

Aesthetic Inertia, Bathetic Death: On the Profoundly Banal Art of Jake and Dinos Chapman

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The performative agenda of young British artists (yBas) of the 1990s crystallised around an emphasis on non-art, a populist attempt to merge art and life, a refusal of bourgeois conventions of high art, or in more general terms, an artistic philistinism “valuing the denial itself” (Bull 1996: 25) and allowing the voluptuous to emerge within art practice. Philistinism, as defined by Dave Beech and John Roberts, “accuses the cultivated refinement of the body as a motivated denial of voluptuousness and excess” and contests how “the ethical value of [the modern] art is secured by impoverishing the body and elevating aesthetic experience and art beyond the voluptuous contingencies, activities and delight” (1996: 126; also 1998; 2002). Julian Stallabrass’s critical take on yBa as “high art lite”, however, emphasises its easily consumable intellectual “lightness” and its “lite” re-enactment of avant-gardism: “[yBa] captures the idea of a fast food version of the less digestible art that preceded it” (Stallabrass 2006: 2). Stallabrass positions these artists in a postmodern political vacuum:

A facile postmodernism, the basis for a ubiquitous irony, was the foundation of this new art, one which took no principle terribly seriously, which pretended not to separate high from mass culture and which, given this relativism, accepted the system just as it was, and sought only to work within it. The new art would be quite as dreadful as the philistines said it was – obscene, trivial, soiled with bodily fluids, and exhibiting a fuck-you attitude – but this time to deliberately use the philistines’ energy and power in the mass media against them. [...] The level of recursion of reference in these projects has moved on from what went before: these artists are not so much engaged in masquerade (in putting on an identity as you would a costume) as in a masquerade of masquerade. High art lite is post-psychoanalytic (2006: 26–48).

However, what Stallabrass regards as “anti-intellectualism” or ideological emptiness in yBas (e.g. Jake & Dinos Chapman, Tracey Emin, Marcus Harvey, Damien Hirst, Gavin Turk) as well as their “fathers” Gilbert & George, may also be considered as a subversively blank, performative activity that invests in more than a mode of postmodern irony and self-consciousness. If one should associate this artistic movement with philistinism, it would be too easy to reduce this association to a critique that either labels yBa as a failed, commoditised lumpen aesthetics or celebrates its presumably transgressive temperament. There remains an ambiguity in discussing yBa along the axes of

success/failure, ethical idealism/capitalist opportunism, adolescent aggression/active nihilism, or transgression/transformation. What deserves particular attention, though, is not the political efficiency of the transgressive aesthetic but the *object of critique* that such a transgressive urge produces. In this sense, the lack of depth, which is framed through blankness, as in simulacrality or Fredric Jameson's postmodern pastiche (1992), or dumbness, as in what Stallabrass points to as the "burial of intellect" in high art lite, does not always lead to the presumption of an atheoretical, if not anti-theoretical, textuality/visuality in art practice. Departing from this, I would like to explore the art of Jake & Dinos Chapman by focusing on a particular mode of *aesthetic inertia* that the duo constructs through their use of violence, exposure, death and mimicry. As I see a meaningful continuity, if not a simple linear progression, within the trajectory of their art practice, this discussion will take the form of an overview on the ways in which the artists' aesthetic strategies evolved, and overlapped, from "Anatomies" (1994-1997) to "Fucking Hell" (2008) and their later experimentations with their earlier work. In this respect, Chapmans' manifesto "We are Artists" (1991) is a good starting point:

We are sore-eyed scopophilic oxymorons. Or, at least, we are disenfranchised aristocrats, under siege from our feudal heritage. The graphic heritage of our absent but nevertheless sonorous letraset, honours the dead (and the bad conscience) of past generations, a recollection of the discordance between concepts and pictures. Our discourse offers a benevolent contingency of concepts, a discourse of end-of-sale remnants, a rationalistic hotbed of sober categories. We have manufactured our products according to the market demands of a deconstructive imperative, and policed them according to the rules of an industrial dispute – our bread is buttered on both sides. We have always already been functions of a discourse; in short, our subjectivity (our labor) deserves professional interpretation, our mental agitation demands a limitless expressionism, our contractual teleology demonstrates our servility to a cultural climax never to be experienced. The future remains excluded. But sometimes against the freedom of work, we phantasise emancipation from this liberal polity, into a superheavyweight no-holds-barred all-in mud wrestling league, a scatological aesthetics, for the tired of seeing (Chapmans in Grunenberg & Barson [1991] 2007: 82-3).

This statement attempts to enact an artistic subjectivity in the form of a capitalistic

desiring-machine. Taking art as manufacturing a product “according to the market demands of a deconstructive imperative”, the artists appear to embody and appropriate the postmodern condition in contemporary art practice – as a symptom of advanced late capitalism. They declare an objective to mimic its logic through their artistic labour. In this sense, in search for a “cultural climax never to be experienced”, the artists, throughout their *oeuvre*, demonstrate and visualise their perverse interest in a phantasmagoria of dysfunctional forms of such artistic labour: an anti-aesthetic that invests in failures of representation (i.e. representations as (re-)productive repetitions), or, art as a form of banal expenditure. Thus, the denial of art in Gilbert & George (whom Stallabrass considers as the key author-function of yBa) and the Chapmans differs significantly. In contrast to Gilbert & George’s statement in their “Art for All” (1971), which entailed an ideal of progress via writing the life-force itself onto the medium, the Chapmans’ work capitalises upon an excess of auto-cannibalism, a death-force, in which the art practice constantly consumes and devalorises itself:

We are interested in shock – in convulsion. We are obsessed with the failed attempt at producing objects with a vertiginous obscenity attached to them; in being purely gratuitous and rejecting critical worth. [...] We are interested in the redemptive value of transgression, and how morality is squeezed from sin. We fantasize about producing things with zero cultural value, to produce aesthetic inertia – a series of works of art to be consumed and then forgotten (Chapman, Chapman & Rosenblum 1997: 149).

Focusing on this logic of inertia in the duo’s art practice, the following discussion is an attempt to identify an aesthetic trajectory that starts with the global debut “Anatomies” and extends to the artists’ various later explorations that mainly capitalise upon a playful engagement with the work of Goya.

The Child Undone

The mannequin sculptures in the duo’s earlier work, the series “Anatomies”, demonstrate an obscene, dysfunctional bodily multiplicity in which some body parts appear to have regenerated themselves on the same human body and the sculptural figuration contains various combinations of genitalia: labia, anuses, and penises throughout. In “DNA Zygotic” (1997), twelve heads are partially fused together in groups of four,

where each group of four heads has a rectal hole in its centre and the entire ensemble of heads is connected to four legs (Figure 1). In “Siamese Twat”, the body is split from the chest (two heads, four hands) and a vagina with a penis above it is sprouting from the point of division. While “Two-faced Cunt” (2009, Figure 2), “Bog Standard Two-faced Cunt” (1996), “Three-faced Cunt” and “Return of the Repressed” (1997–2007) are examples of facial splitting where the wound of the split embodies the presence of female genitals, “Fuck Face” (1994) and “Fuckface Twin” (1995) are examples in which mouths are replaced by anuses, and noses by penises. In comparison to these artworks which operate through displacements and replications across the human body-image, “Token Pole” (1997), “Bubble Bubble” (1997), “Bad Trip at the Folies Bergere” (2009), “H.M.S Cock-shitter” (1997), “The Unnameable” (1997), and “The Disasters of Yoga” (1997) are further experimentations of corporeal deterritorialisation where the phallic bodily unity is perturbed by doubling or tripling bodily territories and further elevating the bodily entropy. The infant-like human head partially embedded into the monstrous mutant-body in works like “H.M.S”, “The Unnameable” and “Distasters” not only implies a confusion of birth and abject but also presents a self-penetrating corporeality in which the body gains the status of a transitional object, a self lacking its unitary phallic presence, a post-human monstrous self *of* selves/others intermingled. In “H.M.S”, the penises sprouting from anuses refer, at first glance, to the primary fear of castration whose shit-to-penis phantasmatic vector is completed and reversed: penises are rendered abject body parts (Figure 1). In general, what “Anatomies” exposes to the spectator is “a sequence of impossibilities, objects that [do not] have [...] the possibility of birth or creation” (Rosenblum, Chapman & Chapman 1997: 147). Being embodiments of a radical fetishism, these sculptures carry zero Oedipal value. This Oedipal inertia undoes the conventional fetishistic excess in representation. Hence what the artists regard as “sore-eyed scopophilia” can be characterised as the “pleasure in looking [which] becomes a perversion accompanied with a perverse enactment of laughter” (Barson 2007: 78). That laughter, however, is more than an effect of pastiche/parody or satire. While, for instance, Cindy Sherman’s parodic engagement with dolls and mannequins, particularly in her series “Sex Pictures” (1992), “Horror and Surrealist Pictures” (1994–96) and “Broken Dolls” (1999) incorporates a critique of gender norms as a construction of phallic differentiation at an ocular level, the Chapmans’ practice invests in the repressed anal value of the body. It lacks irony. It enacts the bathetic rather than the parodic.

Neal Brown comments on the semiotic value of the artists’ re-assembling of man-

nequins in “Anatomies” as follows: “These ‘puppet governments’ serve the artists as strongly established models for extremes of human wishfulness – as (a) the totalising, imaginative projections of children (toys), (b) the ‘primitive’ magico/religious (fetish dolls), and (c) the insatiable desires of consumer capitalism (mannequins)” (Brown 2003: n.p.). Rather than focusing on the materiality of these artistic objects in terms of these three regimes of commodity-fetishism, I would like to take their queer excess into account: an excess that resists reproductive futurism, which Lee Edelman claims to be an ideological effect of the innocent image of the Child as the phantasmatic heteronormative universal. Queer, in Edelman’s conceptualisation, acts against “the pervasive invocation of the Child as the emblem of futurity’s unquestioned value [which] marks the fetishistic fixation of heteronormativity” (2004: 3-4, 21). The image of the Child then becomes a linguistic foreclosure that fills – in the form of desire to be endlessly cultivated (i.e. the Freudian compulsion to repeat formulated as the desiring subject’s constitutive drama in life) – the inevitable voids in referentiality within language and identity politics.

Edelman’s revision of queer politics, with the ethical imperative in “the ceaseless disappropriation of every propriety” (24), takes a stand against the sacralisation of the Child. Though not proper dolls or toys due to their sculptural size, the Chapmans’ mannequins seem to have child-like faces and postures whose juxtaposition with their over-sexualised and mutilated/mutated presence gains a bathetic effect. The construction of such libidinal chaos intervenes into the phantasmatic ideal of the Child: they are too sexualised to be sexed/gendered and too mutated to be taken as human. Their queerness comes not only from their perversely multiplied sexuality but also from the non-heteronormative logic of their representation. They are anti-Oedipal. Their monstrosity elicits almost equal effects of disgust, joy, and laughter. They are non-reproductive, so their sexuality is not subject to the phantasmatic imperative of the Child: they are anti-Child. Their presence does not trigger a vision of futurity. Their creation implies a form of sibling-hood but they seem to come to life as effects of mitosis, that is to say, without any logic of female-male sexual union but a series of amoebic divisions, “nomadically breeding in an unlimited becoming” (Biesenbach & Dexter 1996).

The artists note that they “like the relationship between representation and reproduction [however, they] present objects that couldn’t have a model for reproduction” (Chapman, Chapman & Rosenblum 1997: 147). Also resonating with Edelman’s critique of the Child as the embodiment of reproductive futurism, Chapmans’ critical engage-

ment with representation as an ideological effect of reproduction is considerably visible in not only the duo's "Anatomies" but also the complex appropriation of Goya in their later works. The extensions of "Hell" and "Fucking Hell" in "Unhappy Feet" (2010), "Altered Towers" (2011), "Nein! Eleven" (2012–2013), "The Sum of All Evil" (2013), and "To Live and Think Like Pigs" (2015), as well as the further bastardisations of (or insults to) their own work, in the recent shows "Shitrospective" (2009–2010, see Figure 2) and "Come and See" (2014) can be considered as their further interventions into representation-as-reproduction as well as their own identity as artists. The following section will explore the duo's post-"Anatomies" engagement with Goya. Since Goya has operated almost like an *urtext* throughout Chapmans' career, I believe that a discussion of the artists' earlier appropriations of Goya is crucial in terms of identifying elements of continuity in their recent works, especially their post-"Hell" practice.

The Dead Undone: Re-staging Goya

The Chapmans' ambition to create an object of aesthetic inertia that resists the logic of reproduction extends to the duo's later art works such as the series "Insult to Injury" (2003–2004), "Rape of Creativity", "Like a Dog Returns to Its Vomit" (2005), "Hell" (1999–2000), and "Fucking Hell" (2008). These works engage with Francisco Goya's (1748–1828) etchings, especially the series "Disasters of War" (1810–1820), which demonstrates how central the artists' deployment of imitation, appropriation, and excess in reanimating Goya's spectacles of war is to the overall trajectory of their career. Their method evolves around two main axes: (i) the sculptural interpretation of Goya's etchings in works such as "Disasters of War" (1999), "Disasters of War IV" (2001), "Hell" and "Fucking Hell", and (ii) the appropriation of Goya by means of re-drawing the original, or partially manipulating the copied/printed original, and further intervening into the copies they produced.

In order to interpret the Chapmans' reanimation of Goya's "Disasters", Philip Shaw recalls the ways in which Goya's depiction of human suffering and violence in war has been hitherto perceived by art-historical and political discourses. Goya's depictions included the Peninsular war, the Napoleonic occupation of Spain, and Spanish resistance against the imperial forces. According to Shaw, the visual-textual ambivalence in Goya, as well as the authorial pleasure embedded in the image, is ignored and displaced by the urge to moralise and humanise the painter's work. While Shaw reminds the reader of Wilson-Bareau's understanding of Goya's work as a humanist one that depicts "the

desire for dignity, the betrayal of a people's sense of its own humanity" (Wilson-Bareau 1998: 37), he also notes Goya's rather obvious humorous enjoyment of these series of rape, torture, genocide, and bodily mutilation. Shaw asks: "at what point does the representation of war find relief in a certain kind of libidinal pleasure? Does the enjoyment of disaster qualify the raising of a moral perspective?" (Shaw 2003: 480). The libidinal economy in Goya's imagery is questioned here by using a psychoanalytical argument concentrating on the foundational relationship between the abject and the subject. What Lacan calls *imago*, the imagery of the fragmented body (i.e., in Lacan's words, "images of castration, mutilation, dismemberment, dislocation, evisceration, devouring, bursting open of the body") to be constantly negated and repressed in order to access the unity of the speaking "I", cultivates a foundational aggressivity within the ego that will be projected onto the other (Lacan 2002: 13). Shaw sees a form of eroticism in Goya's compulsion to repeat this primal drama of subjectivity and to return to bodily fragmentation and the abject. Goya seems to impose such erotics by enacting and projecting the subject's constitutive attraction with the repressed *imago* onto the viewer: "the eye/I is invited to partake in a dialectic of attraction and repulsion, seeing in those *unheimlich* [uncanny] depths an *imago* of its own bodily incompleteness" (Shaw 2003: 485). In this regard, "Grande hazaña! Con muertos!" [Great Deeds Against the Dead], plate 39 in Goya's "Los Desastres de la Guerra" (see Figure 3), can be seen as one of the most radical and popular examples where the *mise-en-scène* of the dead resists the sacralisation of death by collapsing the *imago* into a moral vacuum. Shaw argues:

There is something wilfully excessive, even contrived, about Goya's composition, which qualifies the integrity of its moral stance. With sacrificial, ritualistic overtones, the image depicts three castratos draped from a tree, three figures echoing the crucifixion, their absurdly suggestive poses at odds with the solemnity of death. The notion is underscored when we meditate on the ironic contrast between the leaf-laden tree, symbolic of the cyclical economy of nature, and the unregenerate mortality draped and skewered on its branches. The tableau convulses the taboo that offers the loathsome corpse as a counterbalance to sacrifice; instead of differentiating the abject and the sacred, Goya succeeds in a kind of violent yoking suffusing the abject with sacrificial meaning whilst subjecting the sacred to sadomasochistic defilement (2003: 487-8).

In this sense, the logic of appropriation in the Chapmans' sculptural re-animation of "Grande hazaña" does not contradict Goya's mediation of death but elevates its libidinal economy. The duo's work does not sit harmoniously with Jameson's formulation of postmodern pastiche, that is, mimicry as blank textuality (1992: 114). The Chapmans' enactment of blankness works not to reiterate the "death of the subject" but to politicise death-as-subject. It works performatively to produce an aesthetic inertia and to "make a dead sculpture, dead in content and dead – or inert – in materiality" (Damianovic 1997: 5; see Figure 4). The artists' approach here does not function as either a tribute to or a critique of Goya. Their "Great Deeds" manipulates what has been (and could still be) interpreted as humanism in Goya's "Grande hazaña": it extracts the erotic affinity in content and translates it into "a non-dialectical, non-utilitarian and ultimately post-humanist object" (Shaw 2003:490).

While the leaf-laden tree in Goya's picture is transposed into a dead stem in the Chapmans' version, their use of mannequins for castratos with bleeding wounds of corporeal and genital mutilation presents a fake, mundane hyper-realism with "no emotive contrast, no chiaroscuro" (490) which can also be regarded as its radical difference from Goya's etching where a series of visual contrasts functions as the artist's commentary on the scene of the dead. Furthermore, in contrast to the logic of pastiche/parody in which the spectator can trace the tension between the copy and the original, between the intellectual rigour in presenting that tension and the artist's performative invisibility, the erasure of artistic subjectivity in the Chapmans' "Great Deeds", leads to "a spectacle of failed artistic transference which de-magnetises the moral compass" (Fogle 1996). This blank, amoral imagery conceals a critique of the postmodern human condition in its radically "deadened" materiality and cruel dialogism. The juxtaposition that operates between narration and non-narration, sublimation and de-sublimation reduces the textual operation of mimicry into a libidinal skin, a bathetic death of flesh, an aesthetic inertia. The artists state:

We approach our work from a point of view of extreme primary narcissism. Then the process of producing the work is actually a microcosmic example of what happens in society, which has nothing to do with consensus – it has to do with warfare. Nothing dignified happens after our conversations. A legitimate agenda never really reaches the studio. It's always left at the door, and what happens inside is that the studio and the work become one surface, a kind of libidinal

skin. What we produce is only energy, and the only energy that motivates us to make anything is this hysterical laughter. We want to produce something that is more like a hallucination, which is iconic rather than representational. So that the work never becomes just indicative of meaning, because the production of meaning is already a neurotic exchange. What our work attempts to do is to be slightly more psychotic about how that meaning is exchanged (The Chapmans in Foght 1995: 1–4).

The very contrast between Goya's works and the Chapmans' appropriation of them also enables the duo's "Great Deeds" to gain an affinity with a discursive frame that incites the spectator to question the contemporary perception of war. As Shaw also stresses, the Chapmans' revision of Goya cannot be considered outside of the contemporary political context of international conflict: "when we gaze at 'Great Deeds', are we not made aware of the extent to which technology sanitises images of the utmost suffering, to the point where we long, perversely no doubt, for contact with the fecund, palpitating body of 'Los Desastres'?" (Shaw 2003: 494). Jake and Dinos Chapman mimic "the futility of postmodern abjection" as the symptom of the "lack of direct encounter" with the so-called enemy: the performative banality in re-telling Goya accurately reflects the point where the disembodied contemporary imagery of war makes the subject "unable to recognise itself in relation to the desire of the antagonistic other" and where "the nostalgia for the fragmented body takes shape as postmodern fantasy" (494).

In the "Great Deeds Against the Dead 2" (1996), in which eighty-three replicas of "Great Deeds" are collated, and the "Disasters of War" (1993) in which each diorama sculpturally revives a scene from Goya's *Los Desastres*, the use of toy-like miniature figures, or dioramas merits attention in terms of both its critical affinity with Edelman's phantasmatic image of the Child and the artworks' banal imagery of death, used to amplify the failure of its communication. As Chris Townsend also argues, death is the core subject of the artists' "repeated communication of the impossibility of that communication" (Townsend 2008: 11). While the postmodern visual longing for the fragmented body-image appears to be a consequence of the censored reality of war – a war that is legitimised as a humanitarian intervention for the sake of democracy or national security – the Chapmans' so-called "artistic infantilism" penetrates and discursively contaminates the ideological realm of the Child with spectacles of war. It contaminates the embodiment of reproductive futurism, progressive modernism, and humanism. The

artists' later series in the form of prints, etchings, drawings, watercolours, and engravings, namely "Insult to Injury", "Like a Dog Returns to Its Vomit", "Disasters of War", "Disasters of War IV", "Gigantic Fun" (2000-2005), "My Giant Colouring Book III" (2004-2005) and "Etchasketchanon" (2005), may be seen as extrapolations of this critical encounter with the Child – by means of a simultaneously consumed and recycled Goya.

These drawings and etchings "take Goya's sequence as a departure point, rather than copy text, transforming the original with apocalyptic imagery drawn from the Holocaust, contemporary world conflicts and the realms of pornography, Surrealism and science fiction [where the drawing style contains an] *impulse to mutate rather than repeat*" (Shaw 2003: 497, my emphasis). Not only the content but also the strategies in visual narration demonstrate versatility rather than coherence in the artists' re-appropriation of Goya. The common denominator is the naïve but aggressive *infantile hand* they enacted in their Goya-effect. While some etchings carry references to both Goya's "Los Desastres" and the duo's earlier series "Anatomies", the artistic hand in another set of works appears either to reproduce a Goya with an infantile libidinal excess or to intervene within a copied print of a Goya with watercolours, in order to intensify its underlying perverse humour. What the Chapmans attempt to eliminate in their practice, however, is a textual ambivalence that might cultivate a discourse of humanitarianism. The lack of contrast in "Great Deeds" is applied to the two-dimensional medium in their etchings (from both series "Disasters of War" (1999) and "Disasters of War IV" (2001)) which reinterpret Goya's plate 33 in "Grande hazaña!" and the result turns out to be a negation of artistry and an emergence of a cruel infantilism (see Figure 5 and 6). In the reimagining of plate 36, the intensification of contrasts throughout the drawing, the trans-contextualisation by means of the swastika on the hanging, deceased victim (from the Peninsular war to the Holocaust), the arousal implied by the erect penis of the twin figure epitomises the duo's performance of perverse play – which could also be taken as an attempt to address the phantasmatic Child via a sadomasochistic dialectic (see Figure 5 and 6).

In the series "Insult to Injury", the artists use Goya's work in the form of what Rosalind Krauss once regarded as the "pirated print" in her analysis of Sherrie Levine's re-photographing of Weston's photographs: a kind of "desublimation of the discourse of the copy repressed in modernist art for the sake of the discourse of originality" (Krauss 1984: 168). This "act of theft" minimises the access of the Chapmans' own artistic hand within the imagery. The duo printed copies of eighty Goyas from "Los Desastres", hiding a single figure's face in each piece using watercolour, and transforming the face into a

clown or a carnivalesque creature (see Figure 7). This minimal intervention in the act of copying/imitating functions as a condensation of authorial self-consciousness, where the role of that condensed detail, the human face, undoes Goya's ambivalent logic of death and incorporates what the duo consider as their hysterical laughter. As the clown-like extra-terrestrial figures masking the dead face of Goya's victims appear to "add insult to injury" by an implication of *jouissance* and to juxtapose the contemporary mediation of war, the duo's strategic theft not only refers retrospectively to their earlier enactment in "Great Deeds", of abject-as-capital within the postmodern subject's yearning for *imago*, but also repeats their claim in creating an impoverished aesthetics, a self-cannibalising art-practice, an inertia "punishing the idea of making a work of art, punishing pathos" (Chapman in Chapman & Harris 2010: 181).

The condensed detail in "Insult to Injury" takes the form of a transparent layer of children's colouring book images in the series "Gigantic Fun". The duo draws these images onto either their re-etchings of Goya or their "pirated prints" of Goya (see Figure 8). The copies of the cartoon-like images from children's colouring books, which, as a transparent narrative layer, are drawn onto the Chapmans' imagery, present an encounter between the Child and the Goya-style death, or, an encounter between the Child and their own performance of bathetic perversity. As seen in Figure 8, the artists further mime/consume their own imagery, which is already miming/consuming Goya (see Figure 8).

The logic of reproduction in the form of the anti-Oedipal breeding in the early mannequin series "Anatomies" informs the Chapmans' engagement with Goya in the sense that the artists' reproductions are auto-cannibalistic and self-consuming mutations. Their method in appropriation and artistic production attempts to de-sublimate and embrace the death drive rather than repressing, escaping, or sublimating it. This approach relies on not a narrative mode of reverse discourse, developed around the binary narrative/counter-narrative, but the use of irony as a *corrosive*, future-negating textual ambivalence. The unthought remainder in (i) the humanist readings of Goya (that is, the ignored laughter and perverse enjoyment in the imagery) and (ii) the phantasmatic figuration of the Child (that is, the polymorphously perverse infantile body) is exposed by means of a de-idealisation, and/or dehumanisation, of the textual references superimposed onto one another and interchanged.

As the title also implies, the later series "Like a Dog Returns to Its Vomit" can be regarded as a return to the series "Insult to Injury" i.e. a further consumption, a re-recycling, of Goya. In contrast to the condensation of the authorial signature on the pirated

print in “Insult to Injury”, the series “Like a Dog” morphs this into a cannibalistic presence of the artists through their watercolouring of Goya’s “Los Caprichos” prints (1799) and further figural manipulations within it (see Figure 9). Alluding to early “Disasters” etchings and watercolours (1999–2001), which lack the material presence of the pirated prints (although they do refer to them) and are relatively more chaotic in their revival, this intervention can be interpreted as a performative enactment of a child colouring his/her colouring book titled “Los Caprichos” and further manipulating the figures in it (Baker 2005). However, Goya’s use of the monstrous and animalistic excess in these etchings from “Los Caprichos” is predominant, where, according to Schulz, “uncertainty and disorientation [...] result from the blending of satire and fantasy” as a result of the painter’s attempt to “invert the Enlightenment body” (Schulz 2005: 120–56). The satirical approach in “Los Caprichos” creates a grotesque imagery in which Goya “blurs the closely guarded line between the human and the animal that is fundamental to the Enlightenment conception of ‘man’ [...] [by means of subverting the late-eighteenth-century hierarchy of senses with] active mouths and inoperative eyes” (141–2). Therefore, the embodiments of satiric excess already explicit in Goya (which is not as visible in “Los Desastres” as it is in “Los Caprichos”) are re-elaborated in the Chapmans’ “Like A Dog”. Rather than the condensation of their signature, as in the facial details of “Insult to Injury”, or the heterogeneous layering of the artistic hand, as in the series “Gigantic Fun”, here the Chapmans dominate and transform the original surface of “Los Caprichos” but sustain its figural posture. The duo’s figuration of the grotesque (i.e. the monstrous and the animalistic/voluptuous) is designed to intertwine with Goya’s version of the same notion within the image. Goya’s – and the Chapmans’ – functions merge. In “Like a Dog”, the mode of mimicry results in an exchange between Goya and the Chapmans in which the duo’s appropriation attempts to create a perceptual transfiguration of the original Goya and his inversion of Enlightenment in “Los Caprichos”. This is almost an attempt to transform Goya’s “artistic hand” into a composite hand, or a mutant artistic hand.

As discussed above, the artists develop various methods of appropriation while engaging with Goya. Going beyond the conventions of postmodern pastiche, their approach is significantly informed by the logic of mutation, which does not only mutate by revisiting and reappropriating Goya’s art, but also breathes new life into their own work, as *mutations of mutations*.

Fucking Dead

In *The Culture of Death*, Benjamin Noys explores the ways in which a transgressive art of death can give a critical account of how we are exposed to death. From George Bataille and Francis Bacon to the Viennese actionists and J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973), Noys offers us a critical dilemma operating within the intersection between aesthetics and politics. He suggests that modern art, in hyperbolising exposure, "avoids the problem of modern death [...] despite its claims that it confronts death":

What we are exposed to is death as profane and banal. In this way, an aesthetic of bare life must avoid the cherished value of "intensity", which dominates much of contemporary art and criticism. The constant search for or celebration of intense experiences threatens to obscure the actual existence of modern death as something more banal, something not intense at all. Instead of celebrating intensity, celebrating transgressive death or transgressive life, we need to try to find the new aesthetic of bare life (Noys 2005: 120-4).

What remains paradoxical here, according to Noys, is that the contemporary in-yer-face art, in attempting to criticise the media imagery of 'bare life', might become "another type of media image" (107). However, can the Chapman's art practice offer a curious, and perhaps ambivalent, case in this respect? The intricately crafted spectacle of death and its sheer scale in "Hell" and "Fucking Hell", followed by their further reincarnations in "Unhappy Feet", "Altered Towers", "Nein! Eleven", "The Sum of All Evil" and "To Live and Think Like Pigs" (see Figure 10) exposes a visual intensity that, in Jake Chapman's words, operates as "an attractor to depth" but "its opticality and its melodrama and its romantic narration is completely vapid and hollow" (Chapman in Chapman & Harris 2010: 178). The accompaniment of the KKK mannequins in the duo's recent shows "Come and See" and "Shitrospective" has a similarly hollow, if not bathetic, function. Does such an artistic mode of anti-climactic excess and exhaustion bear the potential to comment critically on the "incapacity of representation [of death]" without neutering the event of death ideologically (Townsend 2008:123)? How effectively does the artists' practice reflect their repeatedly declared intent, that is, "to punish pathos, trying to annihilate the claims made for a work of art", and perhaps in other words, to punish art's entitlement to touch people in various affective registers?

What remains from the intensity of the dead/death exposed in the Chapmans' works

is something profoundly banal. It locates 'bare death' outside the redemptive pathos of the Child. The Chapmans' art is an écriture of a queer anti-Child.

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Resim 1 | Figure 1. Jake & Dinos Chapman, "H.M.S. Penis Sıçan" | "H.M.S. Cock-shitter" ve/and "DNA Zigotik" | "DNA Zygotic", 1997. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 2 | Figure 2. Jake & Dinos Chapman, "İki Yüzlü Amcık" | "Two-faced Cunt", 1995 ve/and "İki Yüzlü Amcık (RETROSBOKTİP)" | "Two-faced Cunt (SHITROSPECTIVE)", 2009. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 3 | Figure 3. Francisco Goya, "Büyük Marifet! Ölülere Karşı!", 39. levha, "Savaşın Felaketleri", 1810-1820 | "Great Deeds Against the Dead", plate 39, "Disasters of War", 1810-1820. © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado



Resim 4 | Figure 4. Jake & Dinos Chapman, "Büyük Marifet! Ölülere Karşı!" | "Great Deeds Against the Dead", 1994. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 5 | Figure 5. Francisco Goya, "Savaşın Felaketleri" | "Disasters of War". "Daha Ne Yapılabilir?", 33. levha | "What More Can Be Done?", plate 33; "Bu Sefer de Değil", 36. levha | "Not (in This Case) Either", plate 36, 1810-1820. © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado



Resim 6 | Figure 6. Jake & Dinos Chapman, "Savaşın Felaketleri IV" | "Disasters of War IV". Goya'nın 33. levhasının yeniden çizimi | reanimation of Goya's plate 33; Goya'nın 36. levhasının gravürü | re-etching of Goya's plate 36, 2001. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 7 | Figure 7. Jake & Dinos Chapman, “Yaraya Tuz” | “Insult to Injury”. Goya’nın “Büyük Marifet! Ölülere Karşı!”nın korsan baskısı, 37. levha | pirated print of Goya’s “Great Deeds Against the Dead”, plate 37; Goya’nın “Büyük Marifet! Ölülere Karşı!”nın korsan baskısı, 15. levha | pirated print of Goya’s “Great Deeds Against the Dead”, plate 15, 2003-2004. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 8 | Figure 8. Jake & Dinos Chapman, “Şahane Bir Eğlence” serisinden | from the series “Gigantic Fun”, 2000. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 9 | Figure 9. Francisco Goya, “Los Caprichos”, 24. levha (Hiçbir Çare Yoktu) | “Los Caprichos”, plate 24 (There Was No Remedy), 1799. © Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado ve/and Jake & Dinos Chapman, “Bir Köpeğin Kusmuşuna Dönüşü Gibi” | “Like a Dog Returns to Its Vomit”, 2005. © Jake and Dinos Chapman



Resim 10 | Figure 10. Jake & Dinos Chapman, “Cehennem Dibi” | “Fucking Hell”, 2008 ve/and “Domuzlar Gibi Yaşamak ve Düşünmek” | “To Live and Think Like Pigs”, 2015. © Jake and Dinos Chapman

Jake & Dinos Chapman
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