary performs an identificatory

[181] This translation is in no way an attempt to mirror the poetical attributes of Paradin's text, but rather is intended as an aid to understanding the key details of the context in which the woodcut image is situated.

function insofar as the reader/viewer comes to understand the portrait as that of The Duke of Milan, and the dagger as that of the courtier Lampugnani. The stabbing of the portrait also reflects the scene in the text where the courtier prepares to assassinate the Duke by repeatedly attacking with a dagger a portrait that Lampugnani had himself commissioned. That said, the text/image interaction also occurs on a deeper, metaphorical level; the recounting of Galeazzo Maria's murder at the hands of the courtier and accomplices leads us to interpret the *pictura* as a figurative representation of this ambush, while the religious allusion to the Creator and God of vengeance not only strengthens our perception of the raised militant fist motif as a reworking of the Hand of God symbol but also a symbolic representation of Divine intervention and final judgement of the Duke. The latter is what ultimately also ties together the juxtaposition of the religiously oriented *motto* and enigmatic *pictura*, helping to form a cohesive rhetorical unit by way of the device's interactive text/image hybridity. This resembles the manner in which the liner notes of *Songs of Free Men* invite the prospective listen to decode the cover image as a visual metaphor of the forces of freedom, in all their guises, overcoming those of oppression — and in the particular context of World War II, the forces of fascism.

3.5 Concluding Remarks and Summary of Case-Study

In summation, the resemblance between the text/image characteristics of Steinweiss' cover art and those of Paradin's emblematic *devise* has been explored through the lens of analogous visual motifs, a shared tripartite bi-medial structure involving title, main image, and commentary, as well as a recurring interactive hybridity that hinges upon the meaningful interrelation of text and image. Specifically, the title and liner notes of *Songs of Free Men* interact with the front cover image from which they derive a widely applicable metaphor for the triumph of good over evil — the determination that 'ideals of freedom and good-will shall prevail throughout the world at whatever cost' — which prospective listeners must decode. A comparable communicative procedure was discovered in Paradin's 'Vel in ara' device, whereby a similar motif that nevertheless belongs to a separate religious iconography is exploited both on a literal and figurative level by a thematic title as well as a historicising and moralising commentary. By virtue of the emblematic form's interactive hybridity, the reader/viewer can appreciate the *pictura* as a broad metaphor for Divine intervention and judgement. Despite the evident disparity in historical period and cultural context,

then, Steinweiss' cover art and Paradin's device can be considered counterparts when seen from the angle of their shared principles of text/image communication and semiotic functioning.

One final observation on the formal linkage between Steinweiss' cover art and the broader purpose of an emblematic device is perhaps worth noting. The *Songs of Free Men* record ultimately belongs to Paul Robeson and evokes his ideals, but also those of his followers. Robeson and the 'free men' to whom the title alludes are textually and visually associated with a particular set of values, attitudes and opinions with which they are presumed to identify. The tripartite construction deals textually and visually with topical issues and events that concern specific persons or groups of people, who are also doubtless the intended core listenership of the record and therefore the intended core recipients of the cover's meaning. As such, from text/image interaction results a cultural site in which these groups of individuals sharing a common situation and cause may find their communal feelings represented. That is to say, clarifying the pertinence of these emblematic connections can offer an insight to the influence of text and image upon the music record's broader discursive framework.

In that regard, just as *imprese* serve typically to convey the aspirations and guiding principles of their bearers through the interaction of text and image,[182] so *Songs of Free Men* becomes intelligible as a rallying call to and symbol of solidarity with communities that are caught in and victims of the consequences of Western colonialism, the fascistic mindset driving the Second World War and the fight for African self-determination, particularly among diasporic groups in the States. *Songs of Free Men* may therefore also be seen to represent a milestone in Robeson's 'image-building process', to appropriate once again the words of Nicholas Cook,[183] in that it helps to create a particular brand identity which will then serve to determine the position of his music within the corporate market. As has already been suggested,

[182] For an account of the conventional workings and functions of the impresa and how it might be compared to aspects of contemporary culture, see Peter M. Daly 'The European Impresa: From Fifteenth Century Aristocratic Device to Twenty First Century Logo', *Emblematica,* Vol. 13 ed. Peter M. Daly (AMS Press, 2003).

[183] Nicholas Cook 'The Domestic Gesamtkunstwerk, or Record Sleeves and Reception', in *Composition - Performance - Reception: Studies in the Creative Process in Music*, ed. Wyndham Thomas, Ashgate (1998), pp. 105–117.

there is a strong ideological component to this process, whereby the social point of view that may be derived from the complex layers of meaning produced by an emblematic system of text/image interaction nuances and stabilises Robeson's public reception. Moreover, the emblematic message transmitted through Steinweiss' sleeve art is key to the development of certain 'extra-musical' associations which in turn colour the reception of the performed songs themselves.

Chapter 4

From Hieroglyphic Bible to Jazz Cover Art: Burt Goldblatt's Emblematic Design for Carmen McRae's Self-Titled Record

4.1 Goldblatt and McRae in Context

Carmen McRae (1920–1994) can be recognised as a major figure of mid-twentieth century American popular jazz, particularly the light of her major influence upon, and central role within, the mainstream historical narratives surrounding the jazz vocal tradition and associated female icons. Of McRae's cultural and musical legacy in the context of jazz singing since the 1940s, jazz critic Will Friedwald notes in almost eulogistic fashion the following:

> [Tony] Bennett's approximate female contemporary (in career if not in age or sound) is Carmen McRae, who in the mid- '50s established herself as the last great diva of jazz singing in the lineage that extends from Bessie Smith to Billie Holiday to Ella Fitzgerald to Sarah Vaughan to Dina Washington. An arresting stylist, McRae was at once stunningly musical and dramatically lyrical. McRae's sound was biting, sharp, and amazingly clear, full of pure jazz variations and brilliant paraphrases that never undercut her masterful interpretive style.[184]

More broadly, Friedwald also observes on the same topic that one might broadly associate the beginnings of jazz singing proper with Louis Armstrong, and that during the late 1920s and 1930s, 'Armstrong's influence on his colleagues — Ethel Walters, Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Leo Watson — was deep and profound'.[185] It follows that almost every singer to emerge before 1960, Friedwald notes, arose from the big band experience, and that undoubtedly applies to McRae. Despite having

[184] Will Friedwald, 'Jazz Singing Since the 1940s' in *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* ed. Bill Kirchner (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 483–484.

[185] Ibid.

never received a Grammy,[186] which for some may seem an obvious barometer for popular success (especially since a number of closely associated jazz artists of note have previously won the award),[187] McRae is nevertheless considered to form part of the early group of definitive female jazz vocalists.[188] Whist an extended biography on McRae's life and work falls beyond the purview of the present study, these contextual details shall be returned to and nevertheless provide an important backdrop to the forthcoming artefacts under scrutiny.

4.1.1 Burt Goldblatt's Approach to Sleeve Design

Bostonian graphic artist, photographer, and sleeve designer Burt Goldblatt (1924–2006) can, in the context of the (chiefly Anglo-American) album cover art tradition, be appreciated for his distinctly unorthodox and experimental compositional method, underpinned by a markedly progressive attitude to technological change. Indeed, his cover artworks may be historically situated within an important shift in aesthetic fashion in the field: the withdrawal of the traditional illustrative mode of early designs in favour of photographic sleeve art around the start of the 1950s, an artistic practice in which Goldblatt was an autodidact.

Goldblatt was above all a lifelong jazz enthusiast who, after a period of military service during World War II, studied at Massachusetts College of Art and reportedly spent his free time drawing caricatures of iconic jazz artists, such as Louis Armstrong, whom he had the opportunity to see in concert. Thus, he began establishing his early artistic reputation, requesting that his drawings be autographed by the performers

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[186] See Leslie Gourse's *Carmen McRae: Miss Jazz* (Billboard, 2001). In the introductory passage, Gourse alludes to McRae's reputation as a perfectionistic interpreter of lyrics and masterful improviser which, despite a slow rise to fame and lack of Grammy awards, saw her elevated to the ranks of such leading performers as Fitzgerald, Vaughan and O'Day.

[187] For a brief overview of proceedings and winners, readers may consult the official website wherein lie the names of performers and categories in which they were successful. Among the first recipients was Jazz icon Ella Fitzgerald (Best Vocal Performance, Female, and Best Jazz Performance, individual). https://www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/1st-annual-grammy-awards-1958.

[188] Also apparent is McRae's periodic involvement in American politics, to the extent that she is known to have had lifelong affiliations with the Democratic Party. Notably, she participated in the famous 'Celebrate America' seventeen-hour fundraising telethon, hosted by NBC on Memorial Day, 1983, in a bid to change the party's financial fortunes and broaden their base of contributors.

backstage.[189] Likewise, in relation to the visual identity of the (then) contemporary jazz scene, art director Steven Heller assuredly maintains that 'after the introduction of the LP, the most progressive American cover designs were created for jazz albums, and Mr. Goldblatt was among the pioneers in establishing the cool-jazz style'.[190] Indeed, Goldblatt deftly employed a range of comparatively innovative photographic effects ranging from image cropping and photo-typographic collages to the production and manipulation of x-ray images. In that regard, Heller proceeds to note the following:

> [His approach] encompassed black-and-white portraits and studio photographs, inspired by film noir, as well as gritty street scenes, often abstractly overlaid with flat colors [sic], evoking a sense of urban night life. Expressionistic line drawings of performers in action were also in vogue. One of Mr. Goldblatt's earliest covers, from 1950, was a bootleg album by Holiday for the Jolly Roger label. Like his contemporaries Bob Jones, Reid Miles and David Stone Martin, he alternated between using photography and drawings, always focusing on emblematic details of the trade. He also mastered a wide range of methods including collage, montage and even X-rays.[191]

It is therefore clear that, for Goldblatt, the introduction of photography to sleeve design did not simply mean limiting oneself to the basic reproduction of a performing artist's likeness, nor did it necessarily preclude the interplay of text and image; Heller also notes that Goldblatt's designs, particularly those of the Bethlehem label, tended to comprise the combination of evocative photographs with restrained, yet lyrical typography. This is perhaps at the heart of what renders his compositional method one of artistic hybridity and cultural non-conformism. To that end, what follows is an attempt to provide some general context to the rise of photographic aesthetics in album cover design of the 1950s and the normative models against which Goldblatt could be seen to position himself.

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[189] https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2006-sep-12-me-passings12.3-story.html

[190] 'Burt Goldblatt Designer of Jazz Album Covers, *Dies* at 82' - The New York Times. 2020. Burt Goldblatt, Designer of Jazz Album Covers, Dies at 82 - The New York Times. [ONLINE] Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/07/arts/music/07goldblatt.html. [Accessed 17 December 2020].

[191] Ibid.

4.1.2 Early Photographic Album Art Fashions

Of course, a systematic analysis of the influence of photography on British and American sleeve design of the mid-twentieth century is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. However, an awareness of the key issues that provide important context to Goldblatt's approach to cover art, particularly in terms of socio-technological factors, is helpful from a text/image perspective. As such, art historian and sleeve designer Nick de Ville points out that Anglo-American sleeve design of the 1950s coincided with a period of radical change in design technology and methods, a key feature of which was the introduction of the LP format by Columbia in 1948.[192] With this new technology also came a general rejection of older illustration techniques and stylised pictograms, typical of such iconic designers as Steinweiss and Flora,[193] to photography-based art pervasive in numerous branches of graphic design. This revolution resulted in the gradual edging out of the old guard of designers, whose *modus operandi* was to illustrate ideas and concepts, in favour of photographic record covers that emphasised faces, people and the relatively new concept of 'stars'. The traditional illustrators who successfully continued to produce sleeve art would therefore have had to show sufficient flexibility so as to adapt to this new photographic turn.[194] Beyond increasing unemployment among designers of the previous decade, there was also, from a text/image vantage point, a significant reduction works of a truly hybrid nature. That is to say, perhaps the interplay of text and image appeared less salient to the new preoccupations with mood, aesthetic pleasure, and the reproduction of reality.

As revealed to us through the important work of eminent historian and practitioner of graphic design Philip B. Meggs, there exists a longstanding relationship between photographic practices and the graphic arts in Western culture. Meggs' study covers a lot of historical ground, beginning from the early experiments of Joseph Niépce (1765–1833) and his famed collaborative friendship with Louis Jacques Daguerre (1799–1851) through William Henry Fox Talbot's (1800–1877) breakthrough 'photogenic drawings' to mid-twentieth century popular photography and beyond.

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[192] Nick de Ville, *Album: Style and Image in Sleeve Design* (Mitchel Beazley, 2003) pp.44–46.

[193] For an account of the (principally European) graphic art traditions propelling the nascent years of illustrated sleeve design, see previous chapter on Alex Steinweiss and Paul Robeson.

[194] Burt Goldblatt is specifically cited by de Ville as among those designers capable of adapting to new design contexts.

Conversely, he brings to our attention what he labels as the 'golden age of American illustration'[195] in the context of the cultural trends and accepted practices of mid-Twentieth century graphic design. In accordance with de Ville, Meggs maintains that narrative illustration dominated American graphic art until the start of the 1950s, whereupon improvements in paper, printing and photography replaced illustration at the cutting edge. Whereas illustrators of the period are said to have 'exaggerated value contrasts, intensified colour, made edges and details sharper than life to create more convincing images than photography', material and procedural advances in photography soon gave rise to an expanded range of lighting conditions and 'image fidelity'.[196] In other words, the traditional role of illustration in graphic design was appropriated by photography.

Given that the expansion of the record industry, in terms of the number of active companies in the post-World War II period, encouraged a higher degree of competition, sleeve designs would have increasingly been viewed by labels as a hard-sales tool. On the same subject, Richard Osborne notes that the production of sleeve art during the pre-Beatles era of teen idol was largely characterised by colour portraits shot in photographic studios, which helped to foster a growing inclination towards 'image-based consumption'.[197] He also suggests that 'the musical template for the American pop LP [of the 1950s] was fairly mercenary: one or two hit singles accompanied by 'filler' material.'. While it goes without saying that there would have been exceptions, Osborne's research makes it possible to point to an overriding communications strategy. That is to say, the attractive physical appearance of performers would have appeared more conducive to the marketability of these popular records than, for instance, the careful deployment of cultural symbols accompanied by informative texts — both of which reflecting upon the artist and musical material - that characterised much of Steinweiss' early oeuvre.

The preference for record sleeves resembling a teen magazine pin-up and the superficial kind of image-based consumption to which Osborne refers might also be connected to the rise in popular forms of cinema in which pop music stars, perhaps

[195] Alston W Purvis, and Philip B. Meggs, *Meggs' History of Graphic Design* (Wiley, 2016) p. 469.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Richard Osborne, *Vinyl: A History of the Analogue Record* (Taylor & Francis, 2016) p. 168.

most famously Elvis Presley and The Beatles, were featured.[198] Indeed, Ian Inglis observes that the 1950s and '60s were decades in which pop stars generally sought to become movie stars, as cinema was widely recognised to offer alternative or additional strategies to touring.[199] Films that featured or centred upon famous musicians therefore 'competed with the role the solo-concert as the principal mechanism through which the performers were able to satisfy the demands of fans.'.[200] This desire to circulate the artist's personal image on as wide a scale as possible seems therefore largely connected to the rise in 'stardom' as a notion of popular culture. In that regard, one may be reminded of Nicolas Cook's observation that certain sleeves hinge upon the consumption of the star, through a process of vicarious possession, which is subordinate to musical interpretation.[201]

More closely related to Goldblatt's design milieu, forms of artist portraiture in the field of jazz were, De Ville notes, largely born of a new appreciation of photography's 'ability to project, unmediated by the illustrator's hand, a recording artist's persona' as well as to 'convey the nuances of the recording artists musical proclivities as part of that persona'.[202] Perhaps the most obvious case in point would be the moody, starkly-lit documentary style covers produced for the widely celebrated Blue Note recording artists. While Blue Note was founded as an independent label by Alfred Lion (aided in the early years by Max Margulis) and Francis Wolff, who were both Berlin-born enthusiasts of American Jazz, it was Wolff in particular who became interested in sleeve design. Indeed, we know Wolff was given to collaborate with Reid Miles — the name most readily associated with Blue Note's visual identity — in producing record covers. Among such collaborations was the iconic photographic cover for John Coltrane's *Blue Train* (Blue Note, 1958). The shot (fig. 16), originally taken by Wolff and then manipulated and inserted into the design by Miles, depicts Coltrane in a state of deep contemplation and focus, saxophone in hand, while an enigmatic yet solemn tone is foregrounded by the cool, dark lighting. Though this may

[198] Elvis Presley's entire filmography spanning thirteen years comprises over thirty full-length feature films, beginning with *Love Me Tender* (1956, 20th Century Fox) and ending with *Change of Habit* (1969, Universal Pictures).

[199] Ian Inglis, *Popular Music and Film* (Wallflower, 2003).

[200] Ibid.

[201] Nicolas Cook, 'The Domestic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or Record Sleeves and Reception' in *Composition – Performance – Reception* ed. Wyndham Thomas (Routledge, 1998).

[202] De Ville, *Album*, p. 45.

have been a fairly innovative attempt at capturing the 'mood' of a record through new photographic practices, one notes the absence of any mutually supportive combination of text and image.

Figure 4: Francis Wolff and Reid Miles' cover art for John Coltrane's *Blue Train* (Blue Note, 1958)

It is well known that Miles produced record covers for several jazz artists that went on to experience widespread critical acclaim and are now accepted to form part of the canon of contemporary jazz. At the heart of his cover designs for such artists as Thelonius Monk, Herbie Hancock and Sonny Rollins were in essence different takes on the central aesthetic conceit of the artist's portrait. While these sleeves tend accurately to reflect the sentiments of de Ville's comments on the photographically constructed artist persona and the evocation of their musical activities, they do not comprise text/image interplay insofar as they could be labelled hybrid productions.

4.1.3 A Note on The Bethlehem Label

To return to the label with which the majority of Goldblatt's collaborations in cover design occurred, Bethlehem began primarily as an outlet for pop records,[203] notably those of Chris Connor, and it was the rapidly decreasing profitability of ensuing releases that prompted Wildi to shift direction towards the field of jazz. In its nascent years, sometime between 1954 and 1955, Bethlehem is reported to have espoused the philosophy of 'under-playing the importance of names in the jazz album field', which, as Gregg Akkerman has noted,[204] was probably an eloquent way of saying they could not afford many high-profile performers at the time. However, a unique 'selling point' of Bethlehem operating as an independent label was the degree of artistic freedom accorded to performers over their recording project, which is likely to have been a rare occurrence among those recording artists working with major labels.

Another distinguishing feature between the ethos of major labels and that of Bethlehem was the preferred choice of format. Like Osborne, Akkerman contrasts the industry's overriding preference for singles against Bethlehem's tendency towards the LP form, despite the latter's widespread reputation as an unnecessary expense in the eyes of major labels. Moreover, Akkerman argues that 'Bethlehem was one of the first labels to view the LP cover as a space to visually communicate the substantive quality of the audio'.[205] Whilst it is clearly an exaggeration to suggest that the record sleeve was never made to serve any artistic purpose before Bethlehem,[206] considering the pioneering work of such designers as Steinweiss and Flora, Akkerman takes care to highlight Goldblatt's work, who was the label's art director and virtually sole sleeve designer. [207]

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[203] The founding of the Bethlehem label is a story resembling that of Blue Note, one based upon the ambition of a European Migrant, Swiss-born Gustav Wildi, and his love of American popular music.

[204] Popular music scholar and director of Jazz Studies Gregg Akkerman is among the few to have engaged seriously with Bethlehem's legacy. A chapter in his book on Johnny Hartman is devoted to the 'Stars of Bethlehem' over the course of which he discusses the label's humble beginnings, rise to fame and innovative artwork. *The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Heartman Story* (Scarecrow Press, 2012) pp. 82–104.

[205] See the previous chapter on the designs of Alex Steinweiss.

[206] As is apparent from the discussion that follows, Akkerman has more or less paraphrased Wildi's claims regarding the label's innovative visual approach.

[207] As per Dix's summary, it was specifically Goldblatt's work for Bethlehem that was displayed at the Princeton University exhibition, and the sleeve for *Carmen McRae* forms part of this corpus.

On the same topic, founder Gustav Wildi is reported to have acknowledged the label's innovative visual and artistic tendencies: 'We recognized from our first 10-inch album release on, that the importance of the quality of the cover was underrated by the other companies […] I believe then that Bethlehem was the first company to create covers with some artistic merit as opposed to use them akin to soap or soup advertisements.'[208] On the one hand, certain comparisons can be drawn between elements of Goldblatt's illustrative oeuvre and the work of Paul Bacon and David Stone Martin.[209] there is evidence in Goldblatt's sleeve design, as already noted by de Ville, of an understanding of photographic procedures that go beyond the style pervasive in Miles' work.[210]

4.1.4 *Carmen McRae* and Roadmap of Case Study

The topic of this second critical study, forming part of the broader question of transhistorical text/image comparisons between Renaissance emblems and album covers, will focus upon the artwork of Carmen McRae's self-titled sophomore record, *Carmen McRae* (Bethlehem, 1956). The record features seven songs that are either jazz standards or taken from Broadway shows and are performed by McRae with accompaniment from both the Mat Matthews Quartet and the Tony Scott Quartet. The songs were initially worked into McRae's concert repertoire in the early 1950s when she performed at the famed jazz club Minton's Playhouse in Harlem.

The main analytical section of this case study will therefore begin with a close critical reading of the text/image attributes of Goldblatt's design for the cover of *Carmen McRae*.[211] In particular, close attention will be paid to the use of isolated symbolic visual forms and motifs, as well as the use of thematic/lyrical text in conjunction with the front cover image, followed by a textual analysis of the liner notes. Much like this previous case study, these observations will conclude with a broader analytical study

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[208] Akkerman, *The Last Balladeer*, pp. 86–87.

[209] See, for instance, Bacon's designs for Albert Ammon's *Boogie Woogie Classics* (Blue Note, 1952) and Sidney Bechet's *Jazz Classics Vol. 2* (Blue Note, 1954), as well as Martin's designs for Charlie Parker's *Bird and Dis* (Verve, 1955) and Lester Young Trio's *Lester Young* (Norgan Records, 1955).

[210] De Ville, *Album*, p.58.

[211] It should be re-emphasised that the foregoing contextual discussion serves to highlight the innovation of Goldblatt's bi-medial compositions, in particular that of *Carmen McRae*'s cover, in response to the medium's design conventions operative at the time, particularly in the context of jazz sleeves and artist portraiture.

of the interrelation of the cover designs component elements, which would allow us to label this a work of text/image hybridity. The comparative section of the analysis will draw upon Chapter 2's criteria of *visual topoi, bi-medial structure,* and *interactive hybridity* so as to posit a formal resemblance between Goldblatt's design and another product of the *Aetas Emblematica*: Melchoir Mattsperger's hieroglyphic bible *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen Inn Zweihundert und Fünfzig Biblischen Figur-Sprüchen Angedeutet* [The Spiritual Heart-Fancies in Two Hundred and Fifty Biblical Picture-Texts] of 1688. It is through this comparative approach that this case study follows the same intellectual thread put forth at the initial stages of this thesis — the analogous principles of text/image interplay across two separate artforms and historical periods.

4.2 Analytical Reading of *Carmen McRae*'s Cover Art

4.2.1 Visual Motif and Cultural Symbol of Red Lips with Sequential Text

We shall begin by addressing the visual/verbal content on the front cover of *Carmen McRae*. In reader response terms, the most arresting visual stratagem is perhaps that of the exploitation of a highly recognisable iconography and pop-cultural symbol: the red lips (fig. 17). Of course, this is a common process in the symbolic mode of visual representation, whereby the use of representational or mimetic content transforms the outside world of cultural production into a referential system carrying vast array of connotative associations with which certain reader/viewers will be more or less familiar.

More the tongue than lips — though they are closely interrelated — is a motif historically rich in symbolism, particularly in the Christian tradition. As the main organ of speech, the tongue has, for example, the capacity to influence, redeem, give judgement, speak the truth, or deceive. In the Old Testament, the tongue is often mentioned pejoratively through the lens of speaking evil, but it might also be used to represent the word of God, and therefore also a symbol of His power and justice.[212] In the highly secular context of Goldblatt's cover art, however, it is unlikely that these are the visual codes upon which the designer is chiefly drawing. Rather, it is far more tempting to interpret this cover along the lines of the old advertising adage 'sex

[212] See philosophy and theology scholar Jean Chevalier's contribution to *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* eds. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (Penguin Books, 1996), pp. 1014–1015.

sells',[213] but this particular iconographic phenomenon did not come about until the early twentieth century, when the motif of (red) lips also became key signifier of femininity and sexuality in a variety of socio-political contexts. In fact, this has been the object of Lauren Gurrieri and Jenna Drenten's critical study, whose primary concerns centre upon the social and gender-based dimensions of consumer culture theory and practice. In their landmark article 'The Feminist Politics of Choice: Lipstick as a Marketplace Icon',[214] they make the general observation that beauty products on the whole have recently been a common focus in the debate in feminist theories of a woman's choice; in other words, their socio-political agency.

As Gurrieri and Drenten note, the relationship between the wearing of lipstick and feminine identity has been something of a contentious issue. That is to say, there appear to exist two conflicting perspectives that, on the one hand, view self-beautification (itself a politicised term whose more neutral equivalent might be self-aestheticisation) as evidence of emancipation and empowerment, while on the other hand lament a submission to normative and oppressive societal standards. This, however, has much to do with the socio-historical evolution of lipstick-wearing throughout the modern era. Indeed, a key development took place shortly after the turn of the century whereby the wearing of lipstick — particularly red lipstick — was famously appropriated by many women involved in the Suffragette movement, who subsequently transformed it into an act of agency. Such an act seems to have been performed 'with express intent of appalling men due to the historical social proscription of lipstick.'[215]. Gurrieri and Drenten point specifically to the central role that makeup entrepreneur Elizabeth Arden had in the transformation of red lips into a symbol of feminist defiance and rejection of gender norms. Indeed, Arden's famously decided to distribute tube of her 'Red Door Lips' lipstick to around fifteen thousand Suffragettes.

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[213] For more on this topic, readers should consult Tom Reichart's *The Erotic History of Advertising* (Prometheus, 2010) in which he examines the history of the use of sex in advertising and the manner in businesses test the limits of public taste and the allure of provocative marketing. While polls have suggested that Americans would like to see less sex in advertising, that is not, Reichart finds, what the research data suggests, proving that sex appeal is still an extremely important means through which to capture consumers' attention.

[214] Lauren Gurrieri and Jenna Drenten, 'The Feminist Politics of Choice: Lipstick as a Marketplace Icon', *Consumption Markets and Culture* (2019).

[215] Gurrieri and Drenten, 'The Feminist Politics of Choice', p. 3.

Figure 5: Burt Goldblatt's Cover Art of Carmen McRae's *Carmen McRae* (Bethlehem, 1956)

Another key development can be discovered during the Second World War where the application of red lipstick served to 'disrupt wartime masculine codes of power'.[216] Gurrieri and Drenten note that Adolf Hitler was reputed to have showed considerable disdain for red lipstick, and as such the image of red lips was once again transformed into a powerful symbol of resilient femininity and patriotism. Likewise, Arden spearheaded the distribution of red lipstick while simultaneously adopting her marketing strategy so as to better resonate with the cultural *air du temps* with such politically motivated brand names as 'Fighting Red!' and 'Patriot Red!'. The authors document that Arden's 'Victory Red!' lipstick was even distributed among the female workers in munition factories with the intention of increasing worker efficiency and boosting morale.

[216] Ibid.

Of particular importance to the historical and cultural context of Goldblatt's cover design, however, is Gurrieri and Drenten's observation on the mid-Twentieth century origins of feminine self-aestheticisation:

> the representation of lipstick wearers as in charge of their sexuality was first made through associations with Hollywood "bad girls" and "sex symbols", such as Mae West — a sexually uninhibited working-class woman who flaunted a raunchy streetwise style with her signature "cupie-bow" red lipstick. The desirability of red lipstick was further enhanced by the bold lips of "bombshell" actresses such as Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe. Hence, empowerment becomes signalled through a woman being in control of her body and the pleasures of that body.[217]

From another, perhaps more cynical, perspective, one might question whether or not these Hollywood actresses actually did have any real degree of autonomy, given the now-widespread documentation of their mistreatment at the hands of abusive management and a broadly toxic show-business industry. [218]

Nevertheless, the cultural baggage of red lips as a popular symbol of eroticism and emboldened femininity, is undeniable. It is therefore in this regard that Goldblatt's choice of pictorial motif may seem particularly suitable, or at least logical, as a visual representation of such an iconic female jazz singer as Carmen McRae. Conversely, it is hard to glean a specific message or meaning from the series of red lips alone. This brings us to the main verbal element of the front cover design. Given that the 'title' fulfils no further role than that of identifying the performer as indeed Carmen McRae, we shall concern ourselves with the use of lyrical typography that, as previously stated, became a characteristic trait of Goldblatt's compositional method.

This form of photo-typographic collage means that the cover abandons the traditional title/image combination and stands in contrast to other cover art such as Steinwess' design for Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men*. Here, the textual component is printed onto and dispersed among the main body of the single-framed pictorial unit. Not only, therefore, is this a question of playing the text off against the image, but also the close interweaving of the two. This bimedial structure implies a degree of sequentiality as opposed to the sole emphasis being upon a global reading pattern that the traditional title/image juxtaposition of cover art invites. The text printed onto the *Carmen McRae*

[217] Ibid, p.4.

[218] Donald Spoto, *Marilyn Monroe: The Biography* (Cooper Square Press, 2001).

sleeve is itself also highly referential, insofar as each fragment — 'you'd be… so easy to… love, so easy… to idolize… all others above, so worth… the yearning for… so well…' — is a lyrical quotation; they collectively form a phrase that functions as an allusion to renowned American composer Cole Porter's '(You'd Be So) Easy To Love', which figures as the first cover song on McRae's record.

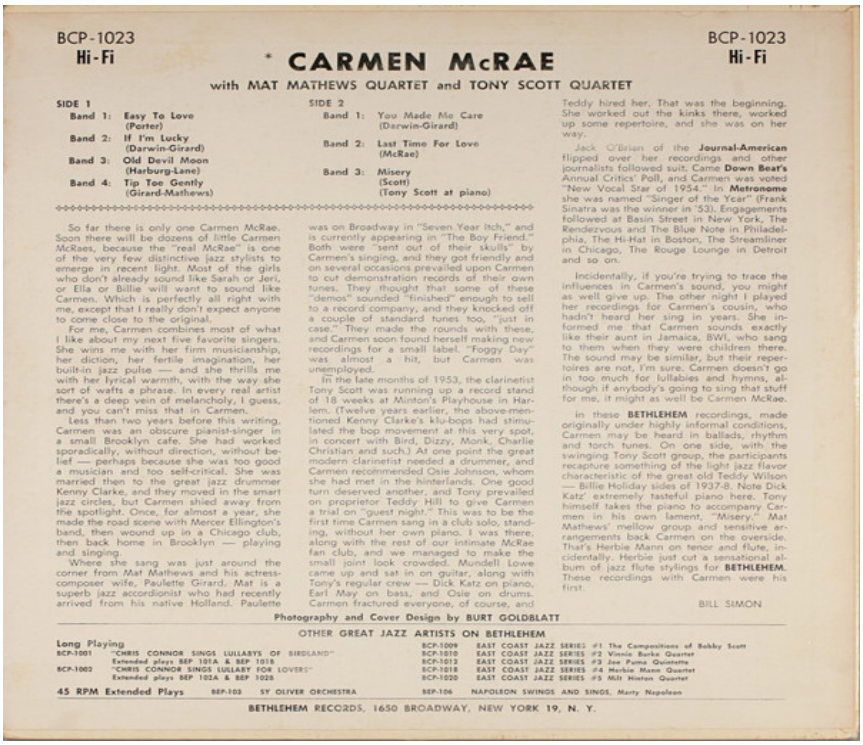
It is easy to understand, therefore, how the general theme of love, or broadly amorous connotations, can be transferred metaphorically from this lyrical text to the image of the red lips, and vice versa. Furthermore, one might interpret the sequentiality of the lyrical typography in conjunction with the series of red lips in different positions as a visually symbolic re-enactment of McRae's act of singing and/or performing. Nonetheless, while there admittedly remain significant ambiguities in this conceptual juxtaposition, it also stands, in the commercial context of the record industry, as a typical example of exploiting feminine identity and sexuality to attract attention while arousing interest amongst potential listeners and consumers. We shall then have to consider how the third textual element of the liner notes play upon, or react to, the cultural discourses brought to bear through the text/image combinations of the front cover art.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Biographical Liner Notes

The liner notes of *Carmen McRae* are written by American songwriter and music critic Bill Simon, a key member of that select group of journalists, including Frederick Ramsey, Charles Edward Smith, Otis Ferguson and George Hoefer who reputedly dominated the American school of popular jazz writing during the war years (fig. 18).[219] Likewise, it has been noted that their style, found in a wide variety of publications that span newspapers, literary magazines and trade publications, is distinguishable by 'short character sketches laced with quotations from the artists'.[220] The cultural impact of their writing was considerable insofar as '[they] became primary sources for jazz scholarship; their record reviews in *downbeat* and *Metronome* influenced the emerging canon of influential jazz artists.' This characterisation is also representative, as shall become apparent, of the writing style that Simon applied to the *Carmen McRae* sleeve notes. Indeed, it is possible to observe certain similarities, and differences, between the contextualising function that Simon's text fulfils in

[219] William Howland Kenney 'Jazz: A Bibliographical Essay', *American Studies International* (1987), p. 13.
[220] Ibid.

relation to Goldblatt's artwork and that of the liner notes of Paul Robeson's *Songs of Free Men*.



BCP-1023
Hi-Fi

CARMEN McRAE

with MAT MATHEWS QUARTET and TONY SCOTT QUARTET

BCP-1023
Hi-Fi

SIDE 1

Band 1: Easy To Love (Porter)
Band 2: If I'm Lucky (Darwin-Girard)
Band 3: Old Devil Moon (Harburg-Lane)
Band 4: Tip Toe Gently (Girard-Mathews)

SIDE 2

Band 1: You Made Me Care (Darwin-Girard)
Band 2: Last Time For Love (McRae)
Band 3: Misery (Scott) (Tony Scott at piano)

So far there is only one Carmen McRae. Soon there will be dozens of little Carmen McRaes, because the "real McRae" is one of the very few distinctive jazz stylists to emerge in recent light. Most of the girls who don't already sound like Sarah or Jeri, or Ella or Billie will want to sound like Carmen. Which is perfectly all right with me, except that I really don't expect anyone to come close to the original.

For me, Carmen combines most of what I like about my next five favorite singers. She wins me with her firm musicianship, her diction, her fertile imagination, her built-in jazz pulse — and she thrills me with her lyrical warmth, with the way she sort of wafts a phrase. In every real artist there's a deep vein of melancholy, I guess, and you can't miss that in Carmen.

Less than two years before this writing, Carmen was an obscure pianist-singer in a small Brooklyn cafe. She had worked sporadically, without direction, without belief — perhaps because she was too good a musician and too self-critical. She was married then to the great jazz drummer Kenny Clarke, and they moved in the smart jazz circles, but Carmen shied away from the spotlight. Once, for almost a year, she made the road scene with Mercer Ellington's band, then wound up in a Chicago club, then back home in Brooklyn — playing and singing.

Where she sang was just around the corner from Mat Mathews and his actress-composer wife, Paulette Girard. Mat is a superb jazz accordionist who had recently arrived from his native Holland. Paulette was on Broadway in "Seven Year Itch," and is currently appearing in "The Boy Friend." Both were "sent out of their skulls" by Carmen's singing, and they got friendly and on several occasions prevailed upon Carmen to cut demonstration records of their own tunes. They thought that some of these "demos" sounded "finished" enough to sell to a record company, and they knocked off a couple of standard tunes too, "just in case." They made the rounds with these, and Carmen soon found herself making new recordings for a small label. "Foggy Day" was almost a hit, but Carmen was unemployed.

In the late months of 1953, the clarinetist Tony Scott was running up a record stand of 18 weeks at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem. (Twelve years earlier, the above-mentioned Kenny Clarke's klu-bops had stimulated the bop movement at this very spot, in concert with Bird, Dizzy, Monk, Charlie Christian and such.) At one point the great modern clarinetist needed a drummer, and Carmen recommended Osie Johnson, whom she had met in the hinterlands. One good turn deserved another, and Tony prevailed on proprietor Teddy Hill to give Carmen a trial on "guest night." This was to be the first time Carmen sang in a club solo, standing, without her own piano. I was there, along with the rest of our intimate McRae fan club, and we managed to make the small joint look crowded. Mundell Lowe came up and sat in on guitar, along with Tony's regular crew — Dick Katz on piano, Earl May on bass, and Osie on drums. Carmen fractured everyone, of course, and Teddy hired her. That was the beginning. She worked out the kinks there, worked up some repertoire, and she was on her way.

Jack O'Brien of the **Journal-American** flipped over her recordings and other journalists followed suit. Came **Down Beat's** Annual Critics' Poll, and Carmen was voted "New Vocal Star of 1954." In **Metronome** she was named "Singer of the Year" (Frank Sinatra was the winner in '53). Engagements followed at Basin Street in New York, The Rendezvous and The Blue Note in Philadelphia, The Hi-Hat in Boston, The Streamliner in Chicago, The Rouge Lounge in Detroit and so on.

Incidentally, if you're trying to trace the influences in Carmen's sound, you might as well give up. The other night I played her recordings for Carmen's cousin, who hadn't heard her sing in years. She informed me that Carmen sounds exactly like their aunt in Jamaica, BWI, who sang to them when they were children there. The sound may be similar, but their repertoires are not, I'm sure. Carmen doesn't go in too much for lullabies and hymns, although if anybody's going to sing that stuff for me, it might as well be Carmen McRae.

In these **BETHLEHEM** recordings, made originally under highly informal conditions, Carmen may be heard in ballads, rhythm and torch tunes. On one side, with the swinging Tony Scott group, the participants recapture something of the light jazz flavor characteristic of the great old Teddy Wilson — Billie Holiday sides of 1937-8. Note Dick Katz' extremely tasteful piano here. Tony himself takes the piano to accompany Carmen in his own lament, "Misery." Mat Mathews' mellow group and sensitive arrangements back Carmen on the overside. That's Herbie Mann on tenor and flute, incidentally. Herbie just cut a sensational album of jazz flute stylings for **BETHLEHEM**. These recordings with Carmen were his first.

BILL SIMON

Photography and Cover Design by BURT GOLDBLATT

OTHER GREAT JAZZ ARTISTS ON BETHLEHEM

Long Playing

BCP-1001 "CHRIS CONNOR SINGS LULLABYS OF BIRDLAND" Extended plays BEP 101A & BEP 101B
BCP-1002 "CHRIS CONNOR SINGS LULLABY FOR LOVERS" Extended plays BEP 102A & BEP 102B

BCP-1009 EAST COAST JAZZ SERIES #1 The Compositions of Bobby Scott
BCP-1010 EAST COAST JAZZ SERIES #2 Vinnie Burke Quartet
BCP-1013 EAST COAST JAZZ SERIES #3 Joe Puma Quintette
BCP-1018 EAST COAST JAZZ SERIES #4 Herbie Mann Quartet
BCP-1020 EAST COAST JAZZ SERIES #5 Milt Hinton Quartet

45 RPM Extended Plays
BEP-103 SY OLIVER ORCHESTRA
BEP-106 NAPOLEON SWINGS AND SINGS, Marty Napoleon

BETHLEHEM RECORDS, 1650 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

Figure 18: Bill Simon's liner notes of *Carmen McRae* (Bethlehem, 1956)

Inevitably, then, Simon makes a point of sketching out McRae's early days as a jazz vocalist in New York clubs and the chance meetings with important industry figures that led to the recordings in question. However, perhaps of greater significance is the way in which Simon's text implicitly frames the record, and consequently the cover art, in terms of the conception of jazz as a markedly rich form of African American cultural contribution. That is to say, his references to and comparisons with Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerland and Billie Holiday, as well as McRae's Jamaican ancestry, tacitly engage in the history of the racial thread that runs through the culture, aesthetics, and consumption of jazz. Furthermore, Simon's notes have an implicit resonance with the various problematic aspects of the race and representation during the genre's early development, as is evidenced by jazz historian Ira Gitler:

> Swing, like the styles of jazz that preceded it, was essentially a black expression, but it was the white bands who were accorded the greatest popularity. Duke Ellington, Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Earl Hines, and Cab Calloway all were successful in this period, but not to the extent of their white counterparts. Benny Goodman, utilizing

> the arrangements of Edgar Sampson, Jimmy Mundy, Horace Henderson, and most particularly, Fletcher Henderson, sparked the arrival of the Swing Era in the public consciousness. He was dubbed "The King of Swing," and achieved the commercial triumph that had eluded Fletcher Henderson in the latter's years as leader of the first big band to gain wide recognition by playing jazz.[221]

The ensuing developments in musical style, most notably the emergence of Bebop from big band music, can therefore be understood in the light of a broader, race-based struggle for recognition, as younger black musicians of the period, Gitler documents, grew weary of white leadership as well as the lack of solo space, and so undertook to devise a new, more progressive, and less easily appropriated, music. The result appears to have been a growing sense of authority among modern jazz musicians of the Bebop era, a sense that they were 'serious artists' in comparison to performers of Swing. Even if Bebop was perhaps at first publicly seen as rather 'weird', Gitler contends that it was also 'an expression of the finest black musical minds and, besides what it expressed explicitly, offered the human verities that jazz had communicated from its inception.'[222] In a certain sense, therefore, these aspects of Simon's notes fulfil an important historicising role for the *Carmen McRae* record, situating the artist's identity and that of her music within a broader socio-historic framework as it pertains to the evolution of early-to-mid twentieth century popular music. It is in this regard that it also resembles the functioning of the unattributed liner notes of *Songs of Free Men*.

4.2.3 Deciphering the Interactive Hybridity of *Carmen McRae*'s Cover Art

Seen from the perspective of the record's cover art, it might not be immediately clear how Simon's implicit textual allusions to race and representation can be said to impact or play upon the ambiguities and connotations of Porter's lyrics and the red lips motif. One might, however, argue that liner notes, in their foregrounding of the African American context, re-direct the reader/viewer's reception of the cover image towards unexpected but important questions of the racialisation of the body. In particular, racist discourses and tropes that centre upon the image of black lips are an issue that has been the object of leading sociologist Shirley Anne Tate's critical study in *Black*

[221] Ira Gitler, *Swing to Bop: An Oral History Of The Transition In Jazz In The 1940S* (Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 3.

[222] Ibid, p. 5.

Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization, Politics; by way of a general introduction to the topic of beauty shame in a racial context, Tate offers the following explanation:

> As said previously what makes beauty shame possible within the Black/white binary is the stock of beauty value which has been sedimented in our structure of feeling over the centuries. This leads to forms of measurement of worth but as the measures that are being used are being racialized this means that one can never measure up. 'Not measuring up' is a component of the culturally instituted melancholia of Black beauty spoken about in the previous chapter. The culturally instituted melancholia of racist name calling and touching in one's youth produces a bad feeling which attaches to Black skin and hair as an effect produced from proximity to whiteness.[223]

In drawing attention to real-life examples of this kind of 'culturally instituted melancholia', Tate interviews, among others, an African American community worker who recounts her experience of racialised name calling, with particular reference to the trope of 'rubber lips' and the psychological complexes that can stem from this particular form of shaming; '[shame] becomes felt as a matter of being — of the relation of self to itself — insofar as shame is about appearance, about how the subject appears before and to others'.[224] Coral, the interviewee, goes on to state that 'apartness is intensified in the return of the gaze; apartness is felt in the moment of exposure to others, an exposure that is wounding.'. On the one hand, Tate contextualises Coral's lived experience within the broader discussion on shame and racialised body aesthetics by highlighting the wounding nature of the racist trope of 'rubber lips' in terms of 'racist stereotypes which are trans-generational and transnational in their scope as they arise from the racist habitus in which we live in The Black Atlantic.'. Tate continues stating that such racialised positions of beauty shame likewise have the potential for 'multiple shaming events' as 'Black women carry the past, a past which they did not make, on their bodies in the present'.[225] On the other hand, Tate also demonstrates the way in which Coral is able to transform her 'apartness' into a form of empowerment by bringing into being what she names and thus placing the racist actions of the white kids whose behaviour was normalised in the 1970s as 'abnormal'.

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[223] Shirley Anne Tate, *Black Beauty: Aesthetics, Stylization, Politics* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2012), p. 83.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid, p. 84.

Seen from this perspective, the question might therefore become whether building the central visual conceit of an African American female jazz singer's record sleeve around the lips motif might be in some way racially insensitive. This is a difficult question and one that does not necessarily elicit clear answers. Here, we might recall Carissa Kowalski Dougherty's critical reflections on race and record cover design in American jazz — particularly those on cover art as a mode of black 'visibility' — which are doubtless a helpful guide.[226] According to Dougherty, this is largely a question of the historical exploitation and commodification of African American musical culture. For instance, she notes that the exaggerated, racist imagery of 1920s jazz concert posters served to attract white audiences to a somewhat 'subversive' music, but shortly after the genre's proliferation, depictions of race were for the most part avoided so as to appeal to a wider audience and thus bring in bigger profits.[227]

At the same time, however, Dougherty notes the more widespread use of African motifs, black body aesthetics or symbols of black pride, which from a certain perspective may be taken as a sign of artistic liberty and a constructive response to the rising prominence of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements of the mid twentieth century. Nevertheless, the argument of which Dougherty is most convinced is that any renewed fascination with depicting the 'blackness' of jazz and jazz musicians, even if it purports to speak to particular political movements, is largely demonstrative of a desire to re-commodify black culture, rather than a sign and appreciation of African American participation in the field.[228]

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[226] Carissa Kowalski Dougherty, 'The Colouring of Jazz: Race and Record Cover Design in American Jazz, 1950-1970', *Design Issues* (2007), pp. 47–60.

[227] Of particular interest is Dougherty's comment on the parallels between jazz and developments in graphic design and fine art, whereby modern or abstract imagery — adjectives that would not seem entirely out of place in descriptions of Goldblatt's artwork — served to mirror the increasingly dynamic and complex energy of jazz. Indeed, this notion of a cultural shift towards a more sophisticated mode of musical and aesthetic expression accords in large part with scholar of American Studies, Democracy and Aesthetics Johannes Völz's conception of Jazz's historical trajectory from commercial popular culture to modernist high art and eventually pluralised eclecticism. See Johannes Voelz, "Looking Hip On The Square: Jazz, Cover Art, And The Rise Of Creativity", *European Journal Of American Studies*, 12.4 (2017) https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.12389. Relevant examples of this art can be found in the record covers of Ornette Coleman, particularly those of *Free Jazz* (1961, Atlantic), for which Coleman used Jackson Pollock's *White Light* (1954) painting, and *The Empty Foxhole* (1966, Blue Note) for which he designed the cover himself.

[228] Dougherty, 'The Colouring of Jazz', p. 47.

It does not, however, seem entirely credible to suggest that an analogous form of problematic commodification of 'blackness' is likewise at play in the aesthetics of Goldblatt's cover design, though it is certainly reflective of the emergence of modernist abstraction and surrealism in contemporary jazz artwork. Nevertheless, it is the network of allusions and implicit historical framing of Bill Simon's liner notes that serve as the catalyst for this interpretation. Even if more obvious unifying themes are those of sex appeal, feminine mystique, and the jazz vocal tradition, such a wide range of potential overlaps in meaning further indicates the interactive hybridity of *Carmen McRae*'s album cover. These visual/verbal procedures are precisely those that lend Goldblatt's cover to transhistorical comparison with the *Aetas Emblematica*, as we shall explore in what follows.

4.3 The Context of Hieroglyphic Bibles and Mattsperger

It is possible to trace the origins and popularity of the hieroglyphic Bible from the mid-to-late seventeenth century onwards; in their heyday these books were sold by the thousands and continued to excite interest well into the nineteenth century. However, of greater significance is perhaps the major role they could be seen to play in the mediation of a cultural shift from the *ut picta poesis* mindset to that of the primacy of the written word — and therefore illegitimacy of accompanying pictures — that came to characterise much of Western cultural production from the late-1700s and early-1800s onwards.[229] Let us therefore consider the following reflections of W. A. Clouston, dating to 1894, taken from his highly influential, and possibly still fullest, historical account of hieroglyphic bibles:

> Children, and men in a savage state, take great delight in pictures, or representations of objects of physical nature, or of art; and while, in the case of children, such images have been found an easy and pleasant means of conveying instruction, to the savage man they are also useful in recording important occurrences, and as a medium of communicating information to his tribesmen who may be expected to follow in his track. On the teaching of children with the help of pictured objects, an eminent schoolmaster in London, in the 17th century, Hezekiah Woodward, has some judicious

[229] This can be more fully understood in the light of Gotthold Lessing's infamous *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, (Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1853).

> remarks in the second chapter of his *Gate to Sciences*: "If we could make our words as legible to Children and Pictures are, their information therefrom would be quickened, and surer. But so, we cannot do, though we must do what we can. And if we had Books, wherein are the Pictures of all Creatures, Herbs, Beasts, Fishes, fowls, they would stand us in great stead. For Pictures are the most intelligible Books that Children can look upon […][230]

Clouston associates the notion of 'the teaching of children with the help of pictured objects' with the primary function of the *Orbis Pictus* of 1658, printed in Nuremberg, of Czech educator John Komenský, also known as J. Amos Comenius. Comenius' interest in educational theory, as Clouston notes, informed the *Orbis Pictus*, insofar as it was intended to function as an instructive tool for children, not unlike many hieroglyphic Bibles, by using text/image interaction to impart knowledge pertaining to a wide range of topics from nature, botanics and zoology to religion and human behaviour. In fact, the work in question is thought to have quickly asserted itself as the definitive children's textbook (text/image-book) for several centuries across Europe, but particularly in Germany where it was said to have famously been used as a home-schooling tool in the wake of the 'Thirty Years War'. The *Orbis Pictus* is likewise of importance to the broader evolution of text/image culture, as this picture book, alongside the original emblematic corpus pervasive in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, was a significant source of inspiration for the hieroglyphic Bible tradition. Both forms can be seen to render accessible to the under-educated knowledge of a religious or secular nature.

4.3.1 A Note on Melchoir Mattsperger and the Spiritual Heart-Fancies

To historians of text/image culture, the Bavarian city of Augsburg will doubtless hold special importance; not only is it the birthplace of the emblem proper — Alciato's *Emblematum Liber* of 1551 — but it is also where the first hieroglyphic Bible was printed. We know the author to be German burgomaster and merchant of Augsburg Melchoir Mattsperger, while the work itself is entitled *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen Inn Zweihundert und Fünfzig Biblischen Figur-Sprüchen Angedeutet* [The Spiritual Heart-Fancies in Two Hundred and Fifty Biblical Picture-Texts], printed in 1688 by Gabriel

[230] W. A. Clouston, *Hieroglyphic Bibles, Their Origin and History: A Hitherto Unwritten of Bibliography With Facsimile Illustrations* (David Bryce and Sons 1894), pp. 1–2.

Bodenher (who also produced the eighty-four copperplates of which the hieroglyphic bible is composed).[231]

The *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* also comprises two hundred and fifty Biblical quotations and selected passages from the Old and New Testaments, which are re-deployed alongside a series of pictorial symbols. It would seem that these Biblical Figure-Sayings became the chosen format owing to their concise, visually attractive and accessible nature, hence the fact that most scholarship on the topic considers the tradition to have chiefly been a hybrid form of juvenile and layman's literature.[232] Mattsperger's publication is also noteworthy in terms of its cross-border popularity and the ensuing republications that occurred in Holland, Denmark and later England.[233]

It is worth noting that in spite of the considerable influence that emblem books had upon the development and production of hieroglyphic Bibles, it is more accurate to consider this kind of literature a 'para-emblematic' work given that it occupies the margins of *corpus emblematicum*. That said, it is visibly not uncommon for these Bibles to fall within the purview of emblems-based digitisation projects and can nevertheless be considered a major exponent of the *Aetas Emblematica* and the emblematic mentality implied therein.

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[231] Gabriel Bodenher was part of a family of printers and engravers that came to prominence in Germany during the mid-seventeenth century and took over the Augsburg printing house of Stridbeck. His father, Johan Georg Bodenger, was likewise an established printer at the time and is likely to have assisted somewhat in the publishing and printing of *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*.

[232] For more details, see John T. Irwin's *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance* (Yale University Press 1980).

[233] By popular demand, a second part was printed in 1692 featuring the same kind of picture-texts while the first re-print of *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* took place in Hamburg in 1704, before a number of the same texts were subsequently issued in Amsterdam in 1720. Two later editions followed in Copenhagen, first in German (1743) and then in French (1745). Following its remarkable success on the Continent, the first English version directly inspired by Mattsperger's work was published in London by T. Hodgson in 1780, entitled *A Curious Hieroglyphick Bible* featuring cuts mostly by eminent engraver Thomas Bewick. The *Bible* fulfilled much the same purpose as the previous editions of at once amusing and educating young and lay people by acquainting them with early ideas of the Holy Scriptures through word-image interaction.

4.4 Analytical Reading of a Select Passage of Mattsperger's Hieroglyphic Bible

In a manner not unlike that of the previous study, the following analysis does not chiefly concern itself with formal workings of Mattsperger's Biblical Figure-Texts for their own sake, but instead seeks to uncover formal parallels with aspects of modern-day text/image interaction. It shall be argued, then, that the cover art of *Carmen McRae* bears both a striking and unanticipated resemblance, in formal terms of verbal/verbal interplay, to Mattsperger's *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*. A close examination of this purported analogy between the two text/image forms in question will thus be based upon the threefold criteria of *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure,* and *interactive hybridity,* as set forth in Chapter 2.

4.4.1 Analogous Visual *Topos*, Sequentiality and Verbal Allusions in Mattsperger's Hieroglyphic Bible Passage

A particularly significant counterpart to the *Carmen McRae* sleeve art can be noted in Mattsperger's hieroglyphic construction of page one hundred and seven, which also comprises the pictorial motif of lips, together with a heart-snake juxtaposition and a broken cup (fig. 19). It is self-evident that by simple virtue of its distinct historical context, this text/image work renders the use of the same visual cultural codes of meaning as the Goldblatt sleeve — those of sexuality and feminine identity through the representation of lips — something of an impossibility. In other words, it is more likely that here the motif of lips would correspond with the broader notion of speech, in a manner akin to the motif of the tongue, which naturally could be employed in some metaphorical sense according to the context.[234] Likewise, the additional motifs of the cup, the heart, and the snake are all motifs that have historically carried a vast array of interpretations in multiple diverse Western contexts. Therefore, this is surely where one depends upon the text for further clarification and hermeneutic strategy.

[234] It should be noted, as a point of general interest and relevance, that the use of the tongue, lips, or mouth motifs was particularly widespread in the Early Modern emblem tradition at large. Prominent examples would be Alciato's 'Eloquentia fortitudine praestantior' (Paris: Chrestien Wechel, 1534), p. 98; Hadrianus' 'Linguam compescito' (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1565), p. 47; Montenay's 'Frustra me colunt' (Zurich: Christoph Froschover, 1584), fols 24^{v}-25^{r}.

It is immediately apparent that the verbal component will function as an intertextual reference to the twenty sixth chapter of the Book of Proverbs (Sprüche Sal: XXVI), while drawing the reader/viewer's attention to the twenty third verse in particular. That this text should be replete with religious allusions is, of course, entirely predictable. However, the reader must now cast their mind to the original verses that Mattsperger has quoted and recycled, given that various parts have been substituted with the aforementioned visual motifs of lips, a heart-snake juxtaposition, and a broken cup. It should be apparent, then, that this procedure mirrors the quotation of Cole Porter's lyrics on the cover of *Carmen McRae*, where the prospective listener is expected to recall the original musical and lyrical context, while considering how they correspond with the cultural symbol of red lips. In reading this passage, then, the beholder may then think to study comparatively Mattsperger's composition with the following original Biblical verse:

Figure 19: Mattsperger's *Spiritual Heart Fancies* excerpt taken from Volume 2, fol. LXII, image no. 187 (1692)

Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with silver dross.[235]

By virtue of their direct juxtaposition, it is evident that the visual motifs are intended to reflect selected moments in the twenty third verse of this particular chapter in the Book of Proverbs. Whereas the lips are seen to convey more or less literally the idea of 'Smooth words', the notion of a 'wicked heart' has a somewhat less denotational connection with the heart-snake juxtaposition. What bridges the apparent semantic gap here, as we shall see, is an awareness of the snake motif's moral and spiritual interpretation, particularly in a Biblical context. That is to say, the motif has a long-standing association with moral conceptions of corruption or sin, as is apparent from the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.[236]

Peter Daly has explored the significance of the snake motif in his important article on transformations of the Biblical theme of Adam and Eve in a number of modern illustrated advertisements.[237] Daly reminds the reader that Albrecht Dürer's famous early print, entitled *The Fall of Man* (1510) serves as a useful point of departure for the Biblical significance of the snake motif as it was understood in a somewhat literal sense. That is, Satan sets out to tempt Eve in the guise of a serpent, offering her the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As a consequence, both Adam and Eve are given access to supposedly destructive and negative concepts such as shame and evil. The title of the Dürer print reflects a key concept in Christianity according to which the first man and woman transitioned from a state of innocent obedience to God to that of guilty disobedience.

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[235] Here, it is worth noting Mattsperger's Protestant Lutheran background. Interestingly, although the Luther Bible, in the corresponding verse, refers to 'lips' [labia], Mattsperger translates this, in fact, as 'mouth'. For the purposes of argumentation, however, it should suffice to observe the formal use of lips or, indeed, mouth motif constructed within a text/image rebus-style interplay. Cf. New King James Bible, Proverbs 26:23 (1983), https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs+26%3A23-26&version=NLT. [Accessed 17 December 2020].

[236] It is notable that, across Western culture, the snake has been ascribed a number of divergent meanings. However, it is generally understood that Christianity has, for the most part, placed significant emphasis on the negative and accursed aspects of the snake or serpent.

[237] Peter Daly, 'Adam and Eve in the Garden of Advertising' in *European Iconography East and West: Selected Papers of the Szeged International Conference, June 9-12, 1993* (Brill, 1993), pp. 77–79.

However, Daly has also pointed out that other interpretations of the serpent tempting Eve carried 'important social and usually misogynistic implications, which are at times highlighted through the addition of visual signs or symbols which have no place in the original Biblical text.' He uses as a case study the Jesuit emblem book *Typus Mundi* (1697) in which a particular engraving focusses solely on Eve and the serpent. The additional and highly significant detail is the head of a woman that substitutes that of the serpent, thereby suggesting that the entry of evil into the human world is provoked by a woman. Indeed, the *Typus Mundi*, Daly notes, remained for centuries 'the source of, or at least a reinforcement for, widespread misogyny.' However, given that the particular proverb to which Mattsperger is referring does not seem to carry any real gender-based implications, it is more likely that the serpent motif is to be understood in the more traditional sense, as evidenced by the Dürer print.

The connecting link for this bimedial simile therefore becomes apparent when the 'wicked heart' is recognised to be conveyed by a heart motif which is symbolically corrupted by a serpent bearing a traditional religious, specifically Christian, interpretation. One proceeds then to complete the meaning of the Biblical figure-saying in interpretating the third motif as the revealing of the humble clay pot beneath a 'pretty glaze', as symbolised by the broken fragments. The original twenty-third verse is thus reconstructed and its meaning, as Mattsperger hoped, is likely to be impressed upon the reader in a more intuitive way, encouraging active participation than passive absorption during the reception process.

From a comparative perspective, it should be noted that both *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* and the *Carmen McRae* sleeve display a greater degree of sequentiality than might be found in any format akin to the canonical *emblema triplex*. That is to say, both text/image forms promote, to some extent, a left-to-right linear reading process by virtue of their formatting and verbal elements. Nevertheless, they also both involve the interpretation of images in relation to text, which somewhat disrupts the traditional mode of linear reading. Bearing that in mind, we should also point out that the semiotic mechanism by which text and image interact in both works, although analogous, may not be entirely the same. The Biblical picture-texts are arguably based upon a rebus construction involving the inter-semiotic substitution of text and image. That is to say, certain visual motifs are in fact weaved into the grammatical structure of the Biblical texts. By contrast, Goldblatt's sleeve hinges more upon a syllogistic construction whereby the receiver must draw analogies between two juxtaposed, not

substituted, semiotic units. Nevertheless, the key point for the purposes of exposing layers of similarity between the two works is that they both play upon the notion of *signifiant* and *signifié* through text/image interaction. In other words, both *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* and the *Carmen McRae* sleeve communicate more than what they literally portray.

4.4.2 Analogous Contextualising Preface of the Spiritual Heart-Fancies

It has already been established that neither Goldblatt's cover art nor Mattsperger's Biblical picture-texts correspond to the conventional Alciatian model of *motto-pictura-subscriptio*. Rather, the album cover and hieroglyphic bible passage have been shown to run parallel in their use of abstracted or dislocated mimetic visual motifs with a linear text. Another possible similarity between the two artefacts in question might therefore be the use of a longer text to provide historical information and context in order to stabilise the reception of the work. In the case of the *Carmen McRae* cover art, this took the form of Bill Simon's liner notes. With regard to the *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*, the broader context is at first provided not by a typical emblematic *subscriptio*, but by what Clouston labels as an 'emblematical titlepage', which he summarises as the following:

> SPIRITUAL HEART-FANCIES, set forth in Two Hundred and Fifty BIBLIBAL PICTURE-TEXTS. For all pious Hearts and for the Youth that loves Virtue, as a diversion well-pleasing to God; and for the Simple, as an attractive representation, and easy understanding and profitable comprehension. Gathered together from each and every book of the Holy Scripture, according to Master Doctor Martin Luther's translation, by a lover of the Word of God. With special pains, designed and published, from copper-plates; and to be had of John George Bodenehr, engraver on copper in AUGSBURG, in the year 1687.[238]

Mattsperger uses this titlepage as a vehicle for the outlining of a number of his Hieroglyphic Bible's formal features and intended purpose; he draws attention to the nature and origin of the borrowed materials on which the work is based, but specifically mentions the translations of Martin Luther, thus bringing to the fore the wider context of Protestantism and Reformation against which the Biblical Picture-Texts should be understood. Mattsperger also makes clear that the intended purpose of his text/image Bible is to engage and instruct all those devoted to the Christian

[238] Translation taken from Clouston's *Hieroglyphic Bibles, Their Origin and History*, p. 126.

faith, but in particular children and the uneducated, by way of concise yet attractive text/image juxtapositions.

What is perhaps more interesting, however, is the far lengthier text provided by Mattsperger in his preface. It begins with a direct address to the reader/viewer — 'Magnanimous, kindly, and very worthy viewer of these Biblical picture-texts' — and what follows is a reference to the duty of Christians, motivated by their love of the Divine and their commitment to serve one another, to spread the Word of God. The pictorial elements are described as helping to impress the spiritual verses on the reader's heart. However, perhaps the most striking aspect of this preface is Mattsperger's recommendation to his reader/viewers that they 'divide it, to lay it as marks in their books, or for their wives to give to the children, or whatever else they may please to do with it'. In other words, he promotes the cutting out of certain passages or figure-sayings that have particular resonance for the reader/viewer, to be passed on, repurposed as a bookmark or singularly meditated upon, which undoubtedly bespeaks an unusually progressive approach to reading practices of the time. Consequently, just as the author's comments introduce an important element of disruption to the notion that such Biblical Picture-Texts are supported by a linear narrative progression, it also provides an interesting contrast to the more sequential nature of the verses, juxtaposed against the use of visual symbols that invites associative thinking.

4.4.4 Analogous Interactive Hybridity in *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*

As previously mentioned, the liner notes of *Carmen McRae* could be seen, albeit somewhat indirectly, to enter into the cover art's broader discursive framework on the level of race and representation, thereby re-orienting our interpretation of the red lips motif as a potentially problematic trope of African American identity. From this communicative process, one could conclude that Goldblatt's sleeve art comprised interactive hybridity. In like manner, the present question becomes whether the *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* also consists of interactive hybridity, to the extent that the text/image properties of the specific passage and that of the contextualising titlepage/preface also form a cohesive rhetorical unit. In this regard, one might suggest that the interactive hybridity occurs initially on the level of Mattsperger's piety; according to the prefatory remarks, this Hieroglyphic Bible reflects above all the mayor of Augsburg's personal desire to spread the Word of God, and the excerpts

borrowed from the Holy Scriptures — subsequently forming the Biblical Picture-Texts — were of his choosing.

The second level on which the *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* could be said to bear witness to interactive hybridity is on that of the general democratisation of religious teachings; at the time of publication, 'commoners' may not have had easy access to copies of The Bible,[239] and as such the Picture-Texts could be interpreted, in the light of Mattsperger's preface, as a solution to this particular issue. Furthermore, the text/image juxtapositions present in the Spiritual Heart-Fancies could equally be seen a manifestation of the increasing tendency to perceive text/image interplay as an attractive and mnemonic tool for the education of the young. However, there is an interesting sense of contradiction inherent in this latter proposition; if the pictorial content, as Mattsperger contends, purports to facilitate an easier reading of The Bible than if it were purely text-based, then this somewhat devalues the formal nature of the image or text/image combination. At the same time, reader/viewers were expected to recognise the symbolic associations of the images and piece together the enigmatic clues in order to recreate the original verse, which constitutes a distinctly active reading process. It is from this perspective that one might view the interactive hybridity of Mattsperger's work as a reflection of a broader, more conceptual issue of the status and reception of text/image forms in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.

4.5 Concluding Remarks and Summary of Case Study

The foremost aim of this chapter has been to demonstrate how a comparative study of the formal text/image workings of Burt Goldblatt's album art for Carmen McRae's *Carmen McRae* and those of Mattsperger's *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen* may advance the broader pursuit of unforeseen similarities in visual/verbal strategies between the Early Modern period and our modern age. Questions of compositional method,

[239] Clouston notes that Mattsperger's suggestion that his work may be particularly valuable to those not in possession of a Bible could 'appear strange to us in these privileged days of Bible Societies […] But it is probable that the "commonalty" of our own country at the end of the 17th century were no better provided with copies of The Book than the same class in Germany'. Ibid p. 133.

intertextuality, and the symbolic interplay of text and image were therefore central to the close critical reading of both bi-medial artefacts.

Specifically in relation to composition, Goldblatt and Mattsperger could be seen to draw upon text/image interplay in a way that exploits the geography of the page, or cover, in a similar quasi-collagist fashion.[240] Likewise, an important parallel was observed between the two artefacts in respect of the referential function of the text and image; *Geistliche Herzens-Einbildungen*'s textual matter relies heavily upon borrowings and quotations from selected passages of Scripture,[241] while the visual stratagem in each emblematical figure is to play upon various recognisable aspects of Christian iconography. The same process was observed in Goldblatt's exploitation of the contemporary visual motif and cultural symbol of red lips, whose relatively recent associations with eroticism and feminine identity are played off against the lyrical quotations of Cole Porter's 'Easy to Love'.

Finally, it was found that the lengthier verbal component of the *Carmen McRae* cover and the Spiritual Heart-Fancies had implications for the broader reception of the work, whereby the former was subject to difficult issues of race and representation and the latter's interactive hybridity resonated with potentially problematic discourses surrounding textual primacy and visual illegitimacy. Thus, through the application of the criteria set forth in Chapter 2, this critical study has uncovered text/image similarities between two forms of cultural expression that, at first glance, may appear entirely distinct owing to their disparate socio-historical context, but in formal communicative procedures have much in common.

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[240] As in the case of Goldblatt's suggestive use of photography, a familiarity with the fragmentary *picturae* of emblems is what has allowed scholars elsewhere to suggest the revival in emblematic construction in some artworks of the Surrealists and Dadaists, in the wake of their celebrated discovery and exploitation of photomontage and collage that recalls the allegorical mode. See both the editors' introduction and Jochen Beker's 'Affenhand und Fotoauge: Zu El Lissitzkys Selbstbildnis Der Konstructeur (1924)' in *Emblematic Tendencies in the Art and Literature of the Twentieth Century* eds. Anthony John Harper, Ingrid Höpel and Susan Sirc (Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2005). Pjotr Rypson discussed this in a previous publication, entitled 'The Emblematic Mode in Twentieth Century Art' in *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo* eds. Peter Daly, John Manning and Marc Van Vaeck (Brepols, 2001) pp. 335–357.

[241] By way of a brief reminder, Renaissance theories of composition, as we have elsewhere noted in this Thesis, referred to this process of borrowing as *copia*, which is arguably an early anticipation of what poststructuralists came to call intertextuality.

Chapter 5

'Let's Shake On It': Text, Image and *Dextrarum Junctio* in Hipgnosis' Artwork for *Wish You Were Here* and La Perrière's *Theatre des bons engins*

5.1 Hipgnosis and Pink Floyd in Context

The British design agency Hipgnosis, established in 1968 by Storm Thorgeson and Aubrey Powel, undoubtedly forms part of what we would accept as the canon of twentieth-century record sleeve art.[242] Whereas the sleeves of the 1950s were transformed by the advent of new portrait-based photographic practices and those of the '60s bore witness to a general comeback of the illustrative mode in the context of the psychedelic movement, Hipgnosis assertively carved out their own niche in the panoply of visual strategies employed by their members, involving both photography, montage, live sets and graphic illustration. Moreover, it is notable that the agency's artistic output and legacy are inextricably linked to the social history and culture of rock music; of the approximately two hundred and fifty cover designs they produced between 1968 and 1983, after which the agency dissolved, around only fifteen did not accompany a rock record.[243] However, it is inconceivable to discuss the work of Hipgnosis without recognising in particular the cover art for legendary British rock group Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973, Harvest), which features the famous abstracted prism refracting colourful beams of light against the midnight black backdrop of deep space. This design has now, to paraphrase eminent media scholars

[242] In terms of accolades, Hipgnosis have not received an inordinate amount of formal recognition from design societies nor have they been the recipient of a Grammy for Best Album Package (now called Best Recording Package), despite five nominations: https://www.grammy.com/artists/hipgnosis/3884. However, in leafing through most popular publications on the topic of album art, we frequently note a substantial reference to Hipgnosis' work and influence upon the field; see for instance Michael Ochs, *1000 Record Covers*, (Taschen, 1996).

[243] Aubrey Powell, *Vinyl Album Cover Art: The Complete Hipgnosis Catalogue* (Thames and Hudson, 2017)

Asbjørn Grønstad and Øyvind Vågnes,[244] inscribed itself into the visual lexicon of popular culture at large. It is among those sleeves so iconic that it can be said to evoke instantly the aesthetic trends and socio-cultural preoccupations of its era.

Pink Floyd's status as one of the best-selling popular music outfits of all time, as well as their membership of both the US Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and UK Music Hall of Fame, are well established. Naturally, it follows that the best-known aspects of Thorgeson and Powell's *oeuvre* consist of their collaborations with Pink Floyd, spanning roughly the period from 1968 to 1994. That said, they have produced various other sleeve designs that have likewise had a far-reaching impact upon rock music culture, such as those for Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Genesis, and Peter Gabriel.

5.1.1 The Beginnings of Pink Floyd

'The Floyd', as they are affectionately referred to among fans and critics alike, were formed in 1965 by well-educated and middle-class Polytechnic students Roger Waters, Nick Mason and Richard Wright, with band leader (until his untimely departure) Roger 'Syd' Barrett also having enrolled at Camberwell College of Arts at the time of the band's formation.[245] It was under this configuration that their debut studio album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (1967, EMI) was released. However, that same year saw lead guitarist David Gilmour enter the fold, while Barrett left in 1968 due to deteriorating mental health. Despite a number of critically acclaimed albums from their inception to the early-1970s,[246] it was not until the release of their eighth record *Dark Side of the Moon* (1973, EMI) — now widely regarded by popular music news outlets as among the greatest rock albums of all time, and confirmed by the Recording Industry of America as being in the category of the top fifty best-selling albums ever

[244] Asbjørn Grønstad and Øvyind Vågnes, *Coverscaping: Discovering Album Aesthetics* (Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010).

[245] A fuller biographic introduction to the Pink Floyd can be discovered in the prefatory remarks of Chris Hart and Simon Morrison's (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Pink Floyd* (Taylor & Francis 2002). This publication takes an unprecedented look at the band from an array of perspectives, ranging from musicological analyses and media and/or reception-based approaches to overviews of historical periods in Pink Floyds work and critical readings of their aesthetics.

[246] A complete discography of both Pink Floyd's singles and albums may be accessed via the band's main website: https://www.pinkfloyd.com/music/albums.php

— that the band achieved the international notoriety with which they are now associated.[247]

The 'swinging sixties', of which London might be described as one of the epicentres, form a large part of the historical backdrop to Pink Floyd's nascent years. While this period of socio-cultural change reflects an exceptionally broad and multifaceted evolution in Western social structures, at the micro level of Pink Floyd and British music artists, it also meant that individuals from various strata of society suddenly had cultural aspirations; in the words of Hart and Morrison,[248] 'the would-be pop stars in art and design colleges, regardless of their backgrounds, could exploit such changes, while at the same time, milkmen, railway workers and engineering apprentices were also seeing the opportunities to be had being 'in a band''. It is also noted that in America and Europe, the largest (listening) demographic was young people at college or school who, against the ever present socially conservative views of previous generations, began conceiving of politics, but above all 'leisure', in a more liberal manner.[249] As such, the question of how the proliferation of (then) contemporary musical subcultures and aesthetic developments can be seen in the light of these socio-historic developments shall, therefore, form an important point of contextualisation.

5.1.2 Pink Floyd, Progressive Rock, and Multimedia Expression

The lively debate among scholars, music critics, and fans over the genre or style of music to which a certain (popular) music group should or should not belong is an eternal one. In this way, Pink Floyd are no exception, and although 'progressive rock' might at first appear the most obvious label, prog rock theorist Bill Martin offers the persuasive argument that 'the Floyd' belong to a group (which includes Led Zeppelin and The Who) who are 'close to the edge' of progressive rock but not actually part of

[247] For the relevant statistics and rankings, see the RIA's main website: https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=top_tallies&ttt=T1A#search_section. Examples of popular music press outlets that categorise *Dark Side* as being among the top records of all time can be found in *Rolling Stone* — https://www.rs500albums.com/100-51/55 — and *NME* — https://www.nme.com/photos/the-500-greatest-albums-of-all-time-200-101-1426258.

[248] Hart and Morrison, *The Routledge Handbook of Pink Floyd*.

[249] Ibid.

the genre.[250] Indeed, he self-consciously labels this 'the Pink Floyd problem', making plain the controversial nature of his decision to exclude the band from the 'progressive rock proper' genre. In Martin's view, this is due to an apparent lack of virtuosity and musical complexity in Pink Floyd's songs, asserting that the technical proficiency of Pink Floyd's members is (or was) not on a par with such bands as *Yes* and *Genesis*. For him, progressive rock comprises the fusing together elements of jazz, the European classical tradition and, of course, rock music. The result is then a form of 'popular avant-garde'. With respect to Pink Floyd, Martin proceeds instead to suggest that 'experimental rock' might be a more appropriate label.

While the number of scholars that have studied progressive rock is limited, it is perhaps unsurprising that not all share Martin's view on the distinction between Pink Floyd and the supposed 'progressive rock proper' genre. Popular musicologist Edward Macan, for instance, states in his influential book *Rocking the Classics* that progressive rock is above all a form of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in that the visual motifs and verbal expression are just as important as the music in conveying the group's artistic vision.[251] In that regard, he considers Pink Floyd as pioneers of progressive rock in that they paved the way with the inclusion of multimedia elements in recordings and live performances, which is considered an essential characteristic of the genre. In fact, Macan directly mentions the revolutionary work of Hipgnosis in designing cover artworks that would render Pink Floyd's releases a multisensory experience for listeners. Stylistically, what distinguishes Pink Floyd as a progressive rock band is, in Macan's view, precisely their 'trippy and surreal touches, evident not only in the music but also in some of Storm Thorgeson's cover art'.[252] He does, however, recognise that the band members 'were not virtuoso instrumentalists, and were capable neither of the flamboyant solos over a chord change evident in the 'song' movements of *Tarkus* nor of the intricate thematic episodes which play a major role in 'Fifth of Firth'', referencing Emerson, Lake and Palmer and Genesis respectively.

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[250] Bill Martin, *Listening To The Future: The Time of Progressive Rock: 1968-1978* (Open Court, 1998), pp. 100–105.

[251] Edward Macan, *Rocking The Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 11. Predictably, Macan also makes the connection to the broader shift in Musicology away from the music itself approach towards a reception-based perspective that accounts for cultural context and multimedia dimensions.

[252] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, p. 124.

What Macan and Martin do in large part agree upon are the origins of progressive rock and its connection to the counterculture mindset. Speaking in general terms, Martin reminds us that the late-1960s were 'a time of both protest and possibility, and even revolution', resulting in new music inspired by 'what seemed to be the retreat, at least on the ideological front, of systems of exploitation and domination' — presumably in reference to the colonial activities and the various ongoing Western-led conflicts, such as that of Vietnam.[253] Likewise, he states that this new music was born out of 'a general opening of genres and a letting down of barriers', which saw a considerable degree of innovation in harmonic and timbral aspects of composition, and whereupon rock music began developing an avant-garde or 'a sub generation of musicians who have tremendous instrumental, lyrical and compositional skills'.[254] In this regard, Martin singles out The Beach Boys, Hendrix, Cream and the later works of The Beatles as particularly close predecessors of progressive rock on account of their experimental and psychedelic tendencies.

In similar fashion, Macan posits that the surrealism of progressive rock lyrics and cover art, as well as the impressive lightshows at concerts, can be seen to derive from the 'psychedelic zeitgeist' of the time.[255] While one must be careful in conferring the 'first of its kind' label upon any work of art, Macan and Martin do underline the importance of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967, EMI) as an early concept album. The group's eighth album represents, among other things, the widespread development of the British psychedelic scene and a taste for the experimental both in terms of music and exotic substances, which naturally influenced the visual art side of the musical material and gave rise to a penchant for enigmatic aesthetics.[256] With respect to the music industry and its (then) contemporary design practices, *Sergeant Pepper's* represents a particularly important moment of artistic control and freedom, given that the EMI label set a new precedent by allowing The Beatles to hire independent designers for their cover art. Undoubtedly, these socio-

[253] Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. 1.

[254] Ibid, p. 5.

[255] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, p. 13.

[256] The relationship between the drug-based counterculture, particularly involving LSD and marijuana, and artwork production, which then shifted audience expectations, cannot be underestimated. The notion that cover art should be possess a quasi-synesthetic aura, whereby audiophiles could enjoy an almost immersive, and pharmaceutically enhanced, listening experience whilst pondering the cover design's enigmatic visual elements became widespread.

cultural changes helped lay the foundation for progressive rock to develop as such an experimental and multimedia-based genre.

That being said, it has also been remarked that progressive rock, and by extension Pink Floyd, was largely addressing an upper-middle class audience, primarily because they were 'more interested in Mozart than Motown'.[257] Indeed, it appears that the music press was generally unfavourable towards the genre,[258] since the tendency to fuse classical and rock may have seemed as though these groups were turning their back on rock's populist origins. This can be partly explained by the educational backgrounds of the (British) musicians themselves. Despite a clear interest in African American jazz and blues music, they would have been far more familiar than other rock musicians with the European classical repertoire coming from a middle-class home. Furthermore, the fact that progressive rock has so rarely been dealt with in academic studies may be attributed to the notion that, due to its disassociation from minority or working-class issues, this music does not easily lend itself to any form of Marxist interpretation, which, in Macan's view, has been the hallmark of popular music scholarship.

To return to Pink Floyd, while the group experienced steady success in the UK music charts with their previous records, it was not until the release of the aforementioned *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973, Harvest) that the group began to achieve the kind of global recognition with which they are now associated. Likewise, it is possible to say that *Dark Side*'s cover art, as previously noted, serves as a major representation of transmediality; George A. Reische notes that it made its way onto numerous posters, t-shirts, macrame rugs, hand-painted cars and wall murals throughout North America and Europe.[259] From a musical point of view, Reische also points out that from *Dark Side of the Moon* onwards, Pink Floyd had 'mastered the art of long, elaborate, meticulously produced songs that often ignored pop's rules and conventions.'.[260]

Despite various criticisms of progressive rock's upper-middle class roots, there is general recognition of an intellectual depth to Pink Floyd's output, not least from a

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[257] George A. Reische, *Pink Floyd and Philosophy: Careful with that Axiom, Eugene!* (Open Court, 2007), p.4. Incidentally, Reische also agrees that Pink Floyd were viewed as being at the top of the 'progressive rock pile', unlike Martin.

[258] Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, p. 4.

[259] Reische, *Pink Floyd and Philosphy*, p. 5.

[260] Ibid, p. 4.

lyrical standpoint. The themes, ideas and abstract concepts explored by the group included time, death, madness, loss and empathy, which, as Reische remarks, were also topics that concerned the minds of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. Musically, Reische reminds us of Pink Floyd's shift from psychedelia to rock tinged with classical elements, as they liberally incorporated choirs and symphonies, particularly on *Atom Heart Mother* (1970, EMI) as backdrop for the band. Furthermore, Reische references the group's dabbling in avantgarde electronic techniques such as that of *music concrète*, audible on *The Wall* (1979, Harvest/EMI), for instance. Indeed, Bill Martin even goes as far as to say progressive rock lends itself to such deep exploration precisely because it constitutes rock music's 'first music of ideas'[261]. That is to say, the music itself purports to channel philosophy, thought and theories on multifarious aspects of world culture, which implicitly make it an object of interest to text/image scholars seeking to understand the interplay between visual/verbal expression and the conveyance of meaning. As such, whether or not Pink Floyd are strictly speaking a progressive rock group is perhaps beside the point, and ultimately a matter of reception susceptible to periodic change. Of chief importance, rather, is that they are at least related to rock music tradition that accords a certain primacy to ideas and concepts rather than people or personalities.

5.1.3 The Aesthetics of Hipgnosis and the Industry Shift to Independent Designers of the late-1960s

It is by now clear that the construction of an all-encompassing and fully representative narrative of late-1960s and '70s album cover aesthetics could by itself fill the pages of a thesis (if such a narrative could exist at all). Album cover art, it should be repeated, as a design tradition is particularly amorphous and remarkably eclectic, sustained by designers from diverse commercial backgrounds and aesthetic contexts. However, discrete pockets of culture and aesthetic fashions are not only of interest *per se*, but they can also shed light upon significant moments in the history of popular music and reveal the importance of contemporary socio-technological factors. Undoubtedly, the transition within the record industry from in-house art departments and designers to independent cover artists and external design agencies is key to understanding the context in which many rock and pop record sleeves would have appeared at that time. Of course, this development is directly related to questions of artistic control between

[261] Martin, *Listening to the Future*, p. xiv.

the record label and recording artists. In the mid-to-late 1960s, the power to make decisions on such aspects as design and packaging was becoming increasingly devolved. Indeed, from a specific legal point of view, Steve Jones and Martin Sorger have documented that for certain groups '…clauses for artistic control began appearing in contracts, including control over packaging'.[262]

This is partly due to a broader diversification and expansion of the commercial music market. As previously noted with respect to the birth of progressive rock, the proliferation of sub-genres coincided with the fragmentation of pop, and particularly rock, audiences in the early 1970s. While this diversification was certainly socially motivated, it can also be thought of as a natural consequence of a booming record industry whose executives were willing, thanks to an exponential increase in profits, to take more risks and experiment with a wider range of artists.[263] It may therefore be argued that various economic factors would have also fed into the growing appearance of more varied musical output, and that applies equally to the visual components. Indeed, certain recording artists, including a (then) fledgling Pink Floyd, sought to take on a more active role in the sleeve design process.

As aforementioned, The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* cover art was revolutionary in its approach insofar as the band circumvented the EMI label's art department and hired designers Peter Blake and Jann Haworth, with the help of McCartney's art dealer friend Robert Fraser and photographer Michael Cooper. The second time EMI permitted the hiring of an external agency for the record sleeve design was in fact for Pink Floyd's sophomore record *A Saucerful of Secrets* (EMI, 1968), which also marked the beginning of the group's collaboration with Hipgnosis. However, it is not until the group's fourth record, *Ummagumma* (Harvest, 1969), that one might pinpoint the beginnings of a unifying aesthetic that would last until their fifteenth and final studio record.

Mike Alleyne is among the few to have seriously engaged with the aesthetics of Hipgnosis and, aside from his attempts to bestow legitimacy upon them, he suggests that the design studio were interested in making the album cover 'more integral to a

[262] Steve Jones and Martin Sorger, 'Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design', *Journal of Popular Music Studies* (2006), p. 69.

[263] See Simon Frith, *The Sociology of Rock* (Legend, 1978) in which he argues that the history and development of rock music can only fully be understood against the backdrop of capitalist economics.

record's artistic totality' and 'translating sonic experiences into still images'.[264] Though album art inherently implies the use of still images, Alleyne maintains that a 'cinematic sensibility' is discernible in the group's art, which likely stems from Storm Thorgeson's MA studies in film and television at London's Royal College of Art, as well as Aubrey Powell's studies at the London Film School. Indeed, their specific brand of imagery, Alleyne writes, can be considered a form of 'cinematic surrealism',[265] imbuing the cover art with compelling and enigmatic visual narratives.[266]

While Alleyne recognises the ubiquity and instantly recognisable status of *Dark Side of The Moon*, he also reminds readers that this stands as Hipgnosis' least ambitious effort.[267] Indeed, a key design principle of Storm Thorgeson was that of 'doing it for real', which typically meant staging a real-life *mise en scène* to be photographed and possibly enhanced, albeit marginally, with illustrative elements. Hipgnosis were of course operating in a time where Photoshop and other now-commonplace digital forms of visual manipulation did not yet exist. The agency's conviction that album art should serve to convey the music's meaning rather than what the product or the artist physically is, coupled with their desire to produce all-encompassing packaging that often took the form of the gatefold, resulted in a range of materials where text and image are seen to interact in innovative, metaphorical, and often surrealistic ways. That said, so far as questions of definition are concerned, Alleyne maintains that there exist few appropriate classifications for the group's artwork. However, any successful

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[264] Mike Alleyne, 'After the Storm: Hipgnosis, Storm Thorgeson, and the Rock Album Cover', *Rock Music Studies* Vol. 1:3, (Taylor and Francis 2014), p. 251.

[265] The cinematic aesthetic of Hipgnosis' art was in the end clearly an appropriate counterpart to Pink Floyd's music, insofar as the group's history is closely intertwined with the world of cinema. Their third album *More* (1969, EMI) served as the soundtrack to Barbet Schroeder's first feature film of the same name. Likewise, the group's second record-setting album *The Wall* (1979, Harvest/EMI) was written as a rock opera and then adapted to film by Alan Parker and Roger Waters in 1982.

[266] See Robert Belton's thought-provoking article, 'The Narrative Potential of Album Covers', *Studies in Visual Arts and Communication,* Vol 2 (2015), in which he discusses how cover art can be understood to interact temporally with music so as to create a modal hybrid. He maintains that still images can be as discursively complex as written poetry, for instance, as even though all is present 'at once' it still takes the viewer time to interact with the entire work. Furthermore, the visual space created by static images, a key example of which he finds in Renaissance linear perspective paintings and their modern cover art equivalents, make them capable of carrying a narrative.

[267] Alleyne, 'After the Storm', p. 252.

attempt would refer in particular to 'the surrealistic application of photography and assemblage techniques, often juxtaposing the normal and bizarre'[268].

It should be said that transition from in-house to independent designers was neither always smooth nor met without resistance, since ample documentary materials suggest that Hipgnosis swiftly were considered notoriously difficult to work with by a number of major record labels. This seems largely due to the fact that their process was often lengthy and involved various meetings with the artists themselves to discuss concepts and rough drafts, as well as on-location photo shoots, all of which cost significant time and money. However, this *modus operandi* raises some intriguing questions around reception and production or creation, insofar as the title and artwork could well reflect the music and lyrics but also something that was said between the musicians and the designers. It is precisely for this reason that Thorgeson felt it important to foster a close working relationship with his clients. Hipgnosis can therefore be seen to have deftly and self-consciously straddled the line between art and commerce, and, with several millions of record sales, certainly played a role in the democratisation and dissemination into the domestic sphere of a high culture/pop art hybrid.

5.1.4 *Wish You Were Here* and Roadmap of Case Study

The purpose of the opening contextual section of this chapter has been to discuss the manner in which the records of Pink Floyd, and therefore also their cover designs, are essentially products of a culture conducive to text/image interaction and multimedia expression. Likewise, its aim has been to highlight the role of Hipgnosis relative to the complex, and at times wild, aesthetic fashions of late-1960s album cover design, particularly those of the Anglo-American rock genre. Crucially, however, these preliminary observations on the technological and socio-cultural factors that influenced Pink Floyds artistic output are intended to lay the foundation for the discovery of an unexpected refashioning of the Renaissance emblem's visual/verbal strategies in modern-day cultural contexts. This therefore brings us to the artefact or

[268] Ibid, p. 253.

'text' that occupies the main analytical portion of this case study, the cover art of Pink Floyd's nineth studio album, entitled *Wish You Were Here* (Harvest, 1975).[269]

The close analysis section of this study, similar to those of the preceding chapters, transhistorically compares *Wish You Were Here*'s cover design to a specific manifestation of the Renaissance emblematics — the work of French emblematist Claude Paradin — with the aim of drawing parallels between their modes of text/image interplay. As previously stated, while generalising theoretical notions can be posited about the emblem's inner functioning, its formal variability means that it is more productive to look at particular text/image comparators and the criteria set forth in Chapter 2, rather than simply to apply a theory of emblems. What the comparison does seek to explore is how the juxtaposition of cover artwork and lyrics-based liner notes mimic the emblematic process of playing upon a range of connotative or symbolic ambiguities that must be teased out by the beholder seeking to discover a hidden significance or the unifying final message.

5.2 Analytical Reading of the Cover Art of *Wish You Were Here*

As noted by music critic Nicholas Schaffner in his detailed biography, the cover art for *Wish You Were Here* was the subject of much debate and speculation throughout Pink Floyd's April U.S. tour of 1975, which Thorgeson himself attended. The decision to conceal the sleeve's artwork inside a black shrink wrap, reportedly inspired by censorship strategies for Roxy Music's *Country Life* and in keeping with Roger Waters' lyrical theme of absence,[270] accorded Thorgeson and Powell greater creative freedom

[269] Contrary to popular opinion, it was the cover art for *Wish You Were Here* that featured among the five nominations Hipgnosis received throughout their career, while the ubiquitous *Dark Side of the Moon* artwork has received relatively little formal acknowledgement (aside from being ranked by *Rolling Stone* magazine as among the best one hundred covers of all time). Furthermore, *Dark Side* was responsible for the band's historic ascent, with international hit 'Money' becoming a regularly featured track on AM radio.

[270] In an interview with Thorgeson carried out by John Edington Documentaries (2011), he recounts the experience of meeting a Pink Floyd fan who had not realised, for over twenty years, that the black

for the cover art design. Thorgeson reflects on sleeve design in his book by suggesting he was generally more concerned with creating an art object than a piece of commercial marketing, and thus dispensed with title and any other outer sleeve printed text that might serve an identificatory purpose.[271] As such, whatever the relationship may be between the sleeve art and the record's musical content, one should first recognise *Wish You Were Here* as a prime example of a designer's conscious attempt to distinguish art from commerce rather than adhering to the simple commercial conventions of packaging.

Figure 20: Hipgnosis' Cover Art for *Wish You Were Here* by Pink Floyd (Harvest, 1975)

shrink wrap on the cover could in fact be removed to reveal the true artwork. This, in Thorgeson's view, was the perfect representation of absence. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPgRF0yCGLA .

[271] Ibid.

5.2.1 Classical Motifs, Photographic Surrealism, and Enigmatic Absence of Title in *Wish You Were Here* Cover Design

On the front cover of the *Wish You Were Here* LP, one encounters a photographic image (shot by Powell) of two figures in suits with hands clasped, presumably performing the handshake gesture (fig. 20). The right-hand figure is engulfed in flames, while the backdrop consists of what appears to be a warehouse estate (we know from contextual research that this is the Warner Bros. studios in California). Particularly conspicuous is the absence of any title, which in many instances would serve to stabilise or help to direct the interpretation of the cover image (e.g. *Songs of Free Men*). In fact, the main textual component is found on the inner sleeve, comprising a printed reproduction of the album's lyrics, to which we shall return in due course.

The central image of the album cover might be seen aptly to reflect the design agency's propensity for surrealistic, enigmatic, and loosely metaphorical imagery. Likewise, the notion that Pink Floyd were inclined to explore deep, sometimes centuries-old, philosophical and psychological questions is perhaps conveyed through the use of a widely recognised motif of the Western tradition — the handshake — which also happens to have its origins in the Graeco-Roman culture of Classical Antiquity. In that regard, before concerning ourselves with the specificity of any text/image relationship in this sleeve design, it is important to consider the referentiality and cultural resonance of this visual representation in relation to Hipgnosis' cover art.

The Classical origins of the handshake or handclasp motif has by now been explored as an iconographic element of some importance by several scholars.[272] That said, Glenys Davies' detailed article in the *American Journal of Archaeology* was especially significant in that it offered a full overview of the motif's applications in a wide variety of Classical artistic contexts,[273] where other studies had preferred to examine individual categories and avoided tracing the motif's history and usage in its period. Indeed, Davies begins by addressing a twentieth century perspective, observing that the handshake motif is used in multifarious contexts such as press photographs and

[272] See for instance the research of Lucia Novakova, 'Dexiosis: a meaningful gesture of the Classical antiquity', *ILIRIA International Review* (2016) and Stephen Ricks, '*Dexiosis* and *Dextrarum Junctio*: The Sacred Handclap in the Classical and Early Christian World', *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon 1989-2011: Vol 18: No. 1* (2006).

[273] Glenys Davies, 'The Significance of the Handshake Motif in Classical Funerary Art', *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 89 (Archaeological Institute of America, 1985), pp. 627–640.

commercial logos with the understanding that, despite its polysemy and varied applications, this is undoubtedly a symbolic gesture:

> Since we may in fact shake hands on a number of different occasions — when meeting or welcoming someone, parting from them or making our farewells, or when we have come to a mutual agreement and wish to express mutual trust — the exact connotations of the handshake in a particular picture are not immediately obvious. Despite this inherent ambiguity the handshake remains a potent symbol.[274]

By contrast, Davies asserts that in the Classical period the motif was used with a degree of continuity and therefore believes there to have been something of a general meaning that underlay all its applications. Among the earliest uses of the handshake motif can perhaps be found in mythological scenes on vases of the Archaic period — Davies notes that it was not until around 450 B.C. that the motif could be applied to everyday mortals. The gesture was then often employed in the context of marriages, but also in scenes of political significance to connote agreement and concord. However, what might be considered the best-known application of the handshake motif in Greek art is in Classical Athenian grave stelai, in which context the motif is known as *dexiosis*. Typically, this form of the motif would depict two figures, one sitting and the other standing (though there could be variations), and linked two men, two women or a man and a woman. The two figures could be alone but also accompanied by other people who Davies assumes to have been relatives or servants.

Iconographic interpretation in this context has proven to be complex, given that the living figures cannot always be readily separated from the dead. Likewise, the background details often do not specify the location of the union. Philosopher and Classical philologist K. Friss Johansen dealt with this issue by proposing that the gesture is a representation of the bond that connects living to dead,[275] that is to say, 'a hypothetical union taking place in the imagination, not in any particular location'. Less certain in his work is the precise nature of the union, but the implication seems to be that the bond illustrated by the handshake is ultimately an act of worship.

Further confusion seems to have arisen from the motif's use on the lekythoi, to the extent that these monuments, unlike the stelai, appeared to evoke a place (often the tomb) and occasion (mourners arriving with gifts). Despite the apparent presence of

[274] Ibid, p. 627.

[275] K. Friss Johansen, *The Attic Grave-Reliefs of the Classical Period* (E. Munksgaard 1951).

the living and dead, both are separated by the tomb and therefore *dexiosis* is absent. However, if both the living and dead are present, then we would expect to see *dexiosis* as a parallel to the stelai and any absence of the gesture would have to be understood as particularly significant. Davies offers an alternative perspective on Friss Johansen's conclusion that the handshake is essentially a symbol of family unity by entertaining the possibility it represents the dead departing from the living or indeed the reunion of the dead with their ancestors in the Underworld.[276]

In addition, Davies underlines the importance and popularity of the handshake motif in the various funerary contexts of Roman art, here referred to as *dextrarum junctio*. It is brought to the reader's attention that this gesture's application in the Roman context differs somewhat from that of the Greek context in that the two figures depicted were often man and woman, whereas in the stelai and lekythoi, for instance, we could frequently find two figures of the same sex (fig. 21 and fig. 22).[277] As a result, interpretation has tended towards that of marriage or the wedding ceremony itself. According to Davies, the two main type of sculptured funerary monuments that employed the *dextrarum junctio* were reliefs of the Augustan period and ash chests as well as grave alters. The former was designed to be set into the façade of a family tomb and the latter to commemorate an individual or several persons as well as containing their cremated remains. In both cases, it is commonplace to find a man and woman linked via the handshake motif which suggests its application to be that of a symbol of marriage.

Davies' examination extends to a particularly interesting non-funerary context in the Roman tradition when he considers the use of the *dextrarum junctio* in official, political and miliary settings associated with the Empire. It is posited that the motif became a symbol of military and political agreement, particularly on coins, and was especially pervasive during the tumultuous period following Nero's death. It is in this context that the gesture served as a representation of friendship and loyalty, Davies

[276] Davies, 'The Significance of the Handshake Motif in Classical Funerary Art', pp. 629-630. Davies states that he prefers to view *dexiosis* as a flexible motif, rather than one having a generalised meaning, and if indeed one looks for a univalent interpretation, then it should combine the ideas of family unity and parting, reunion and (or) communion between living and dead.

[277] Ibid, p. 632.

documents,[278] which eventually metamorphosed into a public expression of private and domestic harmonies.

Davies' concludes her article by reiterating that multifarious applications that the *dexiosis* and *dextrarum junctio* had in Classical art on a wide range of objects over time. What emerges is that the motif bared multiple connotations, and these were exploited by classical artists to convey a panoply of concepts and ideas, ranging from family unity, parting at death, and reuniting in the afterlife to marriage, concord, loyalty, and harmony. The parallel that Davies draws with modern culture is that the motif's popularity is likewise based on its powerfully symbolic potential but also its ambiguous and complex nature.

Figure 21: Funerary stele of Thrasea and Euandria featuring *dexiosis* gesture, ca. 365 BC.

Figure 22: Athenian funerary lekythos featuring *dexiosis* gesture, ca. 375 BC.

To return to the original question of Hipgnosis' cover design for *Wish You Were Here*, it is unclear whether Thorgeson and Powell intended or were even cognisant of the classical resonance of this motif. That said, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest

[278] Ibid, p. 638.

that the attraction of the handshake, or *dextrarum junctio*, as a visual conceit can in like manner be attributed to its ambiguity and complexity in terms of its metaphorical potential to signify a broad range of concepts according to the chosen context, not to mention the authority that the passage of time has conferred upon it.[279] Furthermore, it seems plausible that any number of the classical applications and interpretations such as death, unity, trust, loyalty and concord, among others, could meaningfully intersect with the connotations of Pink Floyd's music, their experience within the world of the music industry and their (pseudo)philosophical lyricism. At this stage, it is above all the enigmatic nature of the image that should be stressed; without a title, the reader/viewer or prospective listener is ultimately left to ponder the multitude of connections and connotations that the cover art evokes. [280]

5.2.2 Poetic and Interpretative Function of Lyrics as Liner Notes in *Wish You Were Here*

As the only verbal matter of *Wish You Were Here*'s cover art, the reader/viewer inevitably comes to rely heavily upon the liner notes for interpretative guidance. The first thing, therefore, to note about Thorgeson and Powell's *Wish You Were Here* sleeve design is what might be labelled the 'degree of separation' between the text and cover image. In the previous case studies, the album covers under examination both had in common the use of expository liner notes or printed text that is conscious of the product itself, in other words the record that the sleeve houses. In the case of Robeson and Steinweiss, or Goldblatt and McRae, the verbal component of the sleeve provides

[279] This point speaks to a previous discussion in this thesis regarding what Sabine Mödersheim calls the 'authority of the image' in her chapter 'Skin Deep – Mind Deep. Emblematics and Modern Tattoos', *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo, Imago Figurata Studies Vol. 1c,* Brepols (2001), pp. 309-335. In essence, Mödersheim states that while the meaning of certain historical images has transcended the original source's context and often exists autonomously, aspects of the earlier intention, implication and historical weight are nevertheless present in their reapplication.

[280] This is perhaps a reminder of art historian E. H. Gombrich's seminal work on text/image relations. Gombrich suggests that 'unlike images, language can make that vital distinction which has concerned philosophers since the days of Plato, the distinction between universals and particulars.'. In reference to the renaming of one of Cézanne's paintings to The Clockmaker, Gombrich proceeds to write that 'Clockmaker, too, is a universal subclass of men or women who make clocks, but *the* clockmaker denotes an identifiable individual, someone in Cézanne's environment […] Let me say in a rough and ready way that language can specify, images cannot.'. E.H. Gombrich, 'Image and word in twentieth-century art', *Word and Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry, Vol. 1* (1985), p. 220.

a commentary on the artist's journey, their social or political preoccupations, as well as their (possibly musical) aspirations as they pertain to the record in question.[281] In having the printed lyrics as part of the cover art, in juxtaposition with enigmatic visual imagery, the text no longer explicitly analyses or historically interprets the work, but rather has the effect of weaving in further layers of connotation and ambiguity to the record. In other words, the sleeve notes of *Wish You Were Here* form an integral part of the cover art's poetic structure and remain 'unaware' of the art or the musical context. It is for this reason that one might find a greater degree of separation between text and image in Thorgeson and Powell's design; to appropriate somewhat the language of cinema, the text does not 'break the fourth wall' in directly addressing the artistic work in which it is situated.[282]

Once the prospective listener comes to remove the outer cover to reveal the liner notes, they will encounter a listing of the song titles: 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond, Pts. 1-5', 'Welcome To The Machine', 'Have A Cigar', 'Wish You Were Here' and 'Shine On You Crazy Diamond, Pts. 6-9'. The corresponding lyrics printed underneath the individual titles. At first glance, the lyrical content has an obvious common thread; everything is written in the first person and refers to an anonymous 'you' throughout. To the uninitiated, it is unclear whether this 'you', 'my son' or 'boy' (presumably intended as a term of endearment rather than literally) refers to a real or fictitious individual. The knowing reader/viewer will, however, be aware of Syd Barett's departure, the emotional toll this took on the members of Pink Floyd, and Roger Water's desire to put into words the experience of loss.

Let us take as our first object of analysis the text of the first five of the nine-suite composition 'Shine On You Crazy Dimond':

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[281] We might consider this kind of textual function as being broadly ekphrastic (see also enargia), in that it provides to some degree a literary description of a work of art (here the works in question, the *Songs of Free Men* and *Carmen McRae* records, are hybrid rather than exclusively visual).

[282] Whether this could be viewed as an expression of the rhetorical figure of enthymeme is worth considering. In broad terms, enthymeme can be defined as a 'truncated syllogism', whereby two or more statements are linked by an unsaid premise. The listener is therefore confronted with a form of information gap that they are implicitly expected to complete so as to understand the argument. The efficacy and success of the enthymematic form of persuasion thus demands a particularly active reader, viewer, or listener, and is dependent on both their cultural experience and intellect to 'fill in the blank', so to speak.

VERSE 1

Remember when you were young,
You shone like the sun.

REFRAIN
Shine on, you crazy diamond

VERSE 2

Now there's a look in your eyes,
Like blackholes in the sky.

REFRAIN

Shine on, you crazy diamond

CHORUS

You were caught in the crossfire of childhood and stardom,
Blown on the steel breeze,
Come on, you target for faraway laughter,
Come on, you stranger, you legend, you martyr, and shine.

VERSE 3

You reached for the secret too soon,
You cried for the moon.

REFRAIN

Shine on, you crazy diamond

VERSE 4

Threatened by shadows at night,
And exposed in the light.

REFRAIN

Shine on (Shine on), you crazy diamond (you crazy diamond)

CHORUS

Well, you wore out your welcome with random precision,
Rode on the steel breeze,
Come on, you raver, you seer of visions,
Come on, you painted, you piper, you prisoner, and shine.

Undoubtedly present in these lyrics, therefore, are the themes of grief and loss, youthfulness *versus* decay and decline, which appear to be set against the backdrop of fame and notoriety. The text can easily be read as an address to an individual once close to the author, possibly Barrett, who now is in some way absent. The text also plays upon an ambiguity between literally absent and absent in the sense of mental decay. What is clear, however, is the melancholic tone of these lyrics.

Subsequently, the lyrical content of 'Welcome To The Machine' and 'Have A Cigar' may be seen to lend themselves to thematic grouping, given that both texts seem to address the same broad topic of the cynical and destructive nature of the corporate world of the Anglo-American music industry.

VERSE 1

Welcome my son,
Welcome to the machine,
Where have you been?
It's alright we know where you've been,

You've been in the pipeline filling in time,
Provided with toys and scouting for boys,
You bought a guitar to punish your ma,
You didn't like school and you know you're nobody's fool.

REFRAIN

So welcome to the machine.

VERSE 2

Welcome my son,
Welcome to the machine,
What did you dream?
It's alright, we told you what to dream,
You dreamed of a big star,
He played a mean guitar,
He always ate in the Steak Bar
He loved to drive in his Jaguar.

REFRAIN

So welcome to the machine.

The following is a reproduction of the lyrics to 'Have A Cigar':

VERSE 1

Come in here, dear boy, have a cigar, you're gonna go far,
You're gonna fly high, you're never gonna die,
You're gonna make it if you try, they're gonna love you,
Well, I've always had a deep respect and I mean that most sincerely,
The band is just fantastic, that is really what I think,
Oh, by the way, which one's Pink?

CHORUS

And did we tell you the name of the game boy?
We call it riding the gravy train.

VERSE 2

We're just knocked out, we heard about the sell-out,
You gotta get an album out, you owe it to the people,
We're so happy we can hardly count,
Everybody else is just green, have you seen the chart?
It's a hell of a start, it could be made into a monster,
If we all pull together as a team.

CHORUS

And did we tell you the name of the game boy?
We call it riding the gravy train.

It is immediately apparent, then, that these lyrics both take a distinct anti-music industry and anti-corporate position. Likewise, both convey their message by means of a satirical and ironic mode of speech. That said, although these texts, like the rest of their counterparts, are written in the first person, there appears a subtle difference in the tone or character of the author between them. In 'Welcome To The Machine', which borders on nihilism as much as satire, one cannot but sense the author's regret at the turn of events; the youthful innocence and rebellion of the same anonymous individual whom the lyrics address (again, possibly Barret) have expired and now they have found themselves open to manipulation — 'we told you what to dream' and 'you've been in the pipeline filling in time' — at the hand of the corporate recording industry. This version of rebellion and revolution is censured and moulded by 'the establishment' or 'the system'. 'Have A Cigar', however, is certainly satirical and has a sharp sense of humour; the author, one comes to understand, portrays a record label executive figure in conversation with a new and inexperienced artist (the anonymous 'you'). Lines such as 'Oh, by the way, which one's Pink?', 'We're so happy we can

hardly count' and 'We call it riding the gravy train', are more or less a direct assault on the capitalistic mindset of the greedy label executive as well as the superficial notion that the artistic work is always subordinated to financial concerns and profits, which a successful career in the music business necessitate.

As for 'Wish You Were Here', which proved the most popular release on the record, one rediscovers a more personal and mournful tone.

VERSE 1

So, so you think you can tell,
Heaven from hell? Blue skies from pain?
Can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail?
A smile from a veil? Do you think you can tell?
Did they get you to trade your heroes for ghosts?
Hot ashes for trees? Hot air for a cool breeze?
Cold comfort for change? Did you exchange,
A walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?

CHORUS

How I wish, how I wish you were here,
We're just two lost souls swimming in a fishbowl, year after year,
Running over the same old ground. What have we found?
The same old fear, wish you were here.

As the title and lyrical refrains suggest, the author can, like in 'Shine On', be seen to refer to an individual *in absentia*. Allusions to a prison cell are discernible in the lines 'Can you tell a green field from a cold steel rail?' and 'Did you exchange a walk on part in the war for a lead role in a cage?'. One might interpret 'prison' here in a metaphorical sense, to the extent that the text is seen to tell of the mental decline of the character in question, trapped in a prison of the mind. The reference to the veil can be understood to highlight further the undercurrent of absence, given that the purpose of wearing a veil is typically that of concealing one's identity, possibly out of modesty

and respect at funerals, or later to reveal the bride whom, in the Christian tradition, the groom is not permitted to see prior to the wedding ceremony. Moreover, the conceit of employing oppositions — heaven and hell, green field and cold steel rail, heroes and ghosts, hot air and cool breeze — parallels the sense of decline and loss. In this regard, the text of 'Wish You Were Here' also reflects the predominant tones and themes of the album lyrics as a whole.

5.2.3 Decoding the Interactive Hybridity of Hipgnosis' Cover Art

We shall now have to consider the question of interactive hybridity in respect of the relationship between the album lyrics and the front cover image. A preliminary observation one could make from the preceding close readings is that both text and image could well exist as autonomous works unto themselves. As shall become apparent, however, that both lyrics and cover art can be seen to share attributes of symbolic significance that has the effect of re-contextualising the album cover. For instance, the visual trope of the handshake, or *dextrarum junctio* could be meaningfully interpreted in relation to the record label executive of 'Have a Cigar' whose concerns are above all profitable business deals within a commercial music industry. The wearing of suits symbolically conveys the corporate context, while the handshake motif could be deciphered as a symbolical representation of signing a deal and entering 'The Machine'. Furthermore, the flames engulfing the figure on the right-hand side could in like manner be interpreted as the artist 'getting burnt' by the pressures and obligations of the corporate world. In that regard, the cover image is perhaps also transformed into a pictorial representation of one who is 'caught in the crossfire of childhood and stardom'. In respect of the personal tone of the lyrics, one may be tempted to re-interpret the relationship between the burning man and the suited man as visually symbolic of the friend or bandmate witnessing the decline of this anonymous 'you', or Syd Barrett, who has been left exploited and burn-out by the music industry.

Figure 7: Image of salesman in the desert from *Wish You Were Here* Sleeve (1975, Harvest). Design by Hipgnosis.

The preoccupation with the themes of absence and loss can also be detected in the various 'secondary' visual images that have been interspersed throughout the sleeve. For instance, the veil blowing in the wind in the middle of a vast, empty forest landscape certainly parallels the notions of absence. The faceless businessman figure in the empty desert is equally demonstrative not only of absence but likewise of corporatism and greed (fig. 23). There appears also to be a self-conscious and self-derisory quality to this image; upon closer inspection of the salesman's briefcase, one spots a collection of Pink Floyd stickers, which suggests an examination of the band's own participation in this uncomfortable dynamic between artistic freedom or integrity and the corporate world of the recording industry. Finally, and on the broadest level, the four images could be said to reflect the four earthly elements — fire (the front cover), wind (the veil), earth (the salesman in the desert) and water (the diver, of which we have thus far said little) — which could possibly be understood as a commentary on life, the natural process and therefore death, all of which also find echo in the lyrics.

5.3 The Context of La Perrière and French Emblematics

That the emblem was big business and played a major role in the dissemination of intellectual knowledge, cultural paradigms, and religious doctrines in Early Modern

France, but particularly throughout seventieth-century French culture, has already been comprehensively documented.[283] That said, Alison Saunders has drawn attention to the fact that the number of sixteenth-century emblem books was comparatively scarce; notwithstanding the collections of *devises*, such as those of Claude Paradin, there exist less than a dozen examples of the emblem proper from this time.[284] After the 1536 French language re-publication of Alciato's *Emblematum Liber* (Paris: Wechel), the emblematic works of Guillaume La Perrière, Gilles Corrozet, Barthélemy Aneau, Guillaume Guéroult, and Pierre Costau followed closely in the space of the ensuing twenty years. Naturally, sixteenth century French emblem books represent a field of endeavour that goes far beyond the confines of a contextual note such as this one, but these seminal points of reference comprise a significant aspect of the backdrop to the forthcoming critical discussion.

The work of La Perrière is of special significance insofar as it is recognised as the first example of native French emblematics. La Perrière's important participation and involvement in the cultural life of the city of Toulouse, as well as his persistent championing of the diffusion of the French vernacular, has already been noted.[285] While his professional and literary activities centred upon the chronicling of daily life in the city (which under his supervision were, for the first time, published in French not Latin), he had an important role in Marguerite de Navarre's visit to Toulouse; his designs for the commemorative gold coins that were to reflect the significance of the occasion were put to official use. It is also noteworthy that an early manuscript copy of what would become his first emblem book was presented to Navarre during her visit. [286]

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[283] Readers should once again refer to the canonical works of Daniel Russell on this topic, such as *The Emblem and Device in France* (French Forum, 1985) and *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 1995).

[284] Alison Saunders, 'Picta Poesis: The Relationship between Figure and Text in the Sixteenth Century French Emblem Book', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance,* T.48 No. 3 (1986), pp. 621–622

[285] A readable introduction to the life and work of Guillaume La Perrière can be found on the website of the emblems digitisation project of Glasgow University Library, entitled *French Emblems at Glasgow*: https://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/books.php?id=FLPa

[286] Although *Le Theatre* was first published in 1540, the circulation of this early manuscript some four years earlier is attested to in La Perrière's *huitain* addressed to the reader at the end of the collection.

5.3.1 A Note on Le Theatre des bons engins

Emblem scholars generally accept, therefore, that *Le Theatre des bons engins* (Paris: Denis Janot, 1540) stands as the first native, and perhaps most influential, French emblem book.[287] Its popularity can be charted not only in the subsequent multiple re-editions in France but also in the translations into Dutch (Antwerp) and English (London) before the end of the sixteenth century. *Theatre*'s broad appeal may be unsurprising not only in the light of the contemporary vogue for emblematic literature but also in view of Janot's highly decorative presentation and lavish printing. The emblems themselves tend to comprise a mixture of fable-like tales, general truths or words of wisdom, allusions to and teachings of Classical antiquity, as well as Biblical lessons.

Part of the reason for which the cover art of *Wish You Were Here* will be seen to lend itself well to formal comparison with La Perrière's emblems is the use of a bipartite text/image structure, which, as Saunders has also documented, was a defining formal feature of the *Theatre*. Far from the fixed expectations that arose from the *emblema triplex* of Alciato's emblems, structural eclecticism and heterogeneity are generally characteristic of the French emblematic tradition, as Saunders notes the following:

> In many cases, although the basic combination of figure and text looks superficially much the same, often in reality the sixteenth-century French emblem book has little in common with the original concept of Alciati. A writer like Corrozet, for example, interested in didadicism, and explaining with the utmost clarity his moral lesson, produced in his *Hecatomgraphie* an emblem book much more in accordance with his other illustrated works produced in conjunction with the printer Denis Janot […] Guillaume Guéroult's *Premier livre des emblemes* […] is extremely long and diffuse compared with Alciati […] Coustau's *Pegme*, with its brevity, its allusive rather than explanatory approach […] coud be seen to possess more of the characteristics of Alciati's elitist collection than to many of its predecessors which are more concerned with […] the 'popular' reader.[288]

[287] Again, although *Le Theatre* is granted the status of 'first', we should remember that it was very closely followed by Gilles Corrozet's *Hecatomgraphie,* likewise printed by Parisian Denis Janot in 1540.

[288] Saunders, 'Picta Poesis', p. 629.

In an important contribution to the *Imago Figurata* publication series, Alison Adams and Stephen Rawles look specifically at the *Theatre des bons engins*,[289] likewise underlining its deviation from the normative tripartite structure as well as addressing the use of a surprising fourth element (a longer verse element) in Corrozet's close follow-up, *Hecatomgraphie*. This is what they consider to be evidence of 'a genre *en pleine évolution* with few definite expectations'.[290] Adams and Rawles point out that it is not until 1545 that distinguished Lyonnais printer Jean De Tournes makes the decision to reformat the *Theatre* in accordance with the classic structure of the *emblema triplex*, which becomes the focus of their study.

On the interpretive implications of the bipartite structure in La Perrière's *Theatre des bons engins*, Alison Saunders highlights the absence of the title in noting that 'the reader… does depend wholly upon the text for clarification of the allegorical sense to be derived from the figure'.[291] This is of course reflective of the special connotative power of the emblem's *pictura* and text/image relationship, where, unlike in hieroglyphic or religious contexts, an object or motif does not possess a single meaning but rather is subject to manipulation by the emblematist and could receive any number of allegorical interpretations.[292]

5.4 Analytical Reading of a Selected Emblem of the *Theatre*

By now, the caveats of our analytical methodology should be readily apparent, insofar as this study does not concern itself with the text/image properties of La Perrière's emblems for their own sake, but in respect of its similarities in form and structure to aspects of modern popular and visual culture. Indeed, the foregoing contextual remarks aimed simply to provide some background context to the formal workings of

[289] Alison Adams and Stephen Rawles, 'Jean de Tournes and the *Theatre des bons engins*' in *Emblems from Alciato to the Tattoo. Selected Papers of the Leuven International Emblem Conference, 18-23 August 1996,* eds. Peter M. Daly, John Manning, Marc van Vaeck (Brepols, 2001), pp. 21-53

[290] Ibid, p. 21.

[291] Saunders, 'Picta Poesis: The Relationship between Figure and Text in the Sixteenth Century French Emblem Book', p. 631.

[292] The nature of the emblem's relationship to context, connotation and allegory is explored in depth in Part I of this thesis.

La Perrière's emblems and to lay the foundations for the discovery of visual/verbal parallels with the modern context of album cover art. In that regard, the following will use Chapter 2's criteria of *visual topoi, bi-medial structure*, and *interactive hybridity* to explore the resemblance between a selected emblem of the *Theatre* and Hipgnosis' cover art for *Wish You Were Here*.

5.4.1 Analogous Visual *Topos* and Absence of Title in La Perrière's Emblem

A particularly close parallel to the *Wish You Were Here* album cover is encountered in the eleventh emblem of the *Theatre*, simply indicated as 'XI'. This emblem's *pictura* comprises two central figures, one of whom (left) is dressed in armoured gear and carrying some form of staff, walking stick or spear, while the other (right) is weaponless and dressed in robes with a feathered hat (fig. 24). The two figures appear poised to shake hands, therefore demonstrating the same *dextrarum junctio* motif as that of the *Wish You Were Here* cover. That a common *topos* of the Classical tradition should find its way into La Perrière's emblems is, of course, unsurprising in the light of the humanist revival of the teachings and culture of Antiquity. It should, however, also be borne in mind that even in the Early Modern period, the handshake had begun a process of 'trivialisation' insofar as it was likely commonplace gesture in aspects of daily life.

Of potential significance is also the nature backdrop, which is composed of mountains, trees, and a rising sun. However, much like the cover art of *Wish You Were Here*, the ambiguities of the *pictura* are foregrounded by the absence of titular matter; vague connections with the abstract notions of trust and agreement are all the reader/viewer can glean thus far. In terms of a potential structural parallel between La Perrière's *Theatre* emblem and Hipgnosis' *Wish You Were Here* cover art, it could therefore be said that the lack of title serves (indirectly) to emphasise the primacy of the image and the potential interpretative importance of the *subscriptio* or line notes. Moreover, while questions of intention are doubtless murky, it seems reasonable to infer that Hipgnosis and Pink Floyd found this to be, on the one hand, a cunning marketing strategy in an increasingly competitive corporate market, and on the other hand, a provocative artistic statement that draws attention to the work as art rather than a commercial product. Of course, the socio-historical context of La Perrière is entirely distinct, and it is unclear exactly why the two-fold structure is adopted rather than the canonical *emblema triplex*. A possible answer may be found in the influence and pervasiveness

of the French illustrated proverb, one of the emblem's known predecessors, which often only comprised picture and accompanying text.[293]

Figure 24: Pictura of La Perrière's emblem 'XI', *Le Theatre des bons engins* (Paris: Janot, 1540)

That said, the analogy between *Theatre* and *Wish You Were Here* surrounding the two-fold structure reaches its limit when we acknowledge the fact that there are several (albeit secondary) images throughout the inner sleeve and reverse-side that are linked to the same printed lyrics. In *Theatre* each emblem has its own text. It is perhaps therefore more meaningful to discuss the rhetorical nature of the interaction between poetic text and image in both the emblematic context and the record sleeve.

[293] This has also been explored in some detail by Russell in *Emblematic Structures in Renaissance French Culture*.

On a paratextual level, it is also worth noting the ornately decorated printed frame within which the woodcut image is situated. This in an interesting point of similarity between the emblem and the *Wish You Were Here* cover art, whereby the edge of the photograph is burnt and thus serves to accentuate the 'frame' of the image, as well as self-consciously referencing the fire motif. In both cases, the presence of a frame (of sorts) also has the effect of highlighting the fact that the visual component is at once a single and global unit. It reflects and interacts with the totality of the work.

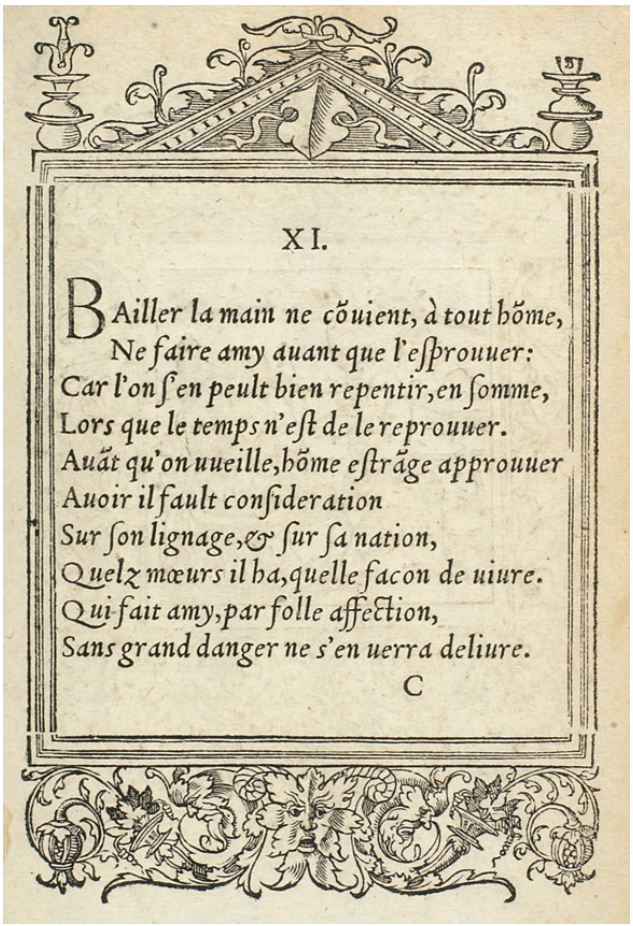
5.4.2 Analogous Poetic Function of the Emblematic *Subscriptio* or *Dizain*

Likewise in the eleventh emblem of the *Theatre*, one encounters a *subscriptio* composed of a *dizain*, which is a poetic text or stanza of ten lines (fig. 25). This differs from the *commentatio* or lengthier prose style of emblematic text which provide readers with a (sometimes historicising) verbal context and interpretation of the image — not unlike the commentaries of Paradin's *Devises Heroïques* — or from the quasi-ekphrastic epigrams that might directly address the image and the figures it presents. In this regard, we shall consider how, despite the disparity in length, the *subscriptio* resembles the liner notes of *Wish You Were Here*'s cover design in the manner in which it forms part of the image's poetic structure. The *subscriptio* of La Perrière's emblem reads as follows:

> Bailler la main ne convient, à tout homme,
> Ne faire amy avant que l'esprouver:
> Car l'on s'en peult bien repentir, en somme,
> Lors que le temps n'est de le reprouver:
> Avant qu'on vueille, homme estrange approuver
> Avoir il fault consideration
> Sur son lignage, & sur sa nation,
> Quelz moeurs il ha, quelle façon de vivre.
> Qui fait amy, par folle affection,
> Sans grand danger ne s'en verra deliver.

Upon inspection, the *dizain* can be understood as a general piece of wisdom which takes the form of a cautioning against trusting too easily, or more specifically befriending a stranger of whose personal affairs we know little. Additionally, the text

alludes to questions of family lineage, nationality, habits, traditions, and lifestyle, which are also proposed as criteria through which one can judge the suitability of a friendship or personal bond. In the final two lines, the reader is then warned of the perils of allowing unbridled emotion to dictate who one decides to trust and befriend. Similar to the lyrical texts of *Wish You Were Here*, then, the emblematic *dizain* is based upon a unifying theme, that of trust (or the absence thereof), which also implicitly challenges the reader/viewer to find a thematic or symbolical connection between enigmatic image and poetic text.


XI.

Bailler la main ne cõuient, à tout hõme,
Ne faire amy auant que l'eſprouuer:
Car l'on ſ'en peult bien repentir, en ſomme,
Lors que le temps n'eſt de le reprouuer.
Auãt qu'on ueille, hõme eſtrãge approuuer
Auoir il fault conſideration
Sur ſon lignage, & ſur ſa nation,
Quelz mœurs il ha, quelle facon de uiure.
Qui fait amy, par folle affection,
Sans grand danger ne s'en uerra deliure.

C

Figure 25: Subscriptio of La Perrière's emblem 'XI', *Le Theatre des bons engins,* (Paris: Janot, 1540)

5.4.3 Analogous Interactive Hybridity in La Perrière's Emblem

Coupled with its verbal component, the emblem's *pictura* is ascribed a new, or more nuanced, significance. This is in essence a question of interactive hybridity, or the manner in which text and image interact to form a cohesive rhetorical unit. By virtue

of the *pictura*'s juxtaposition with the *subscriptio*, the emblem's connotative field is somewhat narrowed and the interpretation of meaning, symbolic or otherwise, must involve an overlap in meaning between the visual woodcut and textual *dizain*. Seen from this perspective, the two figures pictured in the woodcut could be thought to represent both the process of trusting and befriending, as well as the relevant abstract concepts. The *subscriptio* adapts the *pictura* to this moral theme and the handshake motif is then decipherable as a visual metaphor for this social process. Moreover, the subtle separation of the hands, which otherwise may appear as an insignificant detail, now bears a potential new meaning in respect of vigilance and patience, which the reader is urged to demonstrate before they trust.

However, this text/image interactive hybridity also invites reinterpretations of other aspects of the *pictura*; for instance, might the staff or spear-like weapon symbolise wariness and the act of being on guard against the unknown? Likewise, could the different forms of clothing that each figure is seen to adorn be taken to portray the difference in their cultural or social background indicated by the *dizain*? The depiction of the rising sun could equally be subject to a symbolic reading in view of the verbal context; might this meeting at dawn be reflective of the tradition of duelling at dawn that was pervasive in the Early Modern period as a way to avoid legal repercussions?[294] This would translate meaningfully to the mountainous terrain in the backdrop insofar as it could portray something akin to the 'field of honour', an isolated location where the confrontation would take place. Of course, only one figure is shown to wield anything resembling a weapon; that said, the position of the other's robes could be understood as concealing the weapon, which would further evoke the text's references to trust or indeed mistrust. In essence, there are few definite answers. However, what this analysis ultimately aims to evoke is the scope for connotative overlap and interpretative process created by the juxtaposition of text and image, all of which raises several such questions in the mind of the active reader/viewer.

As such, the interactive hybridity of the cover art of *Wish You Were Here* and that of La Perrière's emblem resemble one another in that they both hinge upon the exploitation of a recognisable iconographic element, which is then adapted to new and/or specific contexts that suit the artistic purpose of the work. The *dizain* and album lyrics do not directly instruct us how to decipher the images, but rather their juxtaposition draw

[294] Robert Baldick, *The Duel: A History of Duelling* (Spring Books 1970).

out the attributes they share. In typical emblematic fashion, the *subscriptio* prompts a different reading of the woodcut image — the two figures poised to shake hands — by providing a new context — a warning against trusting the stranger without due consideration — whereby the *pictura* acquires an unexpected significance due to the metaphorical transference of meaning (the two-figure handclasp becomes a visual metaphor for trust and wariness). This is, as John Manning points out,[295] the 'very essence of emblematic wit' and a 'species of metamorphosis'. A similar process takes place in the sleeve design of *Wish You Were Here*, whereby the lyrics do not directly instruct us how to read the image of the two figures shaking hands. Rather, they implicitly analyse the image by way of analogy, and exploit its scope for the metaphorical transference of meaning. The relationship of text to image has the effect of transforming the cover image into a loose metaphor for absence, personal loss and psychological deterioration in the context of a corporate music industry. In the light of these formal parallels, therefore, Hipnosis' cover design and the eleventh emblem of the *Theatre* are ideal models the broader transhistorical comparison of text/image cultures.

5.5 Concluding Remarks and Summary of Case Study

To summarise, this study has sought to foreground the resemblance in techniques of visual/verbal persuasion between Pink Floyd's cover art of the *Wish You Were Here* record and La Perrière's emblematic text/image combinations of the *Theatre des bons engins*. The analogy has focussed upon the criteria of visual motifs, bi-medial structure that involves a two-fold text/image amalgam, and a shared interactive hybridity that requires decoding by the reader/viewer.

The handshake, or *dextrarum junctio*, motif that forms a central part of *Wish You Were Here*'s combination of text and image was initially seen to date to the Classical tradition. A close analytical reading of the cover design then revealed the manner in which the visual motif was adapted to depict in some way the pressures of the modern corporate world of commercial music, but also the eternal themes of loss and absence. In La Perrière's *Le Theatre des bons engins*, the same visual motif of the handshake is

[295] John Manning, *The Emblem* (Reaktion Books, 2002), p. 85.

adapted to the woodcut image of two figures set against a nature backdrop, which, we learn, is then used to convey general wisdom pertaining to the caution and prudence that one must exercise in trusting and/or befriending the stranger. In much the same way as the preceding case studies, then, the purpose of this chapter has been to advance the argument that, despite a clear distinction in their social and historical contexts, these two forms of Western visual culture can be seen to share fundamental principles of text/image interplay and hybrid communication.

Conclusion: Parallel Forms, Parallel Mentalities

McLuhan and the Unavoidable Question

American filmmaker Woody Allen's seventh feature-length movie *Annie Hall* (1977) includes a comedic passage that might also double as an academic's worst nightmare, which is to say: misinterpreting a critical theory in front of the very theorist who devised it and thus being publicly outed as fraudulent. In this scene, a cinemagoer tries to impress his date by ostentatiously critiquing in McLuhanian terms Fellini's *La Strada* (1954) while they wait for the theatre doors to open. The main protagonist Alvy Singer (portrayed by Allen), who is also in the queue with Annie (Diane Keaton), grows irritated by the gentleman's pretension and furthermore disagrees with his appraisal of McLuhan's theory of 'hot media'. Both characters come face to face and subsequently 'break the fourth wall' to argue their case to the camera, or rather the audience in front of the screen. This is also the point at which Singer (Allen) goes off-camera to fetch Marshall McLuhan himself, who, in a humorous act of public shaming, proceeds to explain to the gentleman how he has entirely misunderstood his work.

Aside from the fact that Allen has become an increasingly problematic public figure and thus further fuelled the contentious art/artist separation debate, one might simply interpret this scene as evidence of a vain desire to flaunt his own intellectual credentials. However, this would be missing another important, perhaps broader, point. The pervasiveness of McLuhan's thought in the mid-to-late-twentieth century was such that he himself had been subsumed and recirculated as an object of contemporary popular culture. McLuhan was also at the forefront of a wave of mid-century North American media scholarship that favoured a cross-temporal approach to understanding Western communication tendencies in the light of technological change.[296] That is to say, he, and others such as Walter J. Ong (a former student of McLuhan),[297] posed the question: how has modern (language-based) technology shaped our human and communicative environment, and how also might the past open up a new understanding of this process? That same question undoubtedly has

[296] This is elaborated upon in his book *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (University of Toronto Press, 1962).

[297] See, for instance, Ong's most notable work *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1982).

considerable resonance with the concerns set forth in the previous chapters of this thesis, as we shall seek to demonstrate in these closing remarks.

If we have argued that album covers may comprise the sort of text/image interplay that also appears in Renaissance emblems, then we cannot avoid asking the question: beyond pure serendipity, what can account for such similarities between two cultural forms separated by centuries and continents? To our knowledge, most album cover designers did not have their heads in emblem books. At an even broader level, if we have indeed shown that an awareness of the Emblematic Age and Early Modern text/image interaction can better our understanding of the workings of present-day text/image forms of Western visual culture, then why should this be so? This is the point at which we must move from a close reading of 'texts' and come back to a broad discussion of 'mentalities'.

Album Covers and Emblems as 'Cool' Media?

The album cover can essentially be considered a product of what McLuhan refers to as the 'electric age'. In his pioneering book *Understanding Media*, he advanced the notions of 'hot' and 'cool' media, whereby the former promotes passivity, detachments and prescribes information while the latter promotes activity, involvement and teases the receiver into drawing out information.[298] The advent of the 'electric age' therefore also signals a move to predominantly 'cool' media, as the conventions of rational and sequential printed forms are challenged and pushed to the extreme by the audiovisual simultaneous sensations of film and television. Twentieth-century album cover art thus stood as a new non-sequential and fragmentary printed form that, in connection with the music it housed, became a 'cool' composite medium that discloses itself to the reader/viewer or audioviewer upon their interaction with the work. In some ways, we have already touched upon these concerns in considering how each cover art was born out of a particular hybrid artistic and cultural context, from the European poster-inspired works of the 1940s and the modernist visual graphics and photography of jazz culture, to the psychedelic and cinematically surreal aesthetics of 1970s prog rock. In McLuhanian terms, however, cover art is high in participation and requires greater completion by the audience to acquire the totality of information.

[298] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (McGraw-Hill, 1964).

Likewise, it has already been established that the emblem was partly the product of the manuscript/print culture overlap. The invention of moveable type, as well as enabling the first instances of mass communication, signalled an initial step towards what McLuhan has termed the 'mechanical age' and therefore a predominantly text-based culture. He notes that a predominantly text-based culture is one that is defined by lineal, sequential and 'rational' habits of perception and communication. It is also unsurprising that this process coincided with the rise of science, empiricism and the division of knowledge into discrete disciplines, given that the printing press facilitated an unprecedented democratisation of information and logical analysis that is only possible through the specificity of text. However, seeing that the emblem arose at a period of transition from the image-based mentality of the pre-print era and the introduction of reproductive technology, it too stands as a composite medium that is high in participation with scope for variations upon interpretation. In other words, the emblem, like the album cover, might be considered an early 'cool' medium that does not prescribe but involves.

In that sense, if the text/image characteristics of emblems and album covers are products of analogous technological environments and somewhat repeated circumstances, then they are also products of analogous creative mindsets. At this point, therefore, we are brought back to Grove's concept of *parallel mentalities*, according to which the Renaissance/Baroque periods and our modern times have found themselves 'astride the culture of the text and of the image, with technology — previously printing, now visual and digital technology — taking us from one to the other'.[299]

Preaching to the Choir: Cover Art and Symbolism

From another perspective, the transhistorical comparison that this thesis has sought to draw between emblems and album covers may also operate at a more specific level. Album cover art offers modern counterparts to an emblematic tradition rich in visual and verbal symbolism arguably because of its distinctly folkloric and subcultural nature. To reprise the words of Nick de Ville, cover art provides us with 'pictorial representations of the self-consciously adopted aesthetic values and worldly interests of specific, identifiable lifestyles, subcultures, urban tribes and other self-determined

[299] Laurence Grove, 'Emblems and Impact' in *Emblems and Impact Volume I: Von Zentrum und Peripherie der Emblematik* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), p. 10.

communities'.[300] These subcultures, tribes, and communities of which de Ville speaks arguably possess something akin to a 'shared mindset' and so can collectively understand what might otherwise feel like an esoteric form of communication. For instance, it does not stretch credulity to think that the socially and politically mobilised audiences of Paul Robeson would understand the richly symbolic significance of the raised militant first in relation to the worker's plight, even if they did not know of Köhler's paintings. Likewise, is it so hard to believe that the audiences of Carmen McRae would grasp of the importance of her role in the legacy of female jazz icons and also that 'red lips' has an important feminist symbolic significance? Lastly, it seems feasible that the audiences of Pink Floyd would understand the group's penchant for philosophical exploration and that the use of an ancient symbolic motif — without knowing the precise classical associations — is an important part of that process.

Of course, we cannot forget that album cover art must above all straddle the line between art and commerce in the modern age of capitalism and consumer culture. In that regard, while the esoteric or culturally-specific nature of cover art should not necessarily be overlooked, album covers are also designed with mass appeal in mind, which is often achieved through various forms of visual *éclat*. The point still stands, however, insofar as the notion of a community of individuals capable of relating to each other's way of thinking, and thus of grasping the visual/verbal allusions or structures that could leave others simply bemused but nevertheless intrigued, resonates strongly with the emblematic mode of visual and verbal symbolism.

Summary of Thesis

To summarise, this thesis has argued for a range of similarities in visual/verbal form and function between album cover art of the modern age and emblematics of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. It began by setting out just what 'emblem' and 'emblematic' might mean in contemporary contexts, to be contrasted against a historical-technical understanding of the terms. A survey of existing literature and previous attempts to identify and/or analyse emblematic aspects of modern cultural production served to demonstrate the credibility of this methodology but also to lay the foundation for the original work on album cover art carried out in this thesis. The second chapter took us from the initial troublesome questions of album art as an object

[300] Nick de Ville, *Album: Style and Image in Sleeve Design* (Mitchell Beazley, 2003), p. 8.

of critical study to its text/image origins, previous scholarly treatments, and then, finally, to an emblematic understanding of its formal workings. The key concept here was the use of a set of threefold criteria — *visual topoi*, *bi-medial structure*, and *interactive hybridity* — against which it is possible to analyse the scope for emblematic comparison in certain cover art. This was demonstrated by means of a case in point involving a Metallica record cover and a Jesuit emblem. The ensuing case studies — Chapters 3 to 5 — comprise three close analytical readings of cover art whose distinct visual/verbal characteristics are rediscovered, through the lens of our threefold criteria, in specific manifestations of the emblematic mode.

In this sense, although the present thesis is underpinned by the same broad premise — that of *parallel mentalities* — there has been an essential difference between this study's approach and that of other scholars such as Grove and Van Dongen. While they have drawn analogies through the broad themes of production context, reception, struggle for formal recognition etc. (at this point, we need not rehearse the full extent of their methodologies), this thesis has used close analysis of selected cultural 'texts' as a means of drawing transhistorical comparisons. As such, readers are given an intimate 'backstage' look at the inner workings of these text/image forms, as well as the nature of the formal and functional comparison with emblematics.

A Further Cross-Media Metaphor: Closing Remarks

The opening lines of the Prologue alluded to an international best-selling novel and a Hollywood film whose themes and plot structure could be seen as a broad metaphor for the mosaic-like structure of this thesis. While these cultural outputs were particularly apt representations, there is no dearth of further cross-media metaphors. Lucas and Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* film franchise, starring Harrison Ford, is a recognisable case in point: *The Last Crusade* (1989) sees Dr. Jones Junior rescue his dad (Sean Connery) from the evil Nazis who had captured him to exploit his lifetime's worth of research on the whereabouts of the Holy Grail. The interpretation of historical and often religious visual/verbal enigmas, speedboat chases, exotic locations, questionable Scottish accents, break-outs from Nazi-occupied castles, and the final arrival at The Temple of the Sun where religious faith is tested, all form part of the cross-temporal and cross-cultural mosaic. Not to mention that the musical theme is now almost as 'emblematic' as the films themselves.

To return to the specific cultural objects at play in this thesis, a final comment might be made on what these chapters have sought to illustrate by way of two points:

1) Just as album cover art, and other forms of popular (audio)visual culture, are objects of interest *per se* and thus worthy of critical study, so emblems can be appreciated as important expression of Renaissance culture and an exemplary form of text/image discourse that challenges received conceptions of high art and literature.
2) Cover art and emblems may also lend themselves to transhistorical, cross-cultural, and above all cross-disciplinary studies that form part of a much broader argument with respect to recurring communicative procedures in the history of Western culture.

When American Novelist William Faulkner wrote the famed and now widely de-contextualised line 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.' (Requiem for a Nun, 1951) — which incidentally crops up in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* (2011) — he surely was not referring to cover art and emblems. By now, however, the processes of borrowing and re-adapting to context should be well understood in the light of this thesis. To that end, perhaps Faulkner's line may be re-appropriated once more to remind us that, despite the passing of centuries, emblems remain all around us.

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