



The division bell:

an excerpt

This spread: Laura Vinck.





The division bell

*“What matter who’s speaking,
someone said what matter who’s speaking.
There’s going to be a departure...”*

— Samuel Beckett,
Texts for Nothing, third text²

II. AUTHORSHIP: THE SEMANTIC MYTHOLOGY


Near the turn of the millennium, Michael Rock observed how the meaning of the Author has changed across time, where the “earliest definitions are not associated with writing.”³ However, at present, it inextricably ties the textual to a singular mind: through literature, first-ly, and through nonfiction — what we might term *everything else* — to a secondary degree.⁴ Though he is thinking in the “modern” tradition

Opposite: Mohammad Alizade.

² Samuel Beckett, “Texts for Nothing,” in *The Complete Short Prose 1929–1989* (Grove Press, 1996), 85–90.

³ Michael Rock, “Designer as Author,” in *2x4 Studio* (1996), par. 3. See *End-notes for URL*.

⁴ *Literature* includes fiction, poetry, prose, lyrics, and the avant-garde. *Non-fiction* refers to all that stands in contrast: biographical and editorial writing; theory, criticism, and analysis, etc. *Ibid.*



that scholars generally place in the wake of the Renaissance, Rock is a tad short-sighted in dating this association in the West to eighteenth-century England with the Statute of Anne; as this overlooks Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Marlowe, along with the fertile literary traditions of early-modern France and Italy.⁵ Moreover, the phenomenon of the Author predates temporal formulations of “creative modernity” in the other fields that, like literature, bear antecedence to design. Though we also still read through this “text-and-master” lens, it is Foucault who most potently flavors our current understanding of the Author. In the late sixties, he questioned the supremacy of a writer’s intentions in textual interpretation, instead emphasizing the sociocultural and institutional discourses that shape their perspective, and in turn ours, as better facilitators of meaning. In this way, we create an opening in the text “where the writing subject endlessly disappears.”⁶ The essence or “true” meaning of a text was no longer drawn from the writer’s perceived intentions, that lone, artistic genius; it now manifested externally, though internally to the reader and informed by all the outward and inescapable biases of culture, era, convention, and other social complexities. At that same moment, Quentin Skinner similarly argued that “knowledge of the social *context*”⁷ should carry greater weight in textual analysis over adhering to the Modernist “orthodoxy”⁸ of treating textual works as the products of an infallible mind, one immune to sociocultural influence. Soon after, Barthes propelled us even further by drawing an important distinction between *work* and *text*, where a *work* is “an object of consumption,” while a *Text* “recuperates [*the work*] as play, task, production, practice.”⁹ Essentially, the *work* is the piece itself, blessed as an audience finds it with its initial

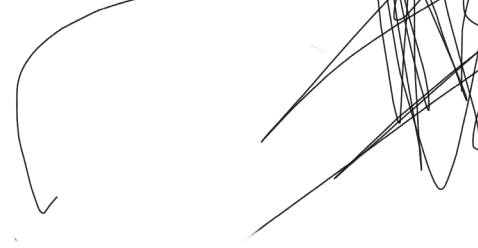
- 5 He likely chooses the eighteenth century as it was at this time that, in the West, the distinction between fiction and history (i.e. fiction versus nonfiction) first emerged. Prior to this, the locus of literary works tended always to be some historical figure or event, but bathed in mythology — and which the contemporary populace took to be fact. *Ibid.*, pars. 7–9.
- 6 Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice:*

Selected Essays and Interviews, trans. Donald F. Bouchard & Sherry Simon (Cornell University Press, 1977), 301.

- 7 Quentin Skinner, “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” in *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (Wiley for Wesleyan University, 1969), 40.

8 *Ibid.*

- 9 Roland Barthes, “From Work to Text,” in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Hill & Wang, 1986), 62.



carriage of meaning by the Author, while *Text* refers to the act of critically interpreting the work. As Barthes would have it, the capitalization of the second item implies that the interpretive act builds upon the content to yield a greater return on intellectual investment for the reader. However, it begs the question of whether works are effectively rendered expressive skeletons in the process, becoming like dioramas for us to, as C.S. Lewis put it in a similar fashion to Skinner, “let loose our own subjectivity upon [*them*] and make them [*our*] vehicles.”¹⁰

At any rate, this is how we largely study literature today: with a methodology that foregrounds sociocultural context and discourse against authorial intent. In other words, meaning sourced from a foregrounded background. It is a recent gear-switch after eons of slow building as well as a thoroughly Western problem, still bogged down by very Western trappings. Here is how we can trace the paradigm and codify it: it was Plato, Aristotle, and all those pre-Christian progenitors who laid our contextual foundations, with walls and rafters raised through the Medieval-to-Renaissance years by the continent’s later innovators of prose, poetry, and drama, many tracing their craft right back to the old Empire and to whom their Modern and early-Modern successors were frequently indebted — by explicit indication or not. It is not difficult, for example, to draw the line from Shakespeare to Defoe, then to Dickens, to Tolstoy, to Woolf, and Butler (Judith, that is). But even in the wake of the post-Modern anarchy that turned us into skeptics of the Author (the change that occurred between Woolf and Butler), we continue to live in the houses of authorial convention built long ago according to Christian, heteronormative, patriarchal codes, only having really done a small bit of remodeling by way of theoretical repainting, the knocking down of some old walls, and the fashioning of a few new interpretive windows. In popular literature, this is strongest, as we praise the work of King or Rowling or Sedaris as one piece of utterly unique art after another while around each a cult of sorts fawns.

- 10 C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1961), 24.

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Axians/photo experiment; Atonement, 2007, meets van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait, 1434. Both works present realities much more complex than they at first seem, shrouding the identities of their inhabitants in layers.



The “origins” of this habit of placing authors on pedestals were pagan and non-heteronormative, anyway (*Arcadia*), compounding the irony. Before spotlighting context in his argument opposing authorial omnipotence (*authorial authority?*), Skinner cautions against layering modern politics over past texts to thereby create a “mythology of doctrines;”¹¹ but what we have taken away from Skinner, along with the other theorists, is that context effectively overtakes, even trumps, the Author. We look for modern racial or religious nuance in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* and do as much critical theorizing over *Mrs. Dalloway* as over *A Room of One’s Own*, and nevertheless, we exalt the writers of both as figureheads whose output defines their time, seemingly allowing context or discourse to outrank authorial intent in one instance while reversing the order in another. We create our own semantic mythology when defining the Author as we perceive them to function in literature, but only once their era has come and passed, it seems. The Author, then, not only changes shape across time and society, but it may be pregnant with contradictions in any given moment. It is a symptom of a world whose “truths” can be found in the items and ideas we *make, verum esse ipsum factum*,¹² from context; to the works that respond to and serve those contexts. Regardless, the juxtaposition of arguments for authorial infallibility against theories that prioritize context reveals the fluidity, the depth, the semantic disputations intrinsic to literature — a paradigm that seems comically unfit for the still very commercial and still very new field of graphic design. Rock, himself a designer, was writing about his own field in his investigation into the *Author*. This was because, by the late nineties, graphic design had seen such conceptual development that its scholars¹³ were taking the time to field groundbreaking questions of authorship as they pertained to contemporaneous work.

This spread: Reddit.

11 Skinner, 7.

12 “The true is what is made,” one of Giambattista Vico’s key principles, taken from his *Origins of the Latin Language*. Alexander Bertland, “Giambattista Vico

(1668–1744),” in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002 (2024). See *Endnotes for URL*.

13 It was also by this time that design was first seen to have what you might call “scholars.”

But in design, we still lack the honor of time to speak of Foucauldian external validations, to make a “Barthesian” categorical differentiation between two species of work, or to advocate for the “Skinner-esque” need to contextualize field-research methodologies. Now, hang on a moment — why this sudden trilogy of mismatched eponymous adjectives? And why do Barthes and Skinner require quotes? Aside from the obvious answer that one has had enough influence on scholarly thought to earn his own terminology, these adjectival propositions reveal something profound in literature that we may be able to apply more than ostensibly to design. The literary Author, in praxis, inhabits an unseen layer in which their creative agency is perpetually subject to cultural determination, and this layer neighbors that in which the Author perceives their creative agency to be an autonomous thing, definable outside of cultural norms. They never operate of their own creative volition; their output must always be evaluated by an audience to grant them Authorship. The profession in turn requires a social sphere that is either overlooked or only sporadically acknowledged in our current cultural setting, especially considering the solitude that any creative role demands. This dichotomy of agency constitutes a semantic mythology of the Author as they constantly straddle these regions, mostly unaware of the dividing line between the assumed role granting inward autonomy and that which follows and calls for outward validation. If there were a bell hung to signal the code-switching inherent between the two sides, it would ring throughout the author’s working day. And here, we can turn once again to Woolf: yes, authorship begins with the solitude of agency, when the idea germinates in the mind and autonomy then takes shape with the act of creating. This internal agency is matched, though seemingly canceled out, by the external agency of the audience — the rigorous debating, the ruminating, the *criticism* — carried out in response to a work; especially in the way we now define “work” (*Text à la Barthes*). So, we define *author* in a combinatory manner: first, of an individual’s offering of value, and second, of the value of that offering as determined by socially accepted parameters dictating artistic and cultural convention. Furthermore, these parameters seem to require a minimum but indeterminate amount of time for digestion, reflection, and evaluation before authorial status is bestowed — the passage of time marking the difference in how

we grant Authorship to current or “popular” literature versus “classic” works, for example. In this way, Authorship is an ever-changing shadow role whose form keeps only as long as the dominant cultural conventions permit. Conversely, the dominant culture may be troublingly fickle in deciding exactly which “shape” an author is even permitted to take.

III. THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES

Let’s also note that authorial shape mutates to an infinitely greater degree when moving beyond the written word. *Text* is one half of design, the other being *image*, bonded together in a systematic amalgamation. What of the origination of meaning, the way we ascribe *Authorship* to works in disciplines wholly encompassed by the second component? This is the same hermeneutic question we posed of literature, but it is perhaps more so the driver of art, even christened with a name that allows for a more transparent discussion in visual studies than in literary and critical theory. It is *intentionalism*,¹⁴ the oft-debated methodology of deriving meaning in what we will term *image-art*: painting, drawing, screen printing, photography, digital art, motion graphics, film (whether within the school of cinema or outside of it), installation art, land art, performance art, conceptual art, found art — all of it. Like literature, these modes of expression have been subjected over the years to their own sagas of interpretative peril where critics oscillate among artist, viewer, and context, evaluating where “true” meaning originates. *Extreme intentionalism*,¹⁵ as it is sometimes termed, is the aesthetic byword for image-art when held in the eye of the Modernist beholder, where artist (*Author*) takes precedence over viewer or context. It dominated in various iterations until relatively recently, though it still holds critical sway, and perhaps more so than in intentionalist readings of literature. Image-art modalities are linked by the common thread in which interpretation derives more from an accessible though embellished metaphor than, as with many forms of literature, the logical framework of a narrative, which itself is a set of constitutive propositions.¹⁶ Literary narrative, as such, becomes more of an


Opposite: FotoFora/photo experiment.

14 Szu-Yen Lin, “Art and Interpretation,” in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002 (2024). See *Endnotes for URL*.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Marxist applications within theories of constitutive rhetoric, like those formulated by Maurice Charland or Louis Althusser, offer more on narrative methodologies.





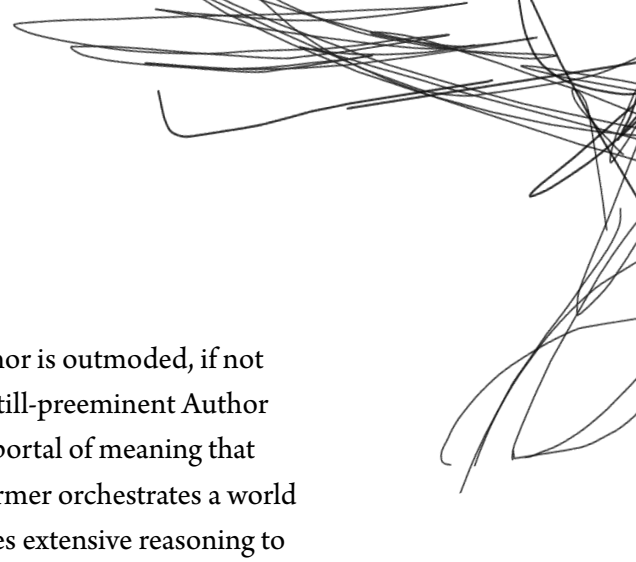
elaborate puzzle, while image-art offers puzzles in a single, impactful visual instance (though narrative film — discussed later — can complicate this a bit). But Authors of image-art do not operate in a vacuum; their work carries just as much sociocontextual baggage as does literature. We may often miss a key component leading to a deeper understanding of a work if we fail to consider that, as theorist Szu-Yen Lin puts it, “factors present at the time of the work’s creation ... play a key role in shaping a work’s identity.”¹⁷ And so now, the output of image-artists, like that of writers, may likely be more colored by methodologies of *contextualism*, or *anti-intentionalism*, in some narrower incarnations. Consider as “templates” for this the following: the culture of postwar America setting the scene for Rothko, Pollock, and other Abstract Expressionists; the influence of the Industrial Revolution on Monet and Courbet; or the nods to earlier pop-culture imagery in Peter Lindbergh’s “new realist” fashion shoots of the nineties.

Despite this, Authors of image-art generally seem to be treated with more reverence, privileging them as originators of meaning where literary Authors now lose out. The Expressionists, the Impressionists, the Dutch Golden-Agers, the Renaissance “men” (to include Artemisia Gentileschi) — all celebrated practitioners of any other movement, if we name them, who are metonyms for their canons. Why else would museums continue to thrive as the egomaniacal show-spaces celebrating the material accomplishments of certain individuals? Image-art, unlike design, is not made for function or to offer a solution to a problem. It is the result of meditation, feeling, expression, existing for the sake of itself; to be appreciated, to confront, or to be interpreted. It is, at its most basic, deliberately impractical. So, the *artist* assumes the more unquestioned role of *Author* and remains the most compelling source for meaning, sometimes also serving as the sole point of a work’s external validation. Literature, on the other hand, *conjures* images in the mind that are subjective to the individual, unlike the immediacy of image-art with its color, composition, and

17 Lin, “Art and Interpretation,” par. 27.

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Anthony Perkins’ disturbed visage as Norman Bates in *Psycho*, 1960, another Hitchcock opus, cropped into Albrecht Dürer’s Christlike 1500 self-portrait. The result fuses two portrayals of men deeply interested in representation, albeit for very different reasons.



materiality. Perhaps that is why the literary Author is outmoded, if not dead completely, when squared off against the still-preeminent Author of image-art: while the latter fabricates a visual portal of meaning that exists in plain sight in the physical world, the former orchestrates a world of imagined visual strata whose meaning requires extensive reasoning to be understood. This is what led Foucault to equate writing with death through the “total effacement of the individual characteristics of the writer”¹⁸ via contextual interpretation, and like the gray layer where a writer’s autonomy clashes with external reception, this difference in signification constitutes what theorist and philosopher Hugh Silverman describes as “the chiasmatic conjuncture of the painter’s seeing ... and what is seen.”^{19, 20}

Design generally provides no such arena for its makers. In its dominant commercial, “problem-solving” form, which still largely defines the field for the public via pop culture, job descriptions, university curricula, and, as we will later see, much of the discipline’s scholarly literature, its text is neither crafted to express chapters of self-sustaining content and over which an audience will pore, nor are its images cast in the same caliber as those of image-art to be anatomized in the same way. Both literature and image-art have evolved so appreciably that the conceptual depth of each has given us everything from *The Canterbury Tales* and *Don Quixote* to *As I Lay Dying* and *A Clockwork Orange* in the first case and the *Venus de Milo* to the *Ghent Altarpiece* to Donald Judd’s many *Untitleds* in the second. These works created as well as deconstructed visual and textual genres through the generations. Warhol perhaps first blurred the line between art and design at mid-century, albeit momentarily, giving us a seminal formal challenge to expected design “genres” (and genres of image-art) with his stacked Brillo boxes and repeating Campbell’s soup

18 Foucault, 301.

19 Hugh Silverman, “Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art: Aesthetics — Then and Now,” in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, NO. 2 (Penn State University Press, 2012), 362.

20 Heidegger also pithily said it as, “neither is without the other,” referring to both artwork and artist in his *Origin of the Work*

of Art. His focus on context presaged Barthes and Foucault, but he similarly argues that art both expresses and creates social concepts of “truth,” implying that *truth* is essentially human-made.


Martin Heidegger, *Martin Heidegger: Off the Beaten Track*, trans. & ed. Julian Young & Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

1500

A
D



Iheronimus Duxerus Nomen
ipsum me proprijs sic effin-
gebam coloribus quatis
anno xxviii.




cans. Predating Warhol, Magritte did something similar with one of his most well-known paintings, referenced in the title of this section with the textual motif that he actually employed in a number of other works. But Magritte did not really “speak” with the same visual design language that Warhol did throughout his œuvre, and Warhol’s use of design was in a “meta-found” fashion, anyway. This means that these did not represent the major structuralist shifts that the listed works of literature and image-art did for their respective disciplines. Design would thus continue along its cookie-cutter path, remaining “merely... a driver for economic growth,”²¹ as designer Ruben Pater states, bound irradicably to capitalism and satisfying a material gain versus one in spirit or intellect. In practice, design is the mere functional cousin in the mostly “truth”-seeking, noble family of arts. The fieldhouse of the creative world — athletic, agile, and alluring in the forms it offers, but sitting like a concrete block near the ornate red-brick shrines where craftspeople gather to respond to the world around them in a manner untethered to the pursuit of profit. Image-art and literature endeavor to find and represent a *Truth*, that which is of a more “natural” world, revealed through work as its currency and turning the profit of the betterment of the mind or spirit; while most design endeavors, by contrast, champion the opposite within a much more fabricated realm.

Before we start to sound too much like Heidegger, Kant, or Marx, let’s reflect: why are the products of design not so “truthful?” Is *profit* as a prime determiner in defining a certain thing such an unethical blot? It is not so much a good-versus-evil binary, but simply that when the driving factor is profit, the lofty reaches of expressivity are very much trumped by formulæ for material necessity: the application of what has worked before to calculate the greatest financial success. Only minimal risk is undertaken, together with whatever set of actions is sufficient to push the chart line at a right-upward diagonal. Products driven by these criteria are *products* in the economic or “literal” sense; creature comforts, luxuries — *fetishized commodities*.²² They are the work of a system, a material methodology

Opposite: KentLife.org.uk.

21 Ruben Pater, *Caps Lock: How Capitalism Took Hold of Graphic Design, and How to Escape from It* (Valiz, 2021), 86.

22 The concept from Marx’s *Das Kapital* describing the social relationship within capitalism of value placed on things, in contrast to social relationships as they exist among people.



sustained by “wins” but the primary force behind, as Alfred Marshall put it, “the ordinary business of life... the social action... connected with the attainment, and with the use of the material requisites of wellbeing.”²³ Literature and image-art are very much at times concerned with ordinary life, but not in their very essence as a business, and the social action attached to such fields revolves around, as stated, an intellectual or spiritual improvement of wellbeing rather than the attainment of material requisites. That these works can make their Authors buckets of money is also symptomatic of their assigned value in a capitalistic system, where *value* is attached to the self-sustaining existence of the work, while a design work generally acts as just one of the *means* for another object to make money. It is the jacket of the book or the branding of the gallery exhibition. The “truth” of design may then be regarded as an *untruth* by comparison. Borrowing from Lucretius, Baudrillard distills this view most famously in what he describes as the *hyperreal* of modern consumer society, surrounding us in the form of a “generation by models of a real without origin or reality... a *precession of simulacra*.”²⁴ It is the tangible and the intangible; objects, things, products, services, and their connotations and tropes which cultivate needs where none really exist, constructing a culture where personal growth, success, *thriving* is defined not by the procurement of practical or intellectual skillsets; mastering rewarding cultural practices; developing meaningful social relationships; and other practices of “nonmaterial” elevation, but by playing each of us as a character in the opposite narrative: that of *material* elevation, of ever-maximizing object-attainment and the status it brings. What’s more, attaining a certain status only encourages the desire to assume the superseding one, along with any corresponding material requisites, marring our perception with “the existential feeling that we are not entirely happy about ourselves,”²⁵ as Pater says in his own, very Baudrillardian critique of advertising design.

23 Mark Blaug, “Economics,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2024). See Endnotes for URL.

24 Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (University of Michigan Press, 1994), 1.

25 Pater, 199.

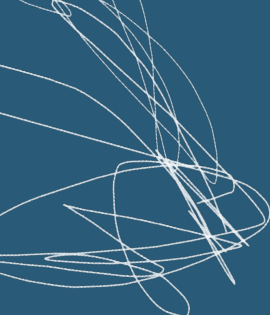


Design as most know it builds and is built by such artifice. So it has been since the Industrial Revolution, with field scholars' favored starting point for "modern" design work — at *la Belle époque*, during the Parisian poster craze, the now-prized Art Nouveau artifacts of which existed to drum up interest in *business*. We inhabit a logical progression of that era, besieged from all angles by what art historian and theorist James Elkins terms *visuality*, a facet "of late capitalist first-world culture"²⁶ and increasingly the primary way we perceive our world. Motion and UX design, two design modes with ever-growing importance, most pertinently illustrate this condition at the moment — along with more ingrained languages like type and title design, though when consumed in the parent format of video application. The Truth that most commonly collides with us is not that of expression, the soul, or the mind, but that of artifice; made of plastic or nothing at all, and borne of market-targeting, need-satisfaction, and upward mobility as the molding forces of happiness. The truth of selling. A truth that rarely, if at all, belongs to the consumer as an individual, but to the corporation. A truth that, rather than delivering happiness, as truth should — brings little more than a fleeting infatuation with one's milieu. Design facilitates this cozy, manufactured reality, and of all the creative fields, it is the only one offering the *simulacrum* as its primary deliverable. And what of its practitioners?

Its Authors do not in large part exist in the form we have so far explored, and if they ever do, their output is usually not tied to Truth as reflected in other creative representations of the world. In this way, design's apparent *authorlessness* renders our original assessment of Authorial agency — defined as a twofold thing both internally independent while contradictorily, outwardly dependent — either irrelevant in the context of design or poised to take on its own, new form in the future of the field. It seems to be that the majority of design might rear little more than what to some is the ugly head of simulacra, but for one thing, growing circles of design give us work that present something else; and for another, in the more dominant design circles, there is no reason that the simulacrum has to continue serving as form and content's default template. More pressing still, it's not like there is a complete lack of artistic value or "Truth" where one is greeted by design

Opposite: Pexels/photo experiment.

²⁶ James Elkins, "What Is an Image?" in *The Stone Art Theory Institutes 2*, (Penn State University Press, 2011), 2.



simulacra, at least insofar as the merits of “corporate” design are concerned, along with noteworthy examples of the opposite, socially conscious type of design that engages content resembling corporate visual languages for the express purpose of critiquing them. Design truths *are* artifice on planes where their schemata exist according to well-understood articulations, such as in typography, logo design, branding identity, or packaging design, all of which can become self-aware artifice in clever hands. Deliberate, sensory, Baudrillardian — Platonic,²⁷ even — simulation. Rick Valicenti’s self-published *Suburban Maul* is a good, though low-profile, example, featuring on one spread a “McMansion” American home with the Toys “R” Us logo realistically slapped over the front door. When design uses the conventions it simultaneously breaks, or when it integrates activist, expressive, ironic, or meta-rhetorical content, the question of design Truth weighs more heavily, and with it, the veracity of design Authorship.

Branding identity becomes a puissant design language when subverted. For a designer to formulate a creative logic to go beyond the typical reaches of identity branding, or to craft the branding to do more than offer the clarity of a logomark and type palette across store shelves or in city streets, they must break free from design’s more common profit-maximizing marketing logic (*object-attainment*) to pursue a *value*-maximizing one.²⁸ That is, marketing not fueled by capitalism, but by creative expression, a social cause, an academic inquiry, or any other value-based endeavor that can be logically engaged for its own sake. In so doing, the Truth denoted by literature and image-art can more readily apply in design spaces. A design Author, if they exist, must not be held to the material goals of a parent entity; as in that moment, their Authorial agency is puppetry, drawing with an overseer’s hand, beautiful as the final work may be. The designer in this area is usually anonymized with the completion of their work, killed off in the Foucauldian sense, like the “death” to which a writer submits themselves as their work takes on life through dissemination. The designer must exert their own hand, but for a different result. Despite contradictions in

27 In the *Republic*, Plato decries art as mere representation, a copy of the natural world. Representation, meanwhile, is nothing more than an illusion, rendering art *simulacra*.

Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Project Gutenberg, 1998).

28 Value-maximizing theories in art, also understood as *utilitarian*, espouse that an

interpretation of a work of art (*image-art*) should extend, or *maximize* its perceived value, making its existence more rewarding for the audience. Such approaches are rooted in contextualism, as the perceived value must draw reasonably from the context in which a work was made.

Lin, “Art and Interpretation,” pars. 31–32.

how we assign Authorship to writers, painters, and their ilk, designers must reach for that same idealistic, contradiction-rich plane of creativity for recognition. For now, those Platonic, Shakespearian, Woolf-esque foundations remain, with centuries of critical remodeling overlain as one field and then another has developed; but with the free pursuit of material happiness that we have embarked upon, our dwelling spaces have metastasized into a Babel-like ziggurat of bought-and-sold narratives, dressed in the usual plumes of design but distracting us from new crests of ideation that appear and which employ the Truth seen in other creative fields. We are on a “quest for authenticity (*being-founded-on-itself*)” that masks a “quest for an alibi (*being-elsewhere*),”²⁹ still meaningless forms without our material surroundings, crawling up and down the pyramid that accommodates us daily with the treachery of the *artificial-truth-through-image* haunting us while never penetrating quite as often as it surfaces.

Following spread: Volvo/
photo experiment.

29 How Baudrillard sums up his critique of our collective fetish for amassing objects in his 1968 doctoral thesis and first book.

Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (Verso, 2020), 81.

