

DOCTORAL PROGRAMME  
IN MUSICAL ARTS

docARTES. ■

## A Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds



Candidate: Nicholas Cornia, 15 January 2025

ORPHEUS INSTITUUT

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Advanced studies and research in music

# A Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds

Nicholas Cornia

01-15-2025

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# Prologue

*Games are the aesthetic form of instrumental reason. Games are the art form about choices and consequences.*

Frank Lantz, *The Beauty of Games* (2023)

*Alberi, tavole, diagrammi, cercano infatti di catturare e di dar forma visibile a tutte le combinazioni possibili fra i due ordini topici del credibile e dell'incredibile.*

Lina Bolzoni, *Macchine per la memoria e per l'invenzione fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (2005)

*We ought to take a fresh look at tradition, considered not as the inert acceptance of a fossilized corpus of themes and conventions, but as an organic habit of re-creating what has been received and is handed on.*

Harry Levin, *The Singer of Tales* (1960)

*Fakes tell us what we want to see in the authentic.*

Esther Pasztory, *Truth in Forgery* (2002)

*A library is the creation of a world, not the archive of a lost past.*

Björn Schmelzer, *Performing by the Book (Next to the Book You Were Looking For) or: Aby Warburg's "Good Neighbour"* (2024)

# docArtes Application

## 1.1 Summary

(132/150 words, 5 keywords)

Despite recent cultural changes, the Early Music movement remains mostly a bastion of "truth" and "authenticity" in modern times' turbulent sea of doubt. Conversely, my project wishes to legitimise a place for falsification, fiction and imagination in the realm of *historically informed practice*. A forgery is typically associated with a work which is not genuine, intended to deceive and destabilize the foundations of value and meaning in the arts. Inspired by proto-scientific thought, poetry, devices of wonder and games from the 16th and early 17th centuries the *Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds* aims to reconsider our past through polyphonic music that never was. In my work, I aspire to discover the liminal space between corpus-based musicking, forgery and period composition by reshaping the role of knowledge, either actual or imaginary, and its systematisation.

### Keywords

- ☞ **ludology** (ludus): thinking playfully and recombining objects to create new meaning. Inspiring literature: Huizinga, [1938] 2016, Suits, 1978, Lantz, 2023.
- ☞ **information science** (clavis universalis): understanding the system underlying phenomena to assemble a novel narrative. Inspiring literature: Eco, 1996, Reiss, 1997, Braguinski, 2022
- ☞ **open work** (coincidentia oppositorum): the alchemical concept of "unity of opposites" invites us to embrace the plurality and the multiple possible worlds hidden in both natural and artificial phenomena. Inspiring literature: Eco, 1989, Castelli, 2002, Dormans, 2012
- ☞ **forgery** (fantasia): the power of fiction in explaining reality. Inspiring literature: Dutton, 1983, Borges, 2006, Saler, 2012, Eco, [2013] 2015, Wolf, 2014, Stephens et al., 2019
- ☞ **period composition** (aemulatio): reshaping dialectically our relation with the past. Inspiring literature: Lowenthal, 1985, Haskell, 1988, Collingwood, [1946] 1993, Haynes, 2007.

## 1.2 Research Subject

(483/500 words)

Advocating the “losers” of music history has always been the inner core of *Le Vecchie Musiche*’s mission. Under my artistic direction, the ensemble gives “a new voice to those forgotten by history”. Furthermore, “it proposes a new way of reading our cultural heritage, too often dominated by a rigid aesthetic canon”.<sup>1</sup> Through music, the ensemble has enhanced the stories of forgotten men and women, daring thinkers reflecting crucial values we find undeniable, especially in turbulent social climates. For instance, during the *Sprezzanti Rime* project, advocating the life of female poets of 16th-century Italy, we realized the limitations of current historically informed practice in delivering our artistic message, namely the birth of feminism in Western art and gender issues during the *querelle des femmes*. We deplored the lack of a “lost music score”, a piece of music belonging to our speculations, inhabiting our deepest and untellable dreams of researchers. From humble musicians, we turned ourselves into forgers of the madrigal *Ecco che un'altra volta*, based on the poignant poetry of Isabella di Morra (c.1520-1546), a poet that never had the chance to publish her work due to the constraints and injustices of her time.

The present doctoral project *A Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds* claims that forgery could be used as a methodological framework for an artistic research doctorate project. This statement might sound bold at first glance, but the boundaries of truth and false, real and unreal, performer and audience have become almost meaningless in the time of Artificial Intelligence and mass production of knowledge and artefacts (Dutton, 1983).

The hermetic title for my future work embeds in itself most of the topics of my doctoral proposal. First, it alludes to Italian philosopher Giulio Camillo (1480-1544), who proposed a device called *artificiosa routa*, a generative model *ante litteram* to systematize the creative process of poets and orators (Bolzoni, 2005; Robinson, 2003). Analogously with Camillo and many transgressive thinkers of the 16th and early 17th century, which could be defined as Mannerist period (Maniates, 1979), my project wishes to investigate the plurality of worlds hidden behind the (re)combinations of a musical knowledge system. (Berkowitz, 2010; Ghisi, 2017; Gjerdingen, 2007) Secondly, it is an homage to fictional writers and thinkers like Jorge Louis Borges (Borges, 2006) and Umberto Eco (Eco, [2013] 2015). Mythical creatures as well as utopian lands share a similar ascendant on our minds: through placing themselves outside reality they become powerful emblems revealing the inner meaning of things. The geometrical features of the whirlpool, idealized by a spiral, occupy a topological liminal space between the line and the circle, the first representing progress, hierarchy and causality, the latter embedding the concept of cyclicity, plurality and simultaneity. The whirlpool represents a boundary between avant-garde and tradition, originality and emulation, proposing a dialectic and pluralistic approach to our musical past (Bowen, 2019; Forment, 2024; Taruskin, 1984).

Through the use of game design, algorithmic music composition, forgery and collective performance I wish to blur the divide between agents involved in music through *lusory attitude* (Suits, 1978), *dialectic emulation* (Lowenthal, 1985), and *historical imagination* (Collingwood, [1946] 1993).

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.vecchiemusiche.be/en/ensemble/>

### 1.3 Research Process

(571/600 words) Planning and methodology of investigation

This doctoral proposal wishes to develop a methodological framework for period composition inspired by Mannerist culture and thought, with special attention to divergent branches which, due to the fate of History, did not find a strong resonance or were forgotten. I am referring particularly to female writers, (Kelly, 1977; Ross, 2010, February; Stevenson, 2005) proto-scientific disciplines such as astrology and alchemy, (Ray, 2015) occult practices (Forshaw, 2010; Rossi, 1960; Yates, [1964] 2022), Neo-Latin literature (Calenza, 2004; Knight and Tilg, 2015; Schaffenrath and Winkler, 2018), parlor and board games (Haar, 1962; Schleuse, 2015; Seville, 2019; Stabile, 2023; Zandrino, 2006) and *com-media dell'arte* culture (Ferrone, 1993; Perrucci, 2008; Wilbourne, 2016)

Furthermore, I wish to draw an analogy between Mannerist visionaries and contemporary artistic and scientific practices by dialectically emulating dispositives and ideas of the past with the help of modern digital tools from computer science and mathematical modelling. Sources of inspiration come from contemporary algorithmic corpus-based composition (Ghisi, 2017), music schema theory, (Burgoyne, 2011; Gjerdingen, 1990; Leman, 1995) classical programming and Machine Learning (Cope, 2000; Cope, 2004; Ebcioğlu, 1990). I am planning to organise musical patterns and schemata using Semantic Web technologies (knowledge graphs) and similar databasing structures from the field of Music Information Retrieval. Contrary to state-of-the-art Deep Learning architectures, I wish to experiment on more flexible, interactive low-computation and low-training models inspired by historical algorithmic procedures and mathematical strategies from the pre-Big Data era. I aim to reconsider the process of musical composition as a curatorial and exploratory process in the space of possibilities provided by a corpus. Redistributing the agency of musical composition from a single composer to a network of agents resonates with recent trends in artistic research concerning the creation of co-creative space for composers using technology (de Assis and Łukawski, 2024), and applications of assemblage theory in the field (de Assis, 2018, p.110).

Additionally, pre-digital and other "analog" procedures such as social games will be crucial to my investigation, expanding my recent work on artificiality and the pre-history of algorithmic music (Braguinski, 2022; Collins, 2018; Cornia and Forment, 2024) to the 16th and early 17th century (Chierotti, 1994; Zweig, 1997). Another fundamental aspect of my research will orbit around the concepts of agency, collaboration, randomness and choice within the frame of the complex process of music making, from composing to performing in front of an audience, and its emergent creative impulse. Methodologies from reenactment studies (Agnew et al., 2019) and game design (Dormans, 2012; Tekinbas and Zimmerman, 2003) will be applied in the collective practice of courtly, domestic and academic music of the Mannerist period.

Arguments for choosing the madrigal as case study are manifold: First, the madrigal's polyphonic form invites us to think playfully, generating a parallel imaginary world of *meraviglia* from endless re-combination of patterns and musical schemata (Gerbino, 2009; Wegman et al., 2014). The intrinsic plurality of polyphonic singing and poetry declamation embedded in the madrigal will become a practical playground to understand the complex relation between composers, devices, performers and audiences. Its collective declamation of poetry in sound aims to be at service of the transgressive *Accademia degli Incompresi*: a fictional organisation inspired by Italian academies. The members' ideas will feed the *Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds* to generate madrigals that never were, legitimising a new form of knowledge *through* forgery (Kivy, 2000; Stephens et al., 2019). Inspirations for such playful and open-ended performances will be taken from a long-standing tradition of *giuochi* and *veglie* from Italian courts and academies (Haar, 1962; Stabile, 2023).

The dialectic engagement with our musical past will be at the foundation of the critical space Early Music Laboratory **EMuLa**, bringing together historically informed practitioners to generate new meanings from our cultural heritage. Finally, I aim to reconsider the role of a corpus, either physical or imaginary in the creative and participative process of artistic research. The library at Orpheus Instituut will be crucial in the development of a musical knowledge graph of schemata, thanks to Ton

Koopman's indices and the copious collection of musical treatises (original and facsimiles), esoteric literature and poetry.

## 1.4 Research Outcomes

(299/300 words)

The output of the *Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds* will be diverse, addressing different kind of audiences.

On a broader level, the project will demystify the *sanctitude of musical text* (Forment, 2024, p.9) though the use of algorithmic procedures, period composition, improvisation, and even infamous forgeries like in the "good old times" (Corten, 1996; Haskell, 1988, ch.4). I will produce a series of musical *open works* emulating the informal and participatory nature of the madrigal and other academic and courtly games of the Mannerism. I will develop activities seeking to give justice to the etymological meaning of "concert".

Similarly, the nature of the project shall recontextualise the concepts of failure, authority and hierarchy providing an alternative artistic framework for the new generations of Classical and Early Music performers. Inspired by the success of critical spaces like *Sound Arguments*<sup>2</sup> and the *Intelligent Instruments Lab*<sup>3</sup> I wish to invite other critical HIPsters in the *magic circle* (Huizinga, [1938] 2016) of the *EMuLa* affording the freedom to experiment, create and blur the boundaries between the actual and the imaginary. (Bolzoni, 2012; Eco, 1985)

Furthermore, I plan to develop and document collective musical practice of polyphonic music with the ensemble *Le Vecchie Musiche*. The fellow musicians will evaluate and co-create procedures to shape poetry in sound, under the constraints of chance and algorithmic rules.

Concerning the academic side of my output, I plan to develop generative models of polyphonic music in the form of digital, analog or hybrid games. Moreover, I am positive that my findings will provide some insights in the current ethical and cultural issues concerning originality, authority and creativity by transhistorically and dialectically approaching our cultural past.

Finally, the quantitative output of my research will manifest in the form of datasets and knowledge bases for Music Information Retrieval tasks, with particular attention to the intrinsic relation between poetry, affects and musical gestures of the Italian madrigal.

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<sup>2</sup><https://orpheusinstituut.be/en/news-and-events/sound-arguments-2025>

<sup>3</sup><https://iil.is/>



## 1.5 Contribution to Knowledge

(421/600 words)

*A Whirlpool of Imaginary Sounds* advocates for interdisciplinarity, bringing together disciplines like performance practice, computer science, ludology, reenactment studies, musicology and philosophy of the arts to reshape the controversial concept of artwork (Goehr, 1992) through corpus-based composition, or period composition, and a lusory attitude towards forgery and deconstruction of aura (Moore, 2012).

My project wishes to inspire other fellow musicians in (re)considering the creative and artistic process as a structured game of endless recombinations, where concepts as authenticity, authority and even truth are questioned. In this guise, artistry opens itself to an intricate network of relations and agents. The "work" becomes a plurality of worlds encoded in rules and procedures, a refined game of skill and wit open to continuous interpretation, collaboration and interaction (Eco, 1989).

I aim to contribute to the current shift in paradigm in the Early Music movement, (Forment, 2024; Haynes, 2007) encouraging fellow musicians to consider the artworks of the past as open to our taste and knowledge, and even to our political and cultural mission. In this regard, I wish to introduce R.G. Collingwood concept of *historical imagination* into the complex equation of musical performance practice, (Collingwood, [1946] 1993) recombining the strata of a musical assemblage to generate new meaning through sound. (de Assis, 2018) The fictional *Accademia degli Incompresi* and the actual critical space of the *Early Music Laboratory* (EMuLa) will bring together transgressive thinkers of now and then.

In my research I propose a new form of musical literacy and practice based on systems, inspired by recent developments in game studies (Lantz, 2023; Zimmerman, 2015), philosophy (Meadows, 2008) and music schema theory (Gjerdingen, 2007; Leman, 1995; Meyer, 1996). My claim is that this way of organising knowledge in diagrams and schemata is not an invention of modernity, but can be traced already in the proto-scientific thought of Early Modern Europe. (Reiss, 1997) By imaginary polyphonic music, I wish to sensibilise modern audiences to the visionary and transgressive thought of the members of the fictional *Accademia degli Incompresi*, men and women from the 16th and 17th century that could help us bring some light, and hope in our current idea of history.

By relating musical schemata, poetry and other artefacts, actual and imaginary, into a complex knowledge base I advocate a novel approach towards the role of corpora, such as libraries, cabinets of curiosities and datasets, in the artistic research process. Paraphrasing the so-called "Lovelace-questions" I wish to understand human creativity through the lenses of modern and historical systems, without forgetting their intrinsic ludicity. (Boden, 2004; Lantz, 2023) Furthermore, my research will become a paragon of corpus-based (artistic) research, organising and recombining information from musical treatises, poetry and other sources in an interactive and generative knowledge graph.

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# Working Plan and Scholarship

- ☞ Intended starting date: 10 October 2025.
- ☞ Intended host university: KU Leuven.
- ☞ Intended Directing Supervisor: Prof. David Burn.
- ☞ Intended Academic Specialist: Dr. Bruno Forment.
- ☞ Envisaged duration of the research: 5 years.
- ☞ No grant or scholarship has been requested.

## Yearly working plan

### ☞ Year 1

- Literature and archival study
- Development of digital corpus and models
- Historically inspired design of performance games
- Attendance and contribution to conferences in the field.

### ☞ Year 2

- Publication of article in computer science and/or artistic research journal
- Open-source publication of dataset and beta model
- Experimentation of designed performance games with selected group musicians.
- Attendance and contribution to conferences in the field.

### ☞ Year 3

- Organisation of **EMuLa**, a creative and critical space for Early Music practitioners and scholars.
- Open performance series with audience.
- Attendance and contribution to conferences in the field.

### ☞ Year 4

- Official recordings of *imaginary madrigals* (period compositions) under Creative Commons open license.
- Publication of second artistic research article.
- Dissemination of research project through workshops and non-specialised periodicals.
- Attendance and contribution to conferences in the field.

- Second edition of **EMuLa**.

#### **Year 5**

- Writing of dissertation.
- Realisation final performance.
- Third edition of **EMuLa**.
- Publication and long-term support datasets, code and knowledge base.

# Appendix

## L'Accademia degli Incompresi

Here a preliminary list of members, which works might be of interest for the *whirlpool*.

- ☞ Leon Battista Alberti, Q182046
- ☞ Andrea Alciato, Q464471
- ☞ Vittoria Aleotti, Q2707991
- ☞ Antonio Allegretti, Q3619162
- ☞ Johann Heinrich Alsted, Q454743
- ☞ Giovanni Battista Andreini, Q1134183
- ☞ Isabella Andreini, Q2632451
- ☞ Giovanni Aurelio Augurello, Q2020328
- ☞ Francesco Badoer, Q114553568
- ☞ Girolamo Bargagli da Siena, Q1403844
- ☞ Scipione Bargagli, Q3952391
- ☞ Emilia Bassano-Lanier, Q3656783
- ☞ Jean-Antoine de Baïf, Q379941
- ☞ Joachim du Bellay, Q18420
- ☞ Giulia Bigolina, Q18819239
- ☞ Giovanni Branca, Q642672
- ☞ Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, Q3769560
- ☞ Giordano Bruno, Q36330
- ☞ George Buchanan, Q715169
- ☞ Michelangelo Buonarroti, Q5592
- ☞ Tommaso Campanella, Q191850
- ☞ Maddalena Campiglia, Q3842277
- ☞ Thomas Campion, Q455618
- ☞ Gerolamo Cardano, Q184530
- ☞ Jacob Cats, Q46151
- ☞ Margaret Cavendish, Q242640



🔖 Laura Cereta, Q3778073

🔖 Vittoria Colonna, Q255368

🔖 Anne Conway, Q4768242

🔖 Chiara Margherita Cozzolani, Q460363

🔖 Tullia d'Aragona, Q444628

🔖 John Dee, Q201484

🔖 Marsilio Ficino, Q192374

🔖 Marcantonio Flaminio, Q351485

🔖 Robert Fludd, Q453697

🔖 Moderata Fonte, Q457070

🔖 Veronica Franco, Q257493

🔖 Veronica Gambara, Q437615

🔖 Tommaso Garzoni, Q3531261

🔖 Conrad Gessner, Q60116

🔖 Giovanni Giocondo, Q5585

🔖 Giambattista Giraldi Cinzio, Q724672

🔖 Lorenzo Gualtieri (Spirito), Q3837084

🔖 Mariano di Jacopo, Q1398560

🔖 Heinrich Khunrath, Q73366

🔖 Athanasius Kircher, Q76738

🔖 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Q9047

🔖 Michael Maier, Q901303

🔖 Francesco Marcolini, Q3750210

🔖 Lucrezia Marinella, Q1873744

🔖 Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Q434425

🔖 Chiara Matraini, Q645763

🔖 Tarquinia Molza, Q274484

🔖 Olympia Fulvia Morata, Q272798

🔖 Isabella di Morra, Q3154847

🔖 Domenica Narducci (del Paradiso), Q3712848

🔖 Lodovico Paterno, Q23013190

🔖 Francesco Patrizi, Q435300

🔖 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Q316307

🔖 Gianbattista della Porta, Q334154

🔖 Giuseppe Porta Salviati, Q3108131

🔖 Dalida de' Putti, Q131747789

- ☞ Agostino Ramelli, Q395696
- ☞ Paolo Ricci, Q2935143
- ☞ Innocenzio Ringhieri, Q41617826
- ☞ Cosimo Rosselli (Cosma), Q29447
- ☞ Francesco Maria Santinelli, Q7420427
- ☞ Johannes Secundus, Q614229
- ☞ Carlo Sigonio, Q544176
- ☞ Sigmund Staden, Q548173
- ☞ Gaspara Stampa, Q466811
- ☞ Marcello Palingènio Stellato, Q261554
- ☞ Suor Lorenza Strozzi, Q20005147
- ☞ Jonathan Swift, Q41166
- ☞ Bernardo Tasso, Q823060
- ☞ Bernardino Telesio, Q457986
- ☞ Laura Terracina, Q6499496
- ☞ Evangelista Torricelli, Q102490
- ☞ Orazio Toscanella, Q55835449
- ☞ Johannes Trithemius, Q60178
- ☞ Roberto Valturio, Q651013
- ☞ Marco Girolamo Vida, Q1340193
- ☞ Elizabeth Jane Weston, Q2563872
- ☞ John Wilkins, Q381039
- ☞ Heinrich Zeising, Q57290212

## Key terms

- Alchemy and empirical sciences
- Neo-Latin poetry
- Proto-scientific thought
- Iconology: the power of images, symbols and emblems.
- *Querelle des femmes*: gender studies and female writers of the Mannerism.
- Imaginary worlds: fiction, parody and critique.
- Esoterism: searching for the lost *clavis universalis* and Hermetic thought.
- Artificiality: fascination for machines.
- Forgery: historical imagination, authority and deception.

## Citations

Here a detailed list of citations that have inspired and shaped my research project.

### Ludus

*Playing games is part of what it means to be human.*

Eric Zimmerman, *Manifesto for a Ludic Century* (2015)

*Games reverse the ends and means of other activities.*

The Grasshopper, *The Grasshopper. Games, Life and Utopia* (1978),  
p. 93

*Games are the aesthetic form of instrumental reason. Games are the art form about choices and consequences.*

Frank Lantz, *The Beauty of Games* (2023), p.103

*[A work of art is] an infinite contained within finiteness.*

Luigi Pareyson, in Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* (1989), p.21

*In both music and language, constraints provide a common ground for communication between the performer and the audience.*

Aaron L. Barkowitz, *The Improvising Mind* (2010), p.3

*È del poeta il fin la meraviglia.*

Gianbattista Marino, *La Murtoleide* (1619)

*Style is a replication of pattering, whether in human behavior or in the artifacts produced by human behavior, that results from a series of choices made within some set of constraints.*

Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music* (1996), p.3

*The unconscious does not speak, it engineers.*

Gilles Deleuze

*The immense literature of arts is rooted in the labyrinthine network of the notion of style: its ambiguities and its inconsistencies mirror aesthetic activity as a whole.*

George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (1962), p.3

*Alberi, tavole, diagrammi, cercano infatti di catturare e di dar forma visibile a tutte le combinazioni possibili fra i due ordini topici del credibile e dell'incredibile.*

Lina Bolzoni, *Macchine per la memoria e per l'invenzione fra Quattro e Cinquecento* (2005)

*È per fervido amore della vera sapienza e studio della vera contemplazione che mi affatico, mi cruccio, mi tormento.*

Giordano Burno, *De l'infinito universo et mundi* (1584)

*... a kind of general algebra in which all truths of reason would be reduced to a kind of calculus.*

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, letter to Nicolas Remond 10 January 1714

*The computer fulfills, or comes tantalizingly heartbreakingly close to fulfilling, the medieval and early modern dream of encyclopedic memory.*

Leah S. Marcus, in *The Renaissance Computer* (2002), p.19

## Aemulatio

*The postmodern response to the modern consists instead of recognizing that the past, since it may not be destroyed, for its destruction results in silence, must be revisited ironically, in a way which is not innocent.*

Umberto Eco, *Reflections on The Name of the Rose* (1983)

*Whatever we have read becomes our own, until failing memory has robbed us of it.*

Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum familiarium* (1359)

*How it is possible to open [musical works] and make them contribute to the generation of new knowledge?*

Paulo de Assis, *Logic of Experimentation* (2018), p.107

*The new image of musical work requires a totally renewed conceptual ecology.*

Paulo de Assis, *Logic of Experimentation* (2018), p.71

*We ought to take a fresh look at tradition, considered not as the inert acceptance of a fossilized corpus of themes and conventions, but as an organic habit of re-creating what has been received and is handed on.*

Harry Levin, *The Singer of Tales* (1960)

*Art does not progress, it transforms itself.*

François-Fétis

*Vano è il sapere di chi non sa volgerlo a suo vantaggio ...[gli antichi filosofi] ritenevano infatti che inutile sarebbe stato per loro conoscere gli elementi e i loro composti [...] se tutte queste conoscenze una volta riunite insieme non potessero giovare in qualche modo alla loro vita e alla loro felicità.*

Marsilio Ficino, *De vita* (1489)

*L'esigenza di andare oltre le auctoritates, tanto antiche quanto moderne, si fa palese tramite la rivendicazione di una vera e propria libertas philosophandi, che non conosce barriere di spazio e tempo.*

Tommaso Ghezzani on Francesco Patrizi, *Il platonico innamorato* (2023), p.87-88

*The knowledge of the past is desired only for the service of the future.*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Use and Abuse of History* (1874)

*Moderns are dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of ancient giants.*

David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985), p.76

## Fantasia

*Se non è vero, è molto ben trovato.*

Giordano Bruno, *De gli eroici furori* (1585)

*A good story can begin anywhere the teller chooses.*

George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (1962), p.2

*The hope of filling in perceived lacunae in our understanding of the distant past constitutes yet another conspicuous patch within the variegated and knotted tapestry of (literary) forgery: the need to connect the dots that, in truth, never existed.*

Earle A. Havens, *Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe* (2019), p.36

*How is 'truth through fiction' possible? In what ways can we learn about the real world by reading narratives whose construction is not guided by the fidelity constraints?*

David Davies, *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* (2005), p. 270

*È un privilegio dei romanzieri creare personaggi che uccidono quelli degli storici, La ragione è che gli storici evocano solo meri fantasmi, mentre i romanzieri creano persone in carne e ossa.*

Alexandre Dumas

*Ilsa: Can I tell you a story, Rick? Rick: Has it got a wow finish? Ilsa: I don't know the finish yet.*

Casablanca

*A musical work is best and most easily forged as a collaborative enterprise, involving a trained historical musicologist, a composer-theorist with a gift for mimicking other composer's styles, and an experienced embezzler with a good hand.*

Peter Kivy, *How to Forge a Musical Work* (2000)

*Do not reduce texts to making statements on reality, instead consider them as being realities on their own.*

Heiner Müller, paraphrased in *Futures of the Contemporary: Contemporaneity, Untimeliness, and Artistic Research* (2019), p.85

*Fakes tell us what we want to see in the authentic.*

Esther Pasztory, *Truth in Forgery* (2002)

*I have neither power, time, nor occasion to conquer the world as Alexander and Caesar did; yet rather than not to be mistress of one, since Fortune and the Fates would give me none, I have made a World of my own: for which no body, I hope, will blame me, since it is in every ones power to do the like.*

*Solo nel mirabile, che è la combinazione della mescolanza di credibile e di incredibile, l'intreccio del possibile e dell'impossibile, consiste l'essenza, la vera forma di ogni poesia.*

Adele Spedicati, *Per lo fine di maravigliare. Le espressioni della poesia nella poetica di Francesco Patrizi* (2021), xii

*Una delle molle che spinge alla falsificazione è il desiderio di colmare le lacune.*

Lina Bolzoni, *Nel giardino dei libri* (2023), p.20

*L'immaginazione è il repertorio del potenziale, dell'ipotetico, di ciò che non è stato né forse sarà ma che avrebbe potuto essere.*

Italo Calvino, *Lezioni Americane* (1993), p.93

*The business of art, on this view, would be to construct possible worlds, some of which, later on, thought will find real or action will make real.*

Robin George Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (1923), p.286

*Every present has a past of its own.*

Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946), p.247

*If you do not like the past, change it.*

William L. Burton, *The Use and Abuse of History*

*The word 'history' is itself ambiguous. It covers (i) the totality of past human actions, and (2) the narrative or account we construct of them now.*

William Henry Walsh, *Philosophy of History: An Introduction* (1967), p.16

*Already a fictitious past occupies in our memories the place of another, a past of which we know nothing certainly, not even that it is false.*

Jorge Louis Borges, *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* (1961)

*Voglio dire che sono come coloro che invecchiano nelle scole di scherma con spade da gioco, et sanno i colpi da ferire, et parare, ma non videro mai spade da filo, o per dir meglio, non la fecero mai con armi da dovero.*

Orazio Toscanella

## Coincidentia Oppositorum

*The road actually taken is invariably understood partly in terms of those not taken.*

Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music* (1996), p.32

*Much of what happens in the universe results from recombination.*

David Cope, *Experiments in Musical Intelligence* (1996)

*A library is the creation of a world, not the archive of a lost past.*

Björn Schmelzer, *Performing by the Book* (2024), p.37-52

*Symmetries carry with themselves the playful and yet diabolical taste of spontaneous multiplications of elements.*

Lewis Carroll

*A tool is always intrinsically simple, however elaborate its mechanisms may be, but a work of art, which is a complex of many stages and levels of crisscrossed intentions, is always intrinsically complicated, however simple its effect may seem.*

George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (1962), p.9

*The ultimate authority rests not in the text but in the interpreter.*

Richard Taruskin, *Tradition and Authority* (1992)

*As soon as the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applied to artistic production, the whole social function of art is revolutionized. Instead of being founded on ritual, it is based on a different practice: politics. [...] The distinction between author and public is about to lose its axiomatic character.*

Walter Benjamin

*A genuine work of art must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean.*

George McDonald, *The Fantastic Imagination* (1893)

*La nostra intelligenza consiste nel trovare nessi possibili fra ciò che del mondo abbiamo percepito, interpretato e mandato a memoria.*

Stefano Bartezzaghi, *Mettere al mondo il mondo* (2021), p.203

*How ingenious a mixture is nature ... all things are held together by some similitude.*

Michel de Montaigne