

Is asemic writing a zero-point writing?

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¹ Asemic texts seem to constantly rely on the reader's canny clairvoyance to disclose their meaning, not to leave him standing before the melancholic contemplation of its loss. For this reason, they may appear as a radical, conceptual research into the nature of language, which intentionally drops the contents of experience and hides behind the mimicry of well known languages, institutionalizing text falsification. While writing is always the starting point, asemic writers express themselves on the edge between pure literature and visual art, often insisting on the original, innate characters of handwriting, rather than on traditionally text-based works: every dot, every stain or even every single digital bit in an image is as real as a consonant or a vowel. They often behave like smugglers, creeping along the guarded frontier of meaning, with their bags crammed with somewhat secret or confidential schemes, scripts, preparatory notes or sketchbooks. There may no longer be codes to draw signs from: language restlessly reinvents itself in the common forge of form and meaning. Since the writer gives up his status of *deus ex machina*, the reader/viewer loses a steady point of comparison. As before a paper of jurisprudence, where «La place que le mot y occupe est une place nette. L'ambiguïté du Droit tient sans doute à l'interprétation du texte; à l'esprit et non à la lettre»,² the power of imagination must again be set free to interpret the text not barely as a dumb archive of recov-

ered artefacts, even more so when all conventions are cancelled out. With these premises, some have started questioning themselves about whether asemic practices may be associated with a ground state of writing, a sort of language zero-point, where all meaning ceases and words come to rest, blurred within a fairly random net of signs. Shouldn't we instead rephrase Heisenberg uncertainty principle and state that, though classical texts can always be brought to full meaninglessness, the same does not work for asemic ones, which always tend to exhibit a zero-point meaning? When all textual conventions are so stripped down that the whole page consists of either subtly scattered/stacked text-based elements, or of a mere repertory of independent fragments, the whole meaning gets absorbed into the intrinsic void of deconstruction. Early and late experimental writings have often tried to work around this problem by loading the language with overly conceptual aspects, resulting in necessarily unfulfilled expectations: «[...] it is very difficult to modify our language [...], for words can only describe things of which we can form mental pictures, and this ability, too, is a result of daily experience. [...]; for visualisation, however, we must content ourselves with [...] incomplete analogies [...]».³ In asemic scripts, on the contrary, signs and meanings have been superseded by the pure notion of asemicism, wherein the writing itself becomes a delay in meaning. After all,

the unification of the concepts of space and time almost one century ago has not been integrated within classical physics by means of slight adjustments: it has reframed physics all the way through. Under this perspective, asemic writing can be addressed as the culminating act which has torn down the ultimate barrier, potentially returning traditional writing to its flawless meaningfulness.

NOTES

¹First appeared on «Utsanga», n.15, 2018.

²Broodthaers, Marcel: *Art poétique in Broodthaers*, (ed. B. H. D. Buchloh), Cambridge 1987, p. 16.

³Heisenberg, Werner, *The Physical Principles of the Quantum Theory*, transl. Eng. C. Eckhart, F. C. Hoyt, Chicago 1930, p. 10.