



EDITORIAL #4

Death and Anarchy

by Enrique Pardo

Includes References & Homework

In response to **Nick Hobbs'** offer of two lectures for the Festival - email copy below.

This Editorial #4 is part of a running series, and has a particular mission: to broach the terms and strategies with which to approach the Festival's two main topics: DEATH and ANARCHY. Both topics are "colossal", on many, many levels - especially physical and metaphysical, certainly for performance. Both can easily take us for never-ending rides into *culs de sac* vagaries, naïve or wayward. I wish to take on a selective and demanding line similar to the one I take as Alchemy's "artifex" (laboratory director): pyromancer and security fireman, "lucky" shaman, ombudsman, catalyst, and why not, for once, *facilitator* - and take these roles to "perfectly serious" ends. Remember Lezama-Lima: "The thump of a coffin hitting the ground, is something perfectly serious."

I wish, therefore, to steer and funnel reflections and performances towards the *MAGIC* dimensions of both Death and Anarchy.

I follow up these wishful ambitions with another quote from Rafael Lopez-Pedraza's reading of Cuban poet José Lezama-Lima who considered *colossal* to be much more than a matter of size (giant) and that any object, (I would add: gesture or event), could be colossal if and when it achieved its *figuration*, that is: *meta* qualities of a magical, animistic, mytho-poetic kind, and thereby achieve fetishistic power and presence. (Are we not talking performance here !?) Reference: Lorand Matori's book, *The Fetish Revisited*, seminal to the 2023 *Fetish* Festival.

After the 2021 *Superstition* Festival, Xavier Papaïs, my main Theory collaborator, enjoined me to read James George Frazer's *Psyche's Task* (1909). I was so taken by that book that its title became the 2022 Festival theme. What struck me most were the chapters dedicated to the rituals performed to shield and protect the widow or widower of the deceased spouse. Extraordinarily insightful, with practical networks of *care*, often radical: burning all belongings, house and plantation sometimes, or exile - not to ever meet the gaze of the deceased. The dead could become evil enemies. Frazer was a man of his age: patriarchal and colonialist and, on the surface, he seems to be formally describing a civilizational stage when superstition was laying the foundations towards 'civilized' civilization, i.e., Queen Victoria's England... Later, in 1933, Frazer wrote an ethnographic compilation titled *The fear of the dead in primitive religion*. I find Frazer, and especially the Melanesian rites he comments in *Psyche's Task*, 'perfectly' cogent.

At what level are we talking? Am I implying that Roy Hart, especially after such a terrible triangular death, could become an enemy? Certainly, and I have had to defend myself often from his ghost apparitions, in my dreams and especially in other persons' projections, impersonations or possessions - all the more so since Linda and I own a house in Malerargues. He can appear as an enemy, and in many other guises, beneficial or malevolent. And I have come to consider such reflections to be the most lucid, comprehensive and necessary forms of depth psychology, or call it depth anthropology. And an essential dimension of performance.

Gratia Frazer, *gratia* Xavier and *pace* Roy Hart. It is with such open depths that I wish the Festival to proceed. I count on Nick Hobbs to foster such insights, his way. A note to Nick: at around twenty I went to a concert at San Francisco's The Fillmore, guarded by Hell's Angels; a concert of... *The Grateful Dead!*

I close this Editorial (probably more to come), with a short word on Anarchy (certainly more to come), and particularly on the book that propelled Anarchy to the fore of this Festival : Christine Malabou's *Au Voleur!* (PUF, 2022), translated as *Stop Thief! Anarchism and Philosophy*, (Polity, 2024). Two strong points: first, her reflections on the Greek root *arkhé* in anarchy, and, by corollary (and contrast) in archetype. Second, most important, the quality of Malabou's *sympathy* for Anarchy - the affective yet acute and even stern quality of her... benevolence. A performative lesson - and yet... beware of Altamont 1969.

PS1 The image of Caravaggio is contextual, not topic: we will work with the genius *chiaroscuro* of his lighting and the drama of his artistry (and life).

PS2 We are dropping Trump as a 'magical' rubric. He *grabs* far too much attention.

PS3 But, on the other hand, we are not attracting enough participants! A few great ones have inscribed, but few... so we hope for more! We risk ending like E.P.: with more generals than soldiers. (A bottle of Pisco to who guesses what E.P. stands for - not me.). We are prepared to barter in order to attract more participants. [Write to us](#).

Enrique Pardo, Malérargues, May 12 2025

Nick Hobbs' email:

Le 4 mai 2025 à 14:29, nick hobbs <nick....> a écrit :

if you liked...

I could do an online lecture on music about death; I could also do one about musical anarchy

the one about death could have 2 parts - music directly about death (lots of choice) and music that represents the essence of death

the one about anarchy could also have 2 parts - music directly about anarchy (not a lot of choice) and music that represents the essence of anarchy

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great themes!