

fragMENTaTION 16

Pep Agut Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)

2014

Sanatçının izniyle | Courtesy the artist

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Pep Agut'un Yapısal Denemeleri

Çalışmalarını Barselona'da sürdüren Pep Agut, resim, video ve New Media tekniklerini eş zamanlı kullandığı işlerinde "kavramsal bir görsellik" geliştirmiştir. Sunum (Representation) kavramının sosyal, politik ve ekonomik açımlarıyla yakından ilgilenen sanatçı, belli modeller geliştirerek izleyicilerin kafasında soru işaretleri oluşturmayı hedefler. Onun çalışmalarında karşılaşılan "bütünsel yaklaşım", izleyiciyi pasif bir tüketici konumundan kurtarır. Çünkü sanatçı bakışın "aktifleştirilmesi", soruların gündeme gelmesi için sıra dışı teknikler geliştirerek, birbiri içinde açılan çok katmanlı, palimpsest, diziler üretmiştir.

Sanatçının "Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)" projesi, Vatikan tarafından onaylanmış olan güncel İncil'in "Yaratılış" (Genesis) bölümündeki cümlelerden yola çıkıyor. Kutsal kitabın paragraflarındaki her sözcüğü bir tür diyağrama dönüştüren Pep Agut, "yaratılış" olgusuna çok farklı bir bakış açısı geliştirerek, yazılı ve görsel imgeler arasında dinamik ilişkiyi bünyesinde tutuyor. Dünyanın yaratılışının tanımlandığı kutsal metni, sanat eserinin üretim süreciyle eşleştiren sanatçı, eşine az rastlanır bir "kavram akışı" oluşturmayı başarıyor. Onun her sözcük için kullandığı dipnotlarında geliştirmiş olduğu yaklaşım açısı, tarihin ve sanat tarihinin tüm dar açılarını aşarak farklı bir "görme biçimini" gündeme getirdiği için önemli.

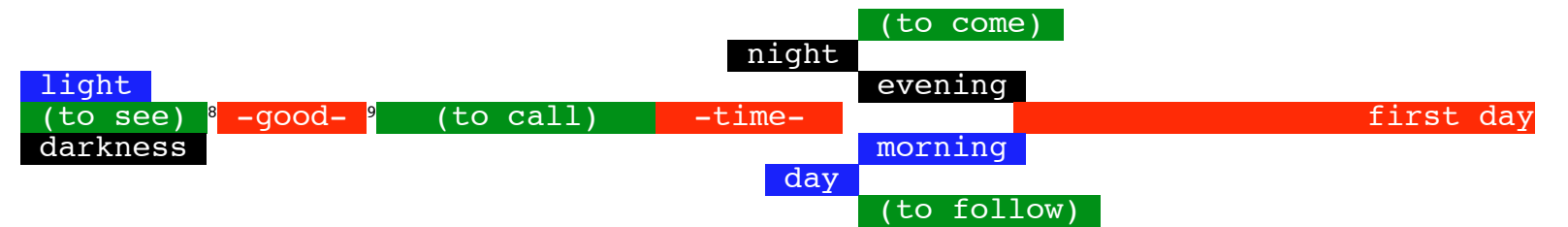
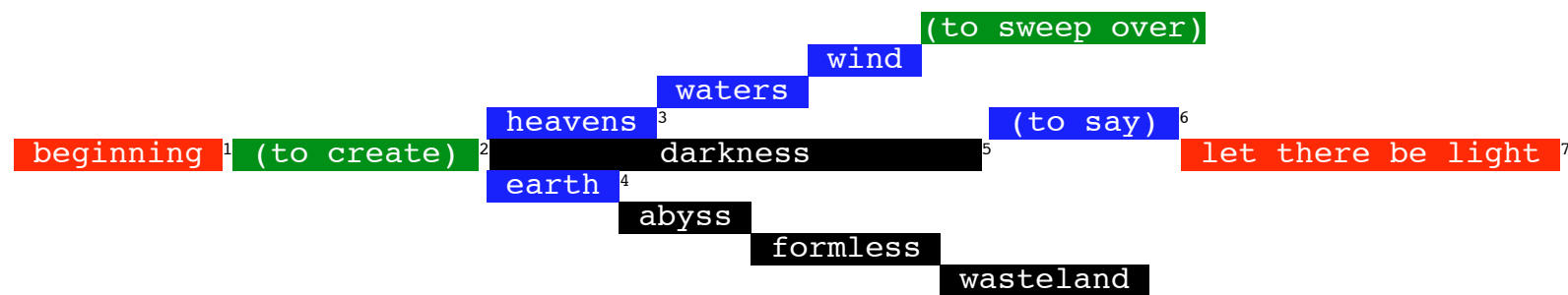
Pep Agut burada ne isyankâr Fluxus ruhunu, ne de Sitüasyonistlerin gösterişe dayalı laf cambazlığını kullanıyor. Onun seçtiği resimler ve yazdığı cümleler ilk bakışta belli olmayacak kadar birbirinden farklı alanlara gönderme yapıyorlar. Sanatçı bu süreçte bakış açısını hem alabildiğine genişletiyor, hem de tekrara düşmeksizin oldukça farklı alanlara uzanmayı başarıyor. Ama farklılıkları birbirine bağlayan, çağrışımlara dayalı bir "kavramsallık", bu çalışmada karşılaştığımız tüm yazılı ve görsel imgeleri belli ortak paydalar altında toplamamıza izin vermiyor. Sanatçı büyük bir titizlikle hazırlamış olduğu dipnotlarında, adeta kazı çalışmalarına başlamadan önce arkeologların yaptıkları "alan araştırması" gibi, gördüğü, düşündüğü her kavramı izleyicilere sunuyor. Arkeologlar eski bir geleneğe bağlı olarak gözlemledikleri her şeyi not ettikleri defterlerinde, fotoğraf öncesi dönemlerde her şeyi çizmeye çalışırlardı. Günümüzde ise, fotoğraf, videonun yanı sıra uydulardan çekilmiş olan görüntüler bile toprağın farklı katmanları hakkında arkeologlara çok farklı bilgiler sunuyor. Pep Agut'u arkeologlarla biraraya getirirken elbette belli bir kavram karmaşasını göze almak gerekiyor.

Ama her sözcük için adeta arkeolojik kazı yapar gibi çalışan sanatçı, "Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)" projesinde, öylesine etkileşimli "sözcük-çağırışım-kavram" üçgeni kuruyor ki, okuyucular burada karşılaştıkları "yeni anlamlar" sayesinde oldukça farklı olguları duymaya başlıyorlar. Pep Agut, kutsal metnin yüce anlamını sorgulamakla kalmıyor, onun açtığı yolda ilerleyerek günümüz insanının yorgun, günahkâr ve isyan dolu varoluş mücadelesine de gönderme yapıyor. Öylesine garip bir tarihsel sürece eşlik ediyoruz ki, ne kutsal metinlerin, ne de yorumlarının bilinen çerçevede masumiyeti kaldı. Çarpık yorumlamaların güncel politik gelişmeleri beslediği bir süreçte sanatçı garip bir şekilde, "sanatın üretim süreçlerine" de gönderme yapmıyor mu?

"Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)" politik açımları olan, sakin imgelerin altında adeta birbirini tetiklemeğe hazır kavram mayınlarının beklediği bir proje. Pep Agut, sadece okunarak değil, gözlemlenerek de algılanabilecek olan birliktelikleri yan yana getirirken sadece sanat tarihini değil, müzik tarihini de devreye sokarak, bir tür "dinlenebilecek" kavramları da çalışmasının odağına yerleştirmeyi başarıyor.

İyimsiz kalmanın çok zor olduğu bir dünyada yaşıyoruz. Kutsal kitapların neredeyse tamamının reddettiği şiddetin, din adına gündeme geldiği bir süreçte Pep Agut, üzerine kan dökülen kavramları yeniden düşünerek oldukça farklı bir pencereyi açıyor önümüze. Karşımızda ağustos sıcaklığı kadar yoğun, şubat soğukluğu kadar dondurucu bir yazı ve imge bütünlüğü var.

Necmi Sönmez, Eylül 2014, Şangay



- 3 Heavens (plural), waters, wind to sweep over. *To sweep over: clean or clear with or as with a broom (T.O.D.)*. The active principle of representation is the draft of oneself.
- 6 Facing the active and passive principles, dissolution and vertigo, the verb is imposed, the voice of oneself, the artist's voice. It is the imperative of language, the basis of representation. The voice heard (see note 5) or emitted, it's the beginning of the creative act. In principle, therefore, it must be the word, but the word calls, without existing, to the one who listens to the dissolution of the oneself, or to the one who opens-up to the other's presence.
- 1 *To begin: perform the first part of. (The Oxford Dictionary > T.O.D.)*. It's a moment of origin that necessarily implies empathy; *Empathy: the power of identifying oneself mentally with a person or object of contemplation (T.O.D.)*. The creator, the artist, reflects about himself in the moment of thinking and he thinks about himself as an outward appearance. With Plotinus: the one, the beautiful, the good, open themselves up to alterity, to representation. *(T.O.D.)*, it's the active principle and it necessarily implies the existence of a receptive principle.
- 2 *To create: bring into existence (T.O.D.)*. That is to say, to originate that which is not more than the exterior of oneself, the perimeter, the skin of oneself. The intuition of the mirror. The representation is still the intuition of oneself that which is unthinkable by the other.
- 5 *"A voice reaches someone in the dark. To imagine."* ('Company' Samuel Beckett, 1979). *Darkness: ignorance, unenlightened. (T.O.D.)*.
- 7 *'Let there be the light' (The Bible. Genesis, 1,3. The Vatican Official English Edition > T.B. G.V.E.)*. The execution of the voice, the speech, language, imposes the appearance of light beyond the concept of light itself. The total and absolute light is the raw material of blindness and not that of vision (the five ways of Saint Thomas Aquinas define with more propriety the concept of light than that of God). If the origin of the vision is the perfect invisibility representation is the source of its negation. God in the biblical text, like the artist, is facing an oxymoron that has created himself.



Figure 1. 'Number 32' Jackson Pollock; paint on canvas, 457.5 x 269 cm; 1950; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany.

- 4 Earth, abyss, formless, wasteland. *Wasteland: a place or time considered spiritually or intellectually barren (T.O.D.)*. The passive principle of representation lies in the possibility of falling, the vertigo before an infinite vacuum (abyss).

- 8 *To see: contemplate, foresee mentally. (T.O.D.)*. If the domain of light in its perfect excess is blindness, the act of seeing is mental, contemplative, speculative; it does not belong to the domain of the physical eye. The artist is not yet subject to shape but to its constitutive value: light and darkness (the invention of *chiaroscuro*) the status of any possible visibility.
- 9 *Good: morally excellent, virtuous. (T.O.D.)*. The passing of intuitions is concentrated, by a moral determination, in a political position: it is necessary the taking of a position. The creative process establishes itself virtually over its elective potential.
- 10 By means of the verb, the nominative action, God establishes in the biblical text the first physical condition -and thus perceptible- of light: time. He calls it evening (to come) and day (to follow), since in ancient Israel the day began with sunset. So time is continuous but unstable. The artist finds in time the foundation of the creative process: between his irregularities, his hiatus, space and form are hidden.



Figure 2. Metronome.

Listen to: 'Symphonic poem for 100 metronomes' György Ligeti. 1962.

- 11 The first biblical day, anchored in a pre-geological time, may take place in a single moment in the artist's mind.

(to say) the dome ¹²

(to follow)¹⁴
morning
evening
(to come)
the sky
(to call)
the waters
above
(to separate)¹³ (to happen) second day
below
the waters

12 Configuration of space and form. *Dome: rounded vault as a roof, with a circular or elliptical pollygonal base; a large cupola. (T.O.D.).* As we have mentioned, light is pure blindness, but it is also the essential condition of the power of vision. Pierced by time, light generates a first shape that, in its hands, it will necessarily be a moving form. The fate of the dome, due to the rotational movement that is intrinsic, is the sphere. (See Note 16)

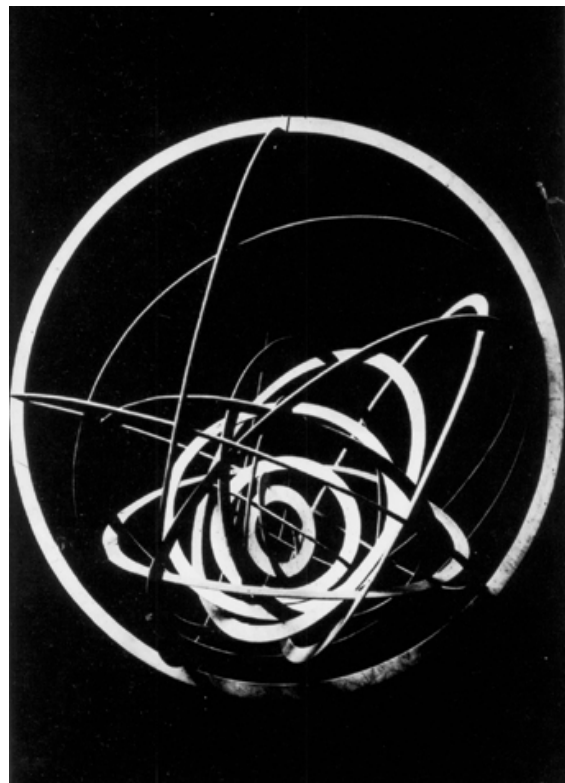


Figure 3. 'Spatial Construction.' Alexander Rodchenko. 1919.

14 See Note 10.

13 *To separate: divide or sort (milk, ore, fruit, light, etc.) into constituent parts or sizes (T.O.D.).* The organization of shape according to its position in relation to time and space. The artist constitutes the generic forms and organizes them in order to open them to the space of representation. The time sequence is still the indicative dynamic (to happen >> the second day). The form, in its materiality, it is only its footprint.

every fruit tree
 (to bear) every seed every plant
 vegetation
 (to bring forth)
 (to call) the earth
 dry
 (to appear) land
 a single basin¹⁶
 the water (to call) the sea
 (to say) (to gather)¹⁵ (to be)¹⁷

-good- (to come) evening (to follow) morning third day¹⁸

16 A single basin (to gather the waters to call them the sea) in opposition to the dome... (and to appear the earth (dry)... to bring forth vegetation, seeds). The logic of the rotation of the dome generates the sphere of the planet. See 'Sphären' of Peter Sloterdijk. Frackfurt am Main, 1998-99, 2004. Language also becomes spherical. The artist generates spheres of content.

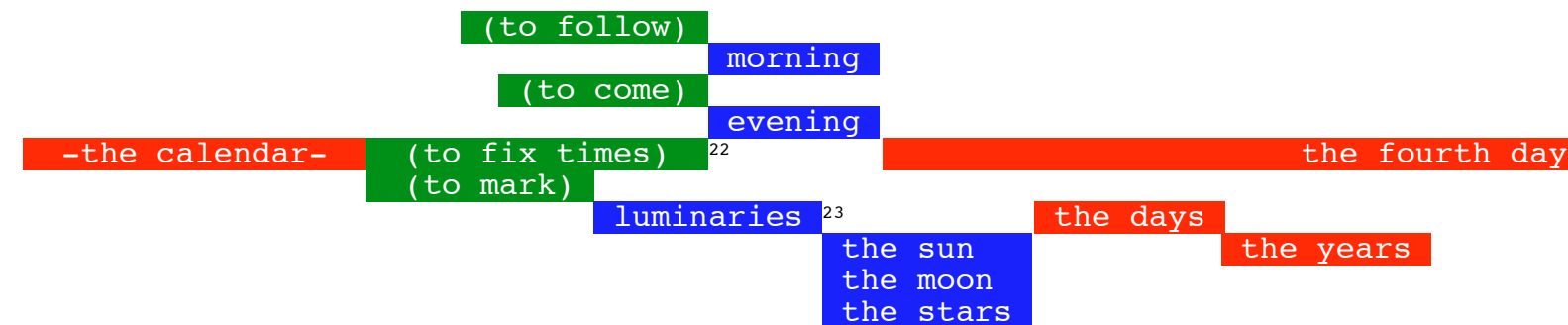
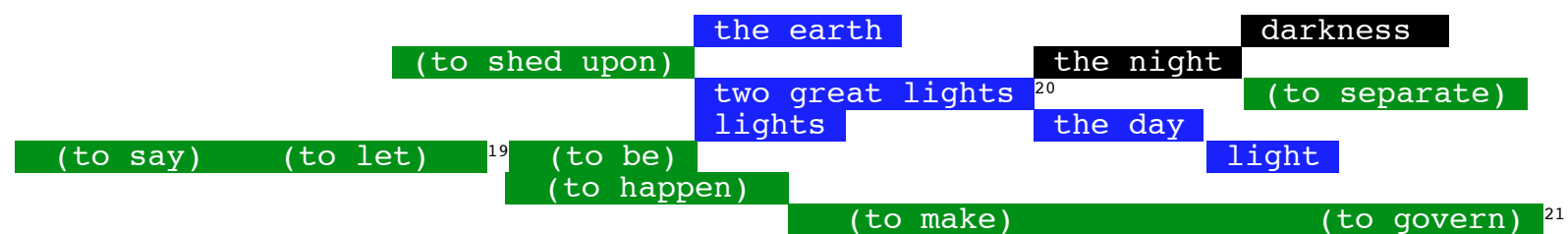


Figure 4. 'The Blue Marble'. Harrison Scmitt (Apollo 17). 1972. It is the most disseminated image of the history of photography. (See 'Imparare dalla luna'. Stefano Catucci. Quodlibet Srl. Roma, 2013).

15 To gather: bring together from scattered places or sources. (T.O.D.). Classification, designation and enumeration of material objects as representational creative contents. The creative specialization of the forms of matter runs parallel to the determination of their names. The created elements will still be the scenery for the representation. The generative logic of the text brings us closer to 'Warburg's' concept of association: language and objects become the archive of that which has been created. The 'Mnemosyne' of Genesis becomes the atlas of that which has been created. The artist penetrates the logic of order.

17 That which is created by the artist becomes an autonomous being. It is the founding moment of representation.

18 See precedent notes.



20 From the raw material- the light- those *existing* (Lévinas) have become autonomous. The creative process of the artist focuses its action in the materialization of language and objects. The opening towards the semantic field and the physical experience presupposes a diversity of points of view. *'Two great lights'* evokes this circumstance and in turn that of the embodiment of light itself in two different points according to their temporal order.

19 It is again the verb that generates a new day. Verbalization, that is, the theoretical budget preceding production, opens the way to let; *to let: allow to, not prevent or forbid (TOD)*. And here it should be noted that allowing is to say that which is not oneself: representing.

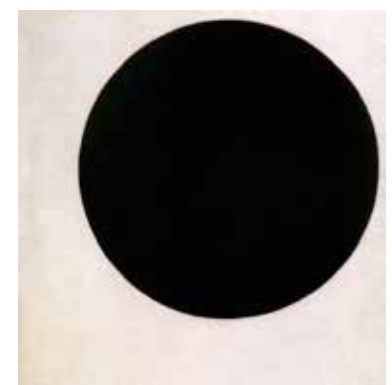
21 To make > *to govern: rule or control (a State, subject, etc.) with authority; conduct the policy and affaires of (an organization, etc)(T.O.D.)*. The concatenation of these two actions, to make and to control -pure action and responsibility-, explicit the basis of the concept of authorship. The political order of that which is created is the object and the fundamental content of the artistic process and representation.

22 To fix the "*tempo*" is the first condition in a political and aesthetical order. That which is represented inexorably becomes a milestone in the temporal course. The calendar names the moments of time and time becomes language, form, order.

23 "*Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not seek or conjecture either of them as if they were veiled obscurities or extravagances beyond the horizon of my vision; I see them before me and connect them immediately with the consciousness of my existence.*" Immanuel Kant. *'Critique of Practical Reason'*. Riga, 1778.

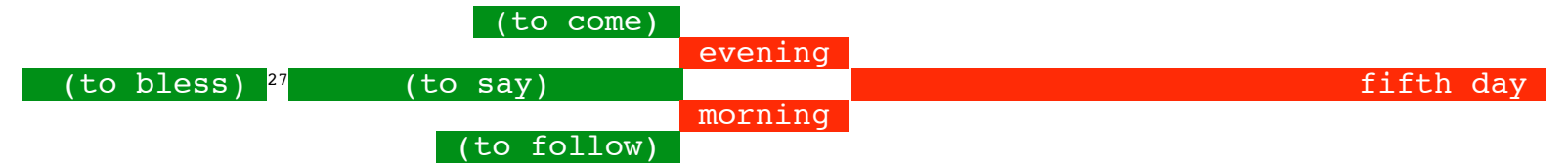
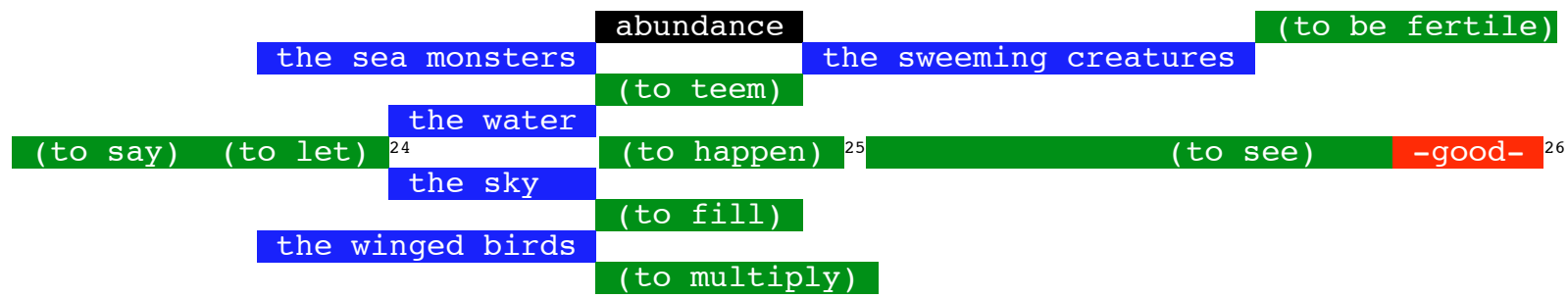


a.



b.

Figure 5. a. *'Solar eclipse'*; b. *'Black cercle over white background'*. Kasimir Malevitch. 1915. The process towards representation is an experiential process. That one that is represented, emancipated from the One, produces with its presence, a differentiated moment of recognition of the One, becoming the synthesis of that which looks at us and that provides our existence with its gaze.



24 See Note 19.

25 The artist creates conceptual structures (sheltered in language) and generic contexts in order to facilitate the emergence of the actors, the figures on an already organized background.



Figure 6. 'The big fish eats the small one' (detail). Roman mosaic. 300 b.C. Lod (Israel).

The constitutive principle of the figure of the actor is precisely the power of action, a separate action from that of the author. If this one, the author, is not the Demiurge, the actor also opens up a new space within the space of representation: the actor, when the time to act arrives, creates and contemplates that who was creating and contemplating. It is the definitive irruption of the other, that who was not at first, the audience, the public.

26 '...God saw how good it was.' *Genesis 1, 18. (T.B.G.V.E.)*. Again, in the biblical text, God pronounces himself on the moral level in order to accept what has been created, that which is different from himself. But there is still the decisive step: in every move towards representation, the creation of a generic 'something' and that of a specific 'something' succeed themselves. In the first half of the fifth day the Demiurge generically creates the place of the viewer, but he will lack, by the need of the perfect balance, the one that is potentially his equal, the perfectly other.

27 To say > to bless > the fifth day. *To bless: pronounce words, esp. in a religious rite, to confer or invoke divine favor upon; ask God to look favourably on. (T.O.D.)*. Again it is the word, the verb, that confirms and rules. God prays before himself and confirms the sense of what it has been created. The artist is ready for the crucial moment of the representation. The transfer of the verb into the hands of someone else.

all kinds
 wild animals
 creeping things
 cattle
 living creatures
 (to bring forth)
 the earth²⁸
 (to say) (to let) (to see) -good-

the creatures that crawl
 the wild animals
 the cattle
 the birds
 the fish (to come)
 (to make) male and female (to dominate over)³⁰ evening
 man (to bless) -very good-³¹ sixth day
 divine image²⁹ (to be fertile) morning
 likeness (to multiply) (to follow)
 (to fill)
 (to subdue)
 (to see)
 (to be given)
 food
 every seed-bearing plant
 every seed-bearing fruit

30 To dominate over > to bless > to be fertile > to multiply > to feel > to subdue > to see > to be given. Man, the representational subject *par excellence*, the figure, will be able to take in his hands the power and control in order to rule (see Note 21), in order to become the co-author of creation.

31 'God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.' *Genesis 1, 31. (T.B.G.V.E.)*. On this occasion the moral evaluation is adjectivated. It emphasizes that which is complete.

29 'God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.' *Genesis 1, 27. (T.B.G.V.E.)*. Is the crucial moment of creation. God discovers and reproduces his own image. The process towards representation that the artist follows is performed on the appearance of the other. The one who is that which is not, the pure spectator, the one who looks and creates the creator with his gaze.



Figure 7. a. 'Adam and Eve'. Albrecht Dürer. Oil on wood; 209 x 81 and 80 cm. 1507. Museo del Prado. Madrid. b. View of several works by Alberto Giacometti.

28 To bring forth all kinds of animals: the actors multiply in the place of the scene.

(to accomplish) (to finish)³² work (to be done)
end of creation³³ holy day (to bless) (to rest) seventh day³⁴

³² To finish: bring to an end; come to the end of; complete. (T.O.D.).

³³ End of creation: Man's footprint dominates the space of representation.



"Aldrin bootprint" (Apollo 11). July, 21st, 1969. NASA.

³⁴ It should be added that the biblical account of creation is done in six days. As we have already discussed, for the ancient Israelites, the day began with the setting sun, which consecrates the Sabbath, the sixth day. The narrative of the seventh day, the divine rest, is part of the second chapter of the Genesis, also known as *'The Second Story of Creation'* for its differences from the first (the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, for example).

The other history within the history, The other meaning beyond the meaning

Pep Agut's structural experiments

Pep Agut, who is based in Barcelona, has developed a "conceptual visualization" in his works where he simultaneously uses painting, video and New Media techniques. He is interested in the social, political and economic expansions of the concept of representation and aims to conjure questions in his viewers' minds by developing certain models. The "total approach" encountered in his works releases the viewer from the passive position of a consumer; because he develops unusual techniques and produces multi leveled palimpsests, series "to activate" the gaze and bring questions to the agenda.

The artist's "Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)" project takes its start from the sentences in the most current Vatican-approved Bible's Genesis chapter. By transforming each word in the paragraphs of the holy book into a type of diagram, Pep Agut develops a different perspective on the phenomenon of "creation" and puts the dynamic relationship between written and visual images under the magnifying glass. He pairs off the holy text where the creation of the World is defined, with the production process of the artwork, and manages to create a type of "conceptual flow" that is seldom found. His approach, which is developed in the footnotes he uses for each word, transcends all the narrow angles of history and art history, bringing up a new "way of seeing"; this is the reason why this work is important.

Pep Agut uses here neither the rebellious spirit of Fluxus nor the Situationists' line of speech based on spectacle. The pictures he picks and the sentences he writes refer to areas that are so different from one another that they are incomprehensible at first glance. Thereby, the artist both widens his viewpoint extensively and succeeds in reaching different fields without falling into repetition. But the "conceptuality" that is based on associations and links differences to one another, does not allow us to collect under specific common denominators all the written and visual images we see in this work. Agut presents each concept he has seen and thought of, in carefully constructed footnotes, as archeologists do in their "field studies" before starting their excavations. Following an old tradition, archeologists used to take notes about their observations and draw sketches in a notebook before the invention of photography. However nowadays, photographs, videos, even images taken from satellites provide archeologists with information about the strata of the earth. One is of course challenged with a complexity of concepts in associating Pep Agut with archeologists. But the artist works with each word as if doing an excavation, and constructs such an impressive triangle of "word-notation-concept" in "Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)", that the readers are able to sense various phenomena thanks to the "new meanings" brought forth here. Pep Agut not only questions the sublime meaning of the holy text, he also refers to the contemporary person's tired, sinful and rebellious fight for existence. We are in a strange period in history, in the framework we are familiar with there is no innocence left in either the holy texts or their interpretations. In these times, while twisted interpretations feed the current political developments, isn't the artist referring to the "production processes of art"?

"Diagrammatic Genesis (of Representation)" is a project with political expansions, where ready mines of concepts that, under their calm images, are almost ready to trigger each other off. Pep Agut juxtaposes unities that can be perceived not just by reading but by seeing; in doing so he not only employs history of art but history of music as well, and succeeds in placing concepts that can be somehow "listened to" in the focal point of his work.

We live in a world where it is very hard to be optimistic. In a time where violence, which almost all holy books reject, has come to order in the name of religion, Pep Agut thinks over the concepts on which blood has fallen, and opens a different window in front of us. What we see before us is a totality of text and image that is as dense the august heat and as freezing as the february cold.

Necmi Sönmez, September 2014, Shanghai

Pep Agut
**Diagrammatic Genesis
(of Representation)**

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