HYPERDREAM
A Play-based Creative Framework for Self-motivated Fantasy Authorial
Illustration Practice

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Carlos Ruiz Brussain

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a practice-led research doctoral project that investigates the relationship between illustration and play. The aim of this study is to examine the significance of play in my own practice as an illustrator and in the current context of the field of illustration. The objective of studio practice is to test out the creative and motivational worth of play as applied to illustration by developing, defining, explaining and trialling Hyperdream: a play-based creative framework for self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration that I have specially constructed as part of my practice-led research and presented as a purely idiographic exercise. This investigation uses phenomenological psychology to evaluate the data gathered. To analyse responses to play experiences and the levels of motivation derived from them, I utilise Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow. To explain phenomena derived from the fantasy aspects of the use of the play-based activities, I utilise Jungian theory. The research methodology includes collection and analysis of internal and external data sources. Internal data sources encompass studio-practice and research journals, whereas external data sources comprise interviews with professional practitioners and questionnaires undertaken in the illustration workshops that I deliver to students after they test the play-based creative framework. As primary data sources, this research utilises studio practice in illustration to test the motivational value of play and it analyses the findings presented in research journals to reflect on practice. Some of the works produced during the study were shown in the exhibition *Hyperdream: A Play-based Creative Framework for Illustration Practice* held at the Avenue Gallery of the University of Northampton between February 15-18, 2016. A dossier and a link to a video of the exhibition provide a complement to this thesis (Appendix #1). For secondary data sources that supplement the main research, the following creative artists were interviewed for this study: Alan Moore, Isidro Ferrer, Steve Braund, Genís Carreras, Josep Alcaraz, Fanny Espinet, David Faüchs, Gemma Rabionet, Pablo Navarro, and experts in play-based teaching Jordi Márquez and Pere Cornellà (samples of these interviews are included in Appendix #2). Additionally, surveys have been collected from the workshops that I delivered to illustration students of the

University of Northampton (UK) and students of Escola Universitària ERAM (Spain) between April 2015 and April 2017. These external sources of data were used to gather opinions about the connection between illustration and play; and, regarding the workshops, to analyse participants' responses to their experiences after testing the play-based creative framework. The outcome of this investigation (studio praxis, interviews and workshops' surveys) indicates that play can be used as a creative approach in illustration practice. In my own case, during the period in which I tested the play-based creative framework my levels of motivation remained high and I produced a considerable number of works that include new motifs and narratives. Two contributions to new knowledge have arisen from this research: firstly, providing and testing a model for studying the relationship between illustration and play in theory and praxis in a scholarly way; and secondly, establishing the importance of intrinsic motivation in self-initiated illustration practice.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABR: Arts-based Research

AGPI: Asociación Galega de Profesionais da Ilustración

AOI: Association of Illustrators

APIC: Associació Professional d'Il·lustradors de Catalunya

APIM: Asociación Profesional de Ilustradores de Madrid

CIFOG: Cicles Formatius Girona

FADIP: Federación de Asociaciones de Ilustradores Profesionales

EU ERAM: Escola Universitària ERAM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Some people say, 'Illustration is dead'. Is that true? I believe it is the illustrator's job now to show how exciting and powerful illustration can be, to show the possibilities outside the regular boundaries of what people would think it can do."

—Yuko Shimizu (cited in Heller and Wiedemann, 2013, p.527)

"Illustration is dead, long live illustration."

—Mark Wigan (2009a, p.6)

INTRODUCTION

The current situation of the field of illustration

Illustration is a popular art form that was principally associated with the print industry, and in its golden age from the late 1880s to the 1950s (Doyle *et al.*, 2019, p.xxx; Male, 2019, p.33) supported by publishing companies and advertising agencies, but for the last twenty or more years the field has been undergoing a complex process of transformation (Wiedemann, 2019, p.7). This metamorphosis was predominantly caused by the explosion of digital technologies (Male, 2014, p.16) and new media (Hoogslag and Sherman, 2019, p.485).

New technologies that could be applied to illustration appeared in the 1980s (Sherman, 2019, p.462) and have affected the field in several ways (AGPI, 2016, p.32); firstly, they changed the way in which illustrators produce, distribute and promote their works (Zeegen, 2009, p.72); secondly, they favoured the proliferation of stock-house merchants (Graphic Artists Guild, 2013, p.215); thirdly, they gave tools to graphic designers to make images without the need to have the work commissioned to an illustrator (Shaughnessy, 2006); and, fourthly, and probably most important, they changed the way in which people relate to cultural contents (Cortabitarte, 2010; FADIP, 2010, p.40). Among other things, these changes include: the preference for digital media, with the increasing abandonment of printed formats (Male, 2014, p.16); the use of social media, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc., to promote illustrators' portfolios and to contact clients, fellow practitioners and followers (Griffin, 2018); the utilisation of crowdfunding platforms, such as Patreon or Kickstarter, to finance self-initiated projects (López and Domingo, 2018, pp.51-53); and the new 'value' concepts — for instance, "free" (not paying for content) (Anderson, 2009), "pay what you want" (PWYW) or "pick your own price" (PYOP) (Bourreau *et al.* 2015). Other relevant changes that are affecting the field are: globalisation (FADIP, 2010, p.35; AGPI, 2016, p.32), neoliberal politics (AGPI, 2016, p.32), and the recent economic crisis (Graphic Artists Guild, 2013, p.215; AGPI, 2016, p.32). These transformations are producing a gradual — or abrupt — process of separation between illustration as a practice and the industries that

traditionally supported the field in economic terms, and, at the same time, they are favouring the emergence of new marketplaces (Bones, cited in Snoad, 2018; Heller, 2019, p.11; Wiedemann, 2019, p.7,). Thus, illustration is creating and occupying novel spaces that often overlap with other domains (Braund, 2017; O'Brien, 2020) and many illustrators are developing a different understanding of the possibilities of the discipline, which is allowing for a redefinition of the field and the emergence of new paradigms. As a consequence, interpretations that reduced the domain to 'commercial' or 'applied art' now co-exist with illustration as 'self-initiated projects';[1] 'authorial illustration';[2] and/or 'illustration as research' in academic contexts.

For this reason, the perception that illustration is marginalised has changed since the 2000s (Zeegen, 2009, p.34) and, according to some commentators, illustrators have never been so highly regarded (Heller, 2019, pp.11-12).

But, even if illustration has never been so well esteemed as it is today, until 2016, numerous illustrators' associations and practitioners had reported that the number of works commissioned for illustrators reduced considerably APIC, 2016a and 2016b, p.20). Nevertheless, three recent surveys of illustrators indicate that out of a sample of 1,261, 1,443 and 1,300 practitioners worldwide respectively, half reported having an increased workload in 2017, 2018 and 2019 (O'Brien, 2019 and 2020). Consequently, there are experts who claim illustration is booming (Bones, cited in Snoad, 2018, p.33; López and Domingo, 2018, p.19). But, according to the aforementioned illustrators' surveys, both in 2017 and 2018 69 per cent and 73 per cent of illustrators respectively said they do not earn enough to live sustainably from illustration (41 per cent of the sample reported that the gross annual income for 2018 was less than £9,999) and 20 per cent informed that more than half of their invoices were paid late, both in 2017 and in 2018 (O'Brien, 2019). Probably as a consequence, less than half of the illustrators surveyed are full-time practitioners and need other income sources. Additionally, in 2017 and 2018, a substantial proportion of respondents (79 per cent and 74 per cent respectively) reported having anxiety or confidence

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[1] I discuss their importance in contemporary illustration in 1.1.6.

[2] I will explain the meaning of this concept and its relevance in relation to my study in 1.1.7.

issues that affect their careers (O'Brien, 2019). And in 2019, 60 per cent of full time illustrators said that they do not earn the £20,000 that the AOI would like them to earn (O'Brien, 2020). As a result, illustration is still regarded as an underpaid profession (Hilder, 2020; Long, 2020). This information is consistent with Lisa Maltby's "Illustrator's pricing survey" (conducted in 2019 in which 210 illustrators were surveyed) that indicates that most illustrators are not well compensated (2019a). According to this survey many professional practitioners are being paid the same as they were in the 1980's (Maltby, 2019a). Maltby concludes that many experienced practitioners are "not making a sustainable living from their work" (2019b). Therefore, many illustrators need other sources of income (Maltby, 2019a). But, what is more concerning is that Maltby found out that the percentage of professional practitioners who need other sources of earnings did not decrease with experience (2019b), as common sense would dictate.

Hence, partly due to the technological and cultural shifts and partly due to the aforementioned professional uncertainties, illustrators are changing the way in which they relate to the discipline and, thus, they are building new strategies to keep up with the field. In my own case, as I explain in the following pages, I designed a personal strategy to deal with the alienating and anomic conditions of the profession of illustration.

Play and illustration

In the last few years, a number of illustration practitioners and commentators have been talking about the importance of play as related to illustration (Mariscal, cited in Dickens, 2011, p.17; Evans, 2013; O'Reilly, 2015b, pp.2-7; Cheverton, cited in Davies, 2019); but still there is no scholarly research that addresses the connection between these two domains. This neglect of the academic study of illustration as related to play is worth noting; especially bearing in mind that the relationships between play and culture and between play and creativity have been largely established and studied in other fields (Schiller, 1902 [1795], pp.50-56; Jung, 1971 [1921] pars.197-198; Martin and Bateson, 2013).

This oversight is even more remarkable when one observes that in the first two decades of the 21st century, play studies have proliferated exponentially. This should be worth considering, as new generations of illustrators have been and are emerging with play and games as a major cultural influence.

According to many commentators the cultural relevance of play in this century is indubitable. Clint Hocking (2011) argues that games are "The dominant cultural form of the 21st century." Similarly, Eric Zimmerman asserts that this is a "ludic century" (Zimmerman and Chaplin, 2013). Douglas Rushkoff states, "In a renaissance society driven by the need to forge connections, play is the ultimate system for social currency" (2005, p.108). Furthermore, Pat Kane believes "Play will be to the 21st century what work was to the industrial age — our dominant way of knowing, doing and creating value" (Kane, cited in Kinchin, 2012, p.26).

As a consequence, scholarly studies of play have multiplied due to the considerable interest surrounding the cultural, psychological, sociological and economic implications of video games (Raessens, 2014, p.99). The video games industry's interest in play is quite obvious because the discipline is sustained on the ludic principle. However, with reference to illustration there is a gap in knowledge as there are no studies of illustration's relationship with play (which is particularly concerning bearing in mind the videogame or the board game industries' demand for illustrators).

Additionally, there is another factor which is at least worth noting: according to many commentators, Dada and Surrealism were (and remain) important sources of aesthetic inspiration for many professionals in the field of illustration (Heller and Chwast, 2008, pp.70-71; Male, 2017, p.68), but critical attention has never been given to the subject of play, a crucial element behind the art practice of both avant-garde art forms (Laxton, 2019).

The relationship between illustration and play, as well as the failure to consider ludic approaches as applicable to contemporary illustration practice, such as Surrealists' interest in artistic games, will be extensively examined in 1.2.3.

Illustration: from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation?

Illustrators depended for many years on the publishing and advertising industries and received commissions to make images mostly from art directors or graphic designers (Heller, 2006a, p.118; Zeegen, 2009, p.38; Male, 2014, pp.54-55). Traditionally, the workflow of an illustration starts with the illustrators' reception of a brief that informs them about the clients' needs, (Male, 2017, pp.16, 19). This commercial model is based on a system of extrinsic rewards: clear goals, defined time frame, and economic compensations (Rees, 2014, pp.66-70). I argue that now, when commissions are scarce, there is no need to use the previous creative model based on guidelines coming from the brief. I defend the possibility of other creative approaches for self-initiated and authorial projects that, instead of being externally motivated, could be based on intrinsic rewards: autotelic illustration. 'Autotelic' means an activity that has an end, goal or purpose within itself. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi uses the word to refer to activities done for their own sake (2014b, p.181).

Only in the last two decades or more, chiefly due to the reduction in the number of commissions, illustrators have started to dedicate more time to self-motivated projects, and, probably not by accident, the concept of play started to show on the surface of illustration practice. Initially, these self-initiated projects were produced in the periods between commercial works, but, when those gaps started to become increasingly longer, these personal projects became a solid complement to commissioned practice. I argue that the explosion of digital technologies has produced a paradigm shift that allows for new approaches to illustration practice in which illustrators have to generate their own content in self-motivated and authorial projects more frequently than they did in the previous paradigm, and in which play might be a helpful element in initiating them (this will be discussed in 1.1.2 and 1.1.6 respectively).

Research questions

With reference to the neglect of the scholarly study of the connection between illustration and play, the question I pose is:

Can a relationship between illustration and play be established?

And, considering the field has changed so much and commissions have reduced drastically, other questions I pose are:

Why do illustrators need to keep on doing things the same way as they did? Considering that self-initiated and/or authorial projects have no initial economic rewards, why not try autotelic approaches to create illustrations? Bearing in mind that the brief (the set of instructions that the illustrator receives from the art director or client) was the communication tool used in commercial practice, is it necessary to keep on utilising it in self-initiated and/or authorial projects?

As a possible answer to these questions I propose the design of a play-based creative framework for self-motivated illustration to compensate for the loss of external challenges in my own practice.

Description of project end: Hyperdream: A play-based creative framework for self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration practice

Hyperdream is a play-based creative framework that I have developed and introduced in my illustration practice to compensate for the reduction of the extrinsic motivational factors that commissioned work used to provide me: clear goals, challenges, a defined time frame, and money as a reward. Hyperdream is a purely idiographic exercise that I designed for myself in order to enjoy 'flow' experiences in my illustration practice and, thus, to remain motivated to keep on illustrating ('flow' is a construct developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi that describes psychological states of peak enjoyment lived by individuals who merge with the activities at hand and report high levels of motivation — the concept of 'flow' will be explained extensively in 1.3.1).

To understand this reaction to the loss of external factors that drove me to search for compensation in ludic autotelic experiences, it is worth mentioning that this process started around nineteen years ago. By the time some commentators debated the 'end of illustration' in 2000 (as I will discuss in 1.1.5), I realised that the illustration industry was not providing me with engaging challenges and I felt that my creative potential was not being properly used. After a decade of professional illustration practice, I realised

that most of the commissions I received were repetitive and unchallenging and, moreover, many clients paid badly, late or not at all; which is something that, according to many commentators, still has not changed (Chandler, 2017; Juan, cited in Vicente, 2019). Furthermore, over the years, I received many offers to undertake unpaid commissioned work. Sadly, this *modus operandi* is very common in the profession of illustration. For this reason, recently there have been a number of campaigns advising illustrators not to work for free (Bones, 2019; Toledano, 2019). When I received these kinds of proposal, I usually thought that, if I had to work for no economic reward, I would prefer to work for myself and, thus, I started a significant number of self-initiated projects but, not having clear goals and/or rewards, I ended up abandoning all of those projects (I will discuss about this in more detail in 1.1.6), which, in turn, made me feel quite frustrated. As a consequence, my levels of motivation were increasingly lower. This generated great conflict in me because I deeply loved illustration but based on my experience working in the field, professional practice was either alienating or anomic. In illustration practice one can experience alienated states when one's own behaviours and outcomes become predictable and anomic states when work conditions are undefined. The former states tend to occur when the task is too repetitive and one cannot find interesting challenges (e.g., due to clients' restrictions). Thus, activities are perceived as boring and creativity and spontaneity are constrained (Mitchell, 1988, p.43). Anomic states are related to feelings of uncertainty due to unclear goals (Mitchell, 1988, p.42) and hence the work experience is related to anxiety. In commercial practice this could be produced as a consequence of bad art direction or delayed payments and, in self-initiated projects because one does not define rules beforehand, including reasonable goals or set deadlines. I have experienced these two states of mind in both commercial and self-motivated practice: alienation when work becomes repetitive and unchallenging; and anomie when goals are not clear or challenges are above one's abilities. Richard Mitchell's descriptions of these states of mind are relevant to my study as he argues, "Flow is the opposite of both alienation and anomie" (1988, p.44).

Unfortunately, it took me a considerable number of years to understand and articulate why I was feeling the way I did as regards illustration practice, and, more importantly, to develop strategies to overcome this challenging problem.

Csikszentmihalyi's concepts of flow, negentropy and intrinsic motivation were key to developing a play-based creative framework (as I will discuss in 1.3.1). He states

> Thus work tends to have the structure of other intrinsically rewarding activities that provide flow, such as games, sports, music, and art. [...] When spending time at home [...], people often lack a clear purpose, do not know how well they are doing, are distracted, feel their skills are underutilized, and as a result feel bored or — more rarely — anxious. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, p.59)

This is important because when the old commercial model ceased to offer interesting challenges for me, I felt the need to return to the play aspects of my work but, as Csikszentmihalyi argues, a considerable effort is necessary to structure experiences in order to enter the flow state (1996, p.417).

One of the first strategies I developed to confront the loss of motivation I felt in relation to commercial illustration practice was to try to find enjoyment in board games but, very soon, I experienced what Clive Thompson calls 'gamer regret': "a sudden, horrifying sense of emptiness when we muse on all the other things we could have done with our game time" (2007). In my case, I experienced this feeling because professional illustration is an activity that consumes a lot of time (it implies many hours of drawing, training, learning rendering techniques, studying narrative strategies, and self-promotion). Probably this varies from illustrator to illustrator but it is my perception that if one does not dedicate a good number of hours to practice, one loses one's ability. In Spanish to be good at something — to have an ability or skill — is usually expressed as "having a good hand" ("tener buena mano") and to lose one's ability or skill is referred as "losing one's hand" ("perder la mano"). Arguably, an important part of one's ability as an illustrator is in the hand; thus, if one does not draw, paint or use the digital tablet one loses one's skill. Juhani Pallasmaa (2014) refers to this phenomenon as the "thinking hand", a hand that, through years of training, embodies knowledge (pp.131-133).

However, my experience of playing board games made me realise the potential of play as a motivational factor: the experiences I had while playing

were indeed exhilarating, but I had to find a way to connect play with my illustration practice. Hence, I decided to think of games that could be used or adapted to my work. The challenge was to find or design games that could provide me with the intrinsic rewards of play but at the same time allowed me to carry on illustrating — to keep my hand trained for drawing and to avoid 'gamer regret'. For that reason I sought compensation in my sketchbooks, which became a kind of creative playground. In them I experimented with new approaches to drawing and felt levels of freedom I never experienced working for the illustration industry. The work I did in sketchbooks was what reminded me of my unrealised potential. Additionally, some of the creative games I developed over the years were first explored in the sketchbooks.

Once I started utilising elements that involved play dynamics in illustration practice the experiences were very fulfilling. So I considered it would be good to apply this play-based approach in a systematic way. I thought I could set challenges especially designed for illustrators and, particularly for myself as a unique individual (moved by singular stimuli). Nevertheless, only many years later did I have the idea of designing a framework that used the motivational power of play and games inspired by dreams to help me reach a state of creative flow that could be applied to illustration practice.

I named the play-based creative framework Hyperdream; *Hyper-* because it means above, over, beyond; and *-dream* because with its use I aim to reach dreamlike states that favour the emergence of creative random juxtapositions, archetypal imagery and storytelling. Thus, *Hyperdream* implies the use of play-based activities that are inspired by dreams to produce a state of mind that increases fantasy thinking, which, in turn, is channelled through fantasy authorial illustration practice. Hence the main objective of this idiosyncratic creative framework is to induce fantasy/dream thinking by the use of play-based image making and storytelling (the concept of fantasy thinking will be discussed in 1.3.2). The hypotheses that sustain this idea are: the "dynamic principle of fantasy is play" (Jung, 1971, par. 93); fantasy or dream thinking is the power source behind creative processes (van den Berk, 2012, p.46); and, "the core of fantasy thinking is the symbol" (van den Berk, 2012, p.47). Therefore, apart from pleasure itself, the objective of the play-based creative

framework is to help one to connect with personal inner images or symbols. As Tjeu van den Berk points out, Jung saw the symbol as the image par excellence (van den Berk, 2012, p.47).

Moreover, due to the strong relationship that exists between symbols and myths, I argue that the creative framework facilitates the connection with one's personal mythology. David Feinstein and Stanley Krippner (1989) understand personal mythology as a system of complementary and contradictory personal myths that organizes one's sense of reality and guides one's actions (p.24). Feinstein and Krippner explain that, as the theme of one's personal myth is symbolic and abstract, it is also versatile and, thus, it provides a flexible structure that allows images that reflect the culture one lives in, one's daily experience, and one's deep feelings (1989, pp.24-26). This means that personal mythological images recombine in an associative and regenerative way, that are comparable to dreams' narrative structures. As for the relationship between myths and dreams, for Jung "myths are dreamlike structures", and he argues, "dreams are the myths of the individual" (1967a, pars. 28-29) and Joseph Campbell (1949) states, "Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the dynamics of the psyche" (Campbell, 2004, p.18). It is worth mentioning that myth always implies storytelling (Campbell, 2004, p.3). Mircea Eliade says, "'myth' means a 'true story'" (Eliade, 1963, p.1). For all these reasons I am profoundly interested in developing methods and techniques that might facilitate the emergence of the symbols and myths that populate my unconscious. This is important when one is dedicated to authorial illustration but particularly if, apart from illustrating, one wants to write one's stories (as I will explain in 1.1.7).

The type of play-based activities that compose the Hyperdream creative framework are aimed at producing a sort of wakeful lucid dreaming in which I am able to consciously control events at the same time I am fantasising or dream thinking. With this I refer to the characteristic of playing, which is performed with opened eyes but as implies fantasy thinking, I am combining the concept with that of lucid dreaming, which is usually performed with eyes shut. I will talk about this characteristic of Hyperdream in 3.1.3. Anthony

Stevens sees a relationship between lucid dreaming and active imagination and refers to this interaction as "liminal states[3] in which conscious and unconscious systems interact" (1995, p.270). Jeffrey Miller (2004) also relates the Jungian concept of 'transcendent function'[4] to liminal experiences (pp.104-108) and idea generation (pp.105-106). Miller explains, "The liminal is the territory not only where both death and birth coexist but becomes an archetypal place of pure possibility that is the potential source of all sorts of original and new ideas" (2004, p.105). Dreams and fantasies are inspirational for me and I see play and art as transformative liminal activities that help to re-establish, as Jung says, "the lost connection between conscious and unconscious" (1970a, par.761). I will talk about these inspirational aspects of my work in 1.3.2 and in 3.1.1, 3.1.3 and 3.2.3.

Additionally, there were other factors that I had in mind to ideate this creative framework; some were activities I used to engage in as a child and included drawing whatever I wanted on my own or with friends; playing a particular creative game called *Action Transfers*; or combining different toys in a sort of narrative ensemble. Furthermore, I remember that for me, as an infant, as a child, and as a teenager, drawing was a type of game (see figure, 1 next page). I liked to play it alone at home but also it was very common that, being at a friend's, someone suggested drawing and we did it collectively, which was immensely enjoyable.

As an illustrator, one often tends to forget that there was a time in which one drew just for the pleasure — without the need of a brief or to comply with the needs or desires of anyone else. But, after professional training, drawing and illustration become almost completely functional. Thus, the memory of the aforementioned pre-professional experiences was essential to develop my play-based creative framework because they helped me to remember a time when drawing was an autotelic activity for me; with Hyperdream I want to recover a playful attitude towards drawing and illustration.

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[3] I will discuss the concept of liminality as related to my study in 1.2.1.

[4] I will explain the concept of 'transcendant function' in 1.3.2.3.
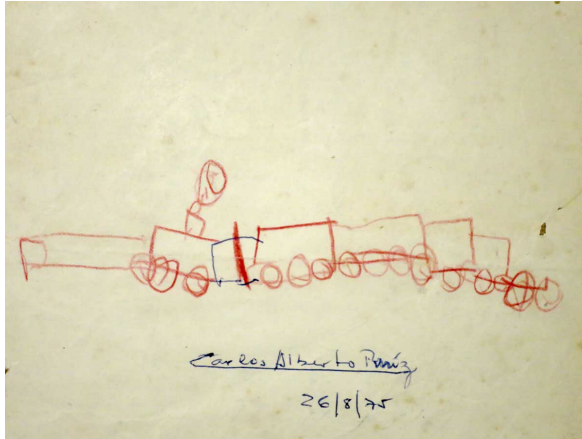
Figure 1. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Clockwork tin train. First (dated) drawing (1975). Coloured pencil and biro pen on A4 paper.

Therefore, to balance the lessening of external motivational factors I decided to design a play-based creative framework that would provide me with intrinsic rewards. The premise is: if these play-based illustration activities were motivational enough, I would maintain high levels of enthusiasm to start with and continue working on self-initiated and authorial projects.

For this reason, this thesis analyses the development of a play-based creative framework for idea generation in self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration practice aimed at producing autotelic experiences. The main objective of this creative framework is the generation of new ideas and illustrations using play activities based on subject matter that motivate me deeply (such as dreams, fantasies, myths and symbols) — as will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Thus, it is worth reiterating that Hyperdream is a purely idiographic exercise that I have designed for myself in order to remain motivated.

Gordon Allport (1937) made a distinction between idiographic and nomothetic approaches to personality. The 'idiographic' approach centres on the individual by describing unique personality features, whereas 'nomothetic' is based on the supposition that there are limited set of variables to describe human personality and, hence, some generalisations can be made (Maltby *et al*., 2010, pp.8-9). My use of an idiographic approach implies a focus on my subjective and idiosyncratic understanding of the relationship between illustration and play and it will require discussing subject matter that manifests in the works produced in my studio practice.

The aim of this research is to explore the possible different directions in which this play-based creative framework will be developed further and I will assess how using it will change my illustration practice over time and how workshops' participants react to play-based approaches in terms of motivation.

Thus, even though the objective of this study is idiographic (because I will be testing out the components of this play-based creative framework in the studio for their value as motivators for creativity and to observe my reactions towards the experience of using play as an approach to illustration in my own practice), I will also consider the nomothetic aspect by evaluating the opinions of professional practitioners as regards the relationship between illustration and play and the reaction of participants to the use of ludic methods to produce illustrations in order to arrive at commonalities or general laws. Therefore, if I detect common patterns between my own experience using Hyperdream and the data gathered in the workshops that I will deliver, I will discuss possible generalisations of knowledge and implications for others working in the field in 4.3.3 and in the conclusion chapter.

As a theoretical framework I will use Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow and certain elements of Jungian psychology. The theoretical framework is explained in 1.3.

Practice-led research as mode of enquiry

Bearing in mind that the best way to describe the experience of play is by playing — and especially considering that in the case of my study play is related to illustration —, the mode of enquiry to obtain the data I am interested in is by testing this play-based illustration method in the studio (I justify the use of practice-led investigation as the most suitable mode of enquiry to answer the research questions of this study in detail in chapter 2 and more specifically in 2.2.1.1). As Linda Candy argues, "a PhD based upon pure argumentation cannot be practice-based" (2006, p.5); thus, compared to pure theoretical investigation exclusively based on the literature review, practice-led research is the most suitable strategy to gain access to the type of information derived from the play-based illustration activities that I propose: the first-person descriptions of psychic phenomena such as motivation,

enjoyment, levels of engagement and flow. Hence, besides making artefacts in the studio to examine the play experience and the motivation aspect involved in the act of illustrating using a ludic procedure, the analysis of descriptions of these subjective experiences and personal meanings is precisely the object of my study. The information collected in my studio practice, surveys and interviews will be analysed in chapter 4. Nevertheless, the artwork generated in the studio will be interpreted in terms of creative process (3.1.2 and 3.2) and in terms of motifs (3.3). In addition, I will interview professional practitioners to gather information about their views on the possible relationships between illustration, play and motivation (4.2.1) and some of them will test a play-based approach to illustration and I will deliver a number of workshops to analyse participants' responses to their experiences after testing a play-based approach to illustration practice (4.2.2).

Aims and objectives of my practice-led research

<u>Aims</u>

1) To develop, define and explain the concept of Hyperdream as a play-based creative framework: a creative method that uses a number of ludic activities and techniques especially designed for idea generation in self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration practice.

2) To understand and articulate better my own creative process and, in particular, the possibilities of visual narrative as I utilise it through the Hyperdream play-based creative framework using Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow and Carl G. Jung's concepts of fantasy thinking, play, and active imagination as the main theoretical frameworks that underpin my research.

<u>Objectives</u>

1) To research the relationship between play and illustration by collecting and analysing data on the current context of contemporary illustration; on play as related to culture; and on previous play-inspired artistic movements or individuals in order to situate my practice-led research and to argue the

importance of play and games in motivating authorial illustration practice with reference to the practical proposal 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game'.

2) To test out the potential of the particular motivational components of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework for idea generation in fantasy authorial illustration in my own practice by creating a body of practical work based on the research and, through developing the concept of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework, introduce a practical proposal 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' as part of my practice-led research.

3) To test out the general motivational components of the play-based creative framework with students with whom the play-based techniques for idea generation will be tested in workshops and then reflected on in questionnaires.

4) To collect and analyse information on the viewpoints of professional illustrators through interviews regarding the idea of connecting play with illustration in order to assess the context and relevance of my practice.

Structure of the thesis

In chapter 1 I will present the contextual review I will undertake to position my research within the context of contemporary illustration (1.1); I will define the concept of play (1.2) focusing on its cultural relevance (1.2.1), analysing earlier artistic movements, genres, and practitioners who have utilised ludic approaches in their artistic processes (1.2.2), and discussing the importance of play in contemporary illustration (1.2.3); and I will introduce the theoretical framework (1.3).

In chapter 2 I will present the methodology (2.1); I will describe the research methods for acquiring and analysing data (2.2); I will explain how the information will be collected (2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.3); and I will mention the tools I will use for presenting findings (2.3).

In chapter 3 I will discuss the importance of studio practice as a research method and I will explain the type of knowledge I am aiming to generate with

this investigation (3.1); I will describe my practical experiences testing the play-based creative framework (3.1.2, 3.1.3); I will introduce the practical proposal: 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' (3.2) and I will reflect upon some of the artefacts I will make using Hyperdream (3.2.1, 3.2.2); I will analyse some motifs of the fantasy genre that appear in the creative outputs of my practical proposal (3.3); and I will explain the usefulness of studio practice to obtain the type of data I am interested in (3.4).

In chapter 4 I will analyse and compare the data collected. I will examine my studio-practice (4.1); I will evaluate the interviews and conversations with professional practitioners (4.2.1); I will assess the record results of the workshops and questionnaires (4.2.2); and I will compare my studio-practice with the information gathered in interviews and workshops (4.3.1 and 4.3.2).

In the conclusion chapter I will analyse Hyperdream in relation to the research objectives; I will present the contributions to new knowledge of this study; and I will discuss possible generalisations of knowledge.

CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

This chapter presents the contextual review I undertook as part of my practice-led research.

The literature review was undertaken to analyse the current situation of contemporary illustration and to define and locate the particular intellectual and cultural contexts for my practice of self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration (discussed in 1.1).

Furthermore, this literature review has the objective of gathering information about the subject of play from different perspectives (illustration, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies) to position my play-based creative framework. In 1.2 I comment on the cultural background with respect to the use of play as creative inspiration by examining earlier artistic movements, genres, and practitioners who have been stimulated by play and games in their artistic processes.

In 1.3 I introduce the theoretical framework. In 1.3.1 I explain the model of flow developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and argue in favour of applying its principles to the construction of a play-based creative framework for illustration practice for its motivational values. Bearing in mind that I operate within the subfield of fantasy authorial illustration and my work is inspired by concepts such as play, fantasies, dreams, archetypes, myths, symbols and images that emerge from my unconscious, in 1.3.2 I also explain why I draw certain conceptual elements from Jungian depth psychology.

1.1. Contextualising my research within contemporary illustration

To contextualise my research, in the following subsections I briefly review the definition of illustration, its history as related to the printing and advertisement industry, the in-betweenness of illustration, the basic professional approaches used to produce illustrations, the ongoing crisis in the field due to the impact of new technologies, and the relevance of working on self-initiated and authorial projects. This is crucial to understand the current situation of the field and to make sense of the reasons that led me to develop a play-based creative framework for self-motivated authorial illustration practice. Additionally, I also comment on the graphic novel as a medium, and on

fantasy as a genre in comics and illustration because, as part of my practical proposal, I will develop a fantasy graphic novel project (discussed in 3.3.2).

1.1.1. The problematic definition of illustration

After the explosion of digital technologies it is quite difficult to provide an authoritative definition of illustration. However, there is a consensus regarding certain key aspects.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* 'illustration' is "The action or fact of making clear or evident to the mind; setting forth clearly or pictorially; elucidation; explanation; exemplification" (Simpson, 2009c). Within the field, most experts agree that illustration's capacity to elucidate is related to the illumination found by acquiring new knowledge (Male, 2019, p.11). Hence, illustration's purpose is to visually communicate ideas and information, and, unlike other visual art disciplines, it is not associated with any particular artistic medium (Brinkerhoff and McIlwain Nishimura, 2019, p.2). Illustration generally communicates using visual storytelling techniques (Arisman, 2006, p.xix; Wigan, 2009a, p.20) and utilising a decipherable visual language (Heller and Chwast, 2008, p.10), which makes it a popular art form (Heller and Chwast, 2008, p.8; Male, 2019, p.10). Illustration is related to authorship; usually, illustrators grant clients a licence for a particular use of their artwork (reproduction rights) in exchange for an economic compensation that varies according to the use purchased (Stern, 2008, p.24; López and Domingo, 2018, p.187). Normally illustration professionals are self-employed and work on commissions for remuneration (Brazell and Davis, 2013, p.12). Commonly, illustration is a solo profession (Rees, 2014, p.126; Gillette, cited in Rees, 2014, p.78). Very succinctly, these are the main aspects that define the field.

For most experts the beginning of the modern and commercial illustration profession was prompted by the rapid growth of the publishing industry and advertising companies during the second half of the 19th century (Zeegen, 2009, pp.16-17; Male, 2014, pp.32-33). The print media expansion created a demand for expert image-makers (Zeegen, 2009, p.18), which in turn gave way to the profession of illustration.

It could be argued that during the time illustration remained almost exclusively related to publishing and advertisement industries, the field was much easier to define. But, with the explosion of new technologies in the 1980s, novel contexts for practice and promotion were created and, therefore, attempts to define the limits of the field became increasingly difficult.

In the last fifteen or more years, in particular, illustration has started to undergo an expansion, which places the field in new territories, not just situated somewhere between graphic design and painting (as was the case in the past), but also between other domains (Mareis, 2007, p.2; Zeegen, 2009, p.10) — such as film, animation, video games, fashion, sculpture, board games, toy design, etc. Partly due to this overlapping and interconnection with other disciplines and partly due to the use of new technologies, the parameters of the sector are continuously changing and, as a consequence, the sphere of operation of illustration practice has become growingly permeable, which, on the one hand, expands the possibilities of interdisciplinarity and, on the other, allows to reach a global audience (Male, 2019, p.241). Thus, the difficulty in demarcating the field becomes far more complicated.

Steven Heller and Marshall Arisman state:

> Given the current surge in the marketplace for visual entertainment, from graphic novels to video games to animated films to toys and streetwear, the role of the illustrator is decidedly more significant as a generator of content and of profit. With this come new definitions for illustration and illustrator. (2008, p.xi)

This argument indicates that illustration occupies an ambiguous position that is very difficult to define and at the same time it grants the illustrator an important role as a generator of cultural content.

Zeegen explains that to define what an illustrator is could be as difficult as defining the field itself because practitioners infrequently work only as illustrators and their practice regularly merges with that of other domains (2009, p.10). Rick Poynor argues that today "There are many kinds of illustration for many kinds of contexts and many kinds of illustrators" (2010). This unclear delimitation of the field, as Poynor points out, creates a problem in tackling some of the most relevant issues related to the current crisis of

illustration (Poynor, 2010). However, this lack of definition can be positive in that it makes it possible to show illustration can cross disciplinary borders and, by breaking with previous traditions (Zeegen, 2009, p.6), enables the field to transform and renew itself.

1.1.2. Illustration: Commercial or expressive art?

While some commentators emphasise that illustration is only a form of applied art or commercial art, others defend the view that it is an expressive art form. And a third group of practitioners claims that these distinctions are of no importance.

Alan Male argues, "Without context, an image cannot be classed as illustration. Context defines the reason for the image in the first place and underpins the essence of the whole brief" (2019, p.9). Terence Dalley states that illustration generally means "art in a commercial context; and social and economic demands therefore determine the form and content of the illustration" (1980, p.10). As discussed in the introductory chapter, I contest this position as I consider that illustration has expanded its frontiers and has for long transcended the concept of art in a purely commercial context restricted by the brief and/or clients' needs — even though I accept that a good deal of illustration practice is still undertaken for commercial reasons.

Zeegen (2009) explains that an appropriate term to classify the field is "'commercial art" because much illustration work is "created for a client to fulfil a task or brief" but, at the same time, he recognises that the term "commercial art" only "describes illustration that is less about personal expression and more about satisfying a service" (p.6). Nevertheless, Zeegen concludes that the "commercial art" definition "does not look enough into the working methods and ideologies of contemporary practice to extract a true understanding of what illustration really is" (2009, p.6).

However, considering illustration in broad historical terms, the current paradigm that associates illustration with commerce is quite recent. Many commentators point out that illustration has roots in the Paleolithic era (Brinkerhoff and McIlwain Nishimura, 2019, p.2; Male, 2019, p.18), which suggests the long tradition of visual communication of the field. Steve Braund

states that illustration pre-dates commercial practice and indicates that illustration's function (to elucidate a subject matter) comes before its commercial potential (Braund, 2017).

As for the difference between commercial and expressive art, Claudia Mareis indicates, "the criteria to distinguish artistic illustration from 'profane handicraft' would be simple: the originality of expression in terms of design and its resistance to commercial 'appropriation'" (2007, p.2). Mareis goes on to explain that, in order to be art illustration has to be original and to lack from intention or utility (2007, p.2). This is a rather radical point of view because illustration has been generally associated with functionality. But currently there are no doubts about the artistic status of illustration (Braund, 2012, p.8; Fernández-Coca, 2012, pp.26-27).

Nonetheless, there are commentators who believe the distinction between commercial and expressive illustration is irrelevant. Steven Heller and Seymour Chwast claim that the discussion over applied and fine arts is "tedious" (2008, p.8). Russell Mills states, "I don't see any difference between self-motivated work and commissioned work" (cited in Poynor, 2015, p.40). Andrew Foster asserts, "For me there is absolutely no difference between commercial practice and private practice" (2010, cited in Braund *et al.*, 2012, p.76).

I agree that there is no problem in alternately producing commercial or self-initiated expressive works, but I stress that the relevance of the distinction between these two approaches is of extreme importance (with "expressive" I refer to works that are not initially intended to be commercial — even if they are eventually). In commissioned work one's attention is focused on the outside world, one has to listen to clients' needs to convey the message they want. For that reason, advertising agencies or publishing companies use the brief to make sure the illustrator understands exactly what it is the client wants to communicate. Apart from this, the work is motivated by external factors: clear goals, defined time frame, and pre-arranged extrinsic rewards. (Arguably, there can be a third case: working for oneself with the aim of making new images for an illustration portfolio to gain popularity and/or to attract possible clients (in order to present those works in person or by using

online resources, such as e-mail or a personal webpage; by posting the material on a social networking service, e.g., Instagram; or by publishing the images in a crowdsourcing platform like Patreon). However, this third case would also fit within the category 'extrinsically motivated' because one would do it thinking in terms of anticipating clients' possible responses; social media users' reactions to posts and/or increasing the number of followers, which, in turn, could translate into commissions or; if it is a crowdsourcing platform, more subscribers and, thus, more payments. So, whether illustrations are made to show in a new portfolio or to post on a social media website, this is done for money and/or elevation of social status (the higher the number of "likes", followers or patrons the higher the social position). Accordingly, there is a goal that involves a commercial exchange). On the other hand, when one wants to produce expressive illustration (self-motivated or personal non-commissioned projects) one's attention should be inwardly focused because one is seeking to elucidate subject matter that deeply interest one, to express emotions or to tell stories, not to please or comply with anyone's wishes but to do it for its own sake. Therefore, the conditions for this creative process are also different; instead of seeking extrinsic rewards, one seeks an autotelic experience and, thus, intrinsic rewards. In certain cases, there is *a need* to paint certain images or to tell certain stories. This is the reason why one refers to this practice as self-expression: something presses from within to come out — "expression" derives from Latin *exprimere*, which means: "press out" (Simpson, 2009b). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that even if one course of action or the other might predominate, there is always a part of the other approach in either procedure (both in results, in thinking processes and also in the type of motivation involved). I will discuss this particular subject in 1.1.4.

Graham Rawle and Andrew Foster argue in favour of the constraints and restrictions of working to commission (Rawle and Foster, 2010, cited in Braund *et al.*, 2012, p.76). I agree with this argument: some limits are good for creativity. But, if imposed limits are so important, what happens when the illustrator is not commissioned to produce any work?

Anna Bhushan explains that in commissioned work the limits are conceptual whereas in non-commissioned work the limits are material (Bhushan, 2010, cited in Braund *et al.*, 2012, p.76). This is similar to what Isidro Ferrer comments about his playful and experimental private practice; he defines a number of limits beforehand and works within those boundaries (Ferrer, 2017).

Personally, I do not think that the term 'commercial art' correctly defines illustration. For me, the definition of the discipline is far more complex than the binary construct 'commercial-expressive.' However, I think that, at the beginning of a new commission or a self-motivated/authorial project, it is key to define a perspective, basically because the thinking processes required are distinct in each case (as I will discuss in 1.1.4) and, therefore, the results and the experience of illustrating are also different (in 1.1.6 I will first mention the difference between 'directed thinking ' and 'fantasy thinking' that coincides with the approaches to commercial and expressive illustration respectively; but in 1.3.2.1 I will explain in detail the Jungian terminology to refer to these opposed types of thinking).

1.1.3. The in-betweenness of illustration

As I introduced in 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, it can be argued that the field of illustration has always occupied an in-between position. When one tries to disentangle what illustration really is, very soon one finds that one is moving within creative domains that overlap with the field of illustration (mainly graphic design and painting). Consequently, a key problem to define Illustration stems from the fact that the field is composed of many sub-fields, and, thus, the discipline is extremely difficult to delimit.

According to some commentators, illustration practice occurs in a space between art/painting and graphic design (Zeegen, 2009, p.6; Klimowski, 2011, p.8). For Zeegen, illustration lies "somewhere between art and graphic design", but he indicates there is a whole range of possibilities between these two poles where practitioners occupy different positions (2009, p.6). Andrzej Klimowski makes a similar argument but indicates that the context of the field is graphic design (2011, p.8). Braund states:

> Some illustrators' practices are closer to graphic design practice than others (eg: Christopher Niemann, George Hardie). I view the creative disciplines as clusters with diffused boundaries; any one or more of which can come up against another or others and create overlaps, something akin to coloured filters; each colouring the other. (2017)

About the similarities with fine art, Dalley states, "art and illustration can never be separated entirely" (1980, p.10). For Mareis the frontier between commercial illustration and independent artistic production has been historically blurred (2007, p.3). Some commentators think that since the nineteenth century illustration filled the space previously occupied by painting (Klimowski, 2011, p.8; Zeegen, 2009, p.16). Klimowski explains that illustration shares with painting "the desire for self-expression" (Klimowski, 2011, p.8).

Respecting the differences from fine art, some commentators argue that, in creative terms, there are no distinctions between an illustrator and a fine artist except for the legal framework in reference to the use of the work (FADIP, 2011, p.13). Apart from the fact that illustrators sell reproduction rights instead of original artwork, what distinguishes the two fields is that illustration is normally used to illustrate a written text or brief (Ferrer, 2017; Male, 2014, pp.69-75) and has not been traditionally practised for its own sake. Alan Male points out:

> Unlike fine art, the discipline it is most frequently confused with or compared to, *illustration is not necessarily cultivated for its own sake and is not meant as a pandering to any intrinsic pleasures it affords the minds and emotions that might experience it*. (Male, 2017, p.19 — my emphasis)

As I have mentioned, given the current situation of the field, I contest this opinion: in the contemporary context illustration can be practised as an autotelic activity.

1.1.4. Illustration: Problem-solving or artistic expression?

For some authors, illustration is about problem-solving (Hall 2011, p.13; Male, 2019, p.223), whereas for others it is about artistic expression (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.97; Braund, 2017) but, most commentators agree that both approaches are important and complementary in order to develop a

successful career in illustration (Braund, 2012, p.7; Niemann, cited in Abstract: The Art of Design, 2017a).

Zeegen indicates there are illustrators who believe that visual problem-solving is at the heart of all illustration but there are others who experienced a shift in perception in the 2000s, which gave birth to new approaches to image making (2009, pp.34-36).

But some practitioners distinguish between these two approaches in a very polarized way. Graphic designer Peter Saville states:

> There's applied art and fine art. The tools are irrelevant. It's either applied: applied to somebody else's problem or product, or it's fine art: standing alone. The difference is really defined. It's not a grey zone, in my opinion, it's black and white. (Saville, cited in Hall, 2011, p.6)

For me the distinction between problem-solving and expression is very pertinent as these different objectives condition the approaches to produce illustration artworks. Problem-solving is the approach broadly used in the design fields, whereas painting is generally driven by an expressive need. Design uses 'design thinking' a process of exploration aimed at finding solutions to problems by empathising with users/customers' needs (Kröper *et al*., 2011, p.98; D'Souza, 2011, p.285), while painting seeks self-expression. Design thinking uses divergent thinking as complementary to convergent thinking to solve problems (Lindberg *et al*., 2010; Tversky and Chou, 2011, p.209-214). This distinction is based on J. P. Guilford's theoretical framework (Guilford, 1967). Convergent production is related to deductive thinking and aims to find a single solution to solve a problem, whereas divergent production accommodates a number of responses to find a solution (Guilford, 1967, pp.213-215).

Anthony Stevens sees a similarity between Guilford's ideas about convergent and divergent production, Edward De Bono's vertical and lateral thinking processes[5] and depth's psychology understanding of the dynamic relationship between conscious and unconscious (Stevens, 1995, pp.280-282). But, although I see some points in common between these theoretical frameworks, I also observe important differences that originate in the distinct philosophical standpoints of the psychological schools that generated these labels. For

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[5] See De Bono, 1967, 1970.

instance, compared with Jungian psychology, cognitive psychology does not grant the same importance to the unconscious and focuses on information-gathering processes (Miller, 2004, p.97). This difference between problem-solving and expression can also be related to the concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation respectively: clients' needs for solutions are external problems to the illustrator, while one's own conflicts and needs of expression are internal. This could also be related to Jung's concept of extraverted and introverted explained in *Psychological Types* (1921).

Product designer Tinker Hatfield says:

> I think there is art involved in design but, to me, I don't think of it as art. My perception of art is that it is really the ultimate self-expression from a creative individual. For me as a designer it is not the ultimate goal to become self-expressive. The end goal is to solve a problem for someone else and hopefully it looks great to someone else and it's cool to someone else. (Abstract: The Art of Design, 2017b)

Stephen Heller and Marshall Arisman also see "serious creative differences between the design process and making illustrations" (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.31). Arisman emphatically establishes a difference by relating design to problem-solving and illustration to storytelling (Heller and Arisman, 2000, pp.11-13).

Braund also observes a difference between graphic designers and illustrators:

> I think designers tend to regard themselves as being within a professional culture defined by business/design group/teamwork/employed often within one company, whereas the illustrator usually feels like a certain breed of artist, who, although often working to a set of instructions, is nevertheless an artist for hire; and an artist of sorts. (2017)

The relevance of these concepts is that the perception of illustration depends greatly on the space where one places the discipline in relation to other domains. The novel methods for expressive and autotelic illustration that I am proposing in my approach — a play-based creative method that is not aimed at problem-solving but at producing enjoyment and flow — can only happen within a new definition of the field. Of course, these ideas challenge the previous model of illustration mostly regarded as client-oriented problem-solving commercial-art.

Nowadays, social networks are apparently at risk of dissolving boundaries between commercial and expressive illustration practice. Currently, most professional illustrators use social media, such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc., to promote their work and contact clients, fellow practitioners and followers. Hence, the majority of professional illustrators agree that social media, and particularly Instagram, are a great way to promote their works (Lecture in Progress, 2019; Jelly London, 2019) and to share rich conversations with other practitioners (Albarran, 2018). Some report that posting self-initiated work effectively helps them to be seen by potential clients who eventually commission them to do work (Luque, cited in Vaughn, 2017; Griffin, 2018); and some also utilise crowdfunding platforms, such as Patreon or Kickstarter, to finance self-initiated projects (López and Domingo, 2018, pp.51-53). But, for most professional illustrators digital platforms are generally used with the goal of obtaining extrinsic rewards, whether these are generated by doing business or by posting self-initiated work that eventually translates into likes, comments and, above all, followers — it is worth mentioning that in network platforms, such as Instagram, these indicators represent the currency of social acceptance (Cockley, 2019). Hence, some professional practitioners comment they use social media exclusively as marketing tools rather than as a space to post images of their personal life (Griffin, 2018); and some even recommend separating work and life in Instagram (Cockley, 2019). So, at least for professional illustrators, there might exist some self-imposed restriction as regards the use of artistic expressive works in social media because, if one uses a digital platform only with commercial purposes, one does not want to risk losing popularity by posting experimental or unconventional material. Additionally, something that is generating important concerns among illustrators who use social media as a promotional tool is the necessity of having big numbers of followers in order to be commissioned to do work. Some professional practitioners are even reporting cases of 'follower bias'; a new phenomenon that consists of a company or client rejecting illustrators if their followers are less than 10,000, which, besides producing great stress and anxiety among illustrators, it is restraining their creativity and self-expression (Lee, 2019). Dan Woodger

comments, "[...] I think it makes people afraid of making mistakes". And he further states:

> Art is about creative self-expression; sometimes it resonates with people, sometimes it doesn't. But if you're deciding whether to share artwork based on how many likes you think it will get as opposed to sharing artwork you believe in, is that really of merit? (Woodger, cited in Lee, 2019)

But Woodger is not the only illustrator concerned with this phenomenon that inhibits creative self-expression; a number of artists are worried about this new trend of making art that chases likes instead of doing it for art's sake (Cockley, 2019; Lee, 2019). Artist Andrea Crespo explains, "Reward systems in social media were influencing my decisions while art making. I would think about what people would think based off of likes and comments" and concludes that using social media activity to evaluate one's performance is "really bad for art" (cited in Zeiba, 2018). Indeed, in order to have an impact on digital platforms, artists not only need to think in terms of the quality of the artwork but also in the way algorithms process information (such as the use of hashtags, knowing the days and hours of more visibility to post their works, etc.). Alison Carmichael states,

> Your Instagram follower count is the measure of how dedicated time-wise you are to your social media, whereas your portfolio is the measure of how talented you are as an artist. Two totally different skill sets. Not to be confused. (cited in Jelly London, 2019)

Spanish graphic designer and illustrator Isidro Ferrer refers to this trend as "the dictatorship of 'like'" (2017). For Aleesha Nandhra, on social media people only show their best side (Lecture in Progress, 2018a) and, for Aitor Saraiba, expression is restricted in Instagram because the network does not allow for expressing fear or sexual desires (cited in Camarzana, 2015). The type of expression Saraiba's mentions could be associated with the Jungian archetypal[6] figure of 'the shadow': which condenses all the things that we cannot see or know about ourselves (Johnson, 1991, p.4). This complex[7] represents everything we deny in ourselves: behaviours or thoughts we perceive as evil, inferior and socially unacceptable (Hopcke, 1989, p.81).

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[6] The definition of 'archetype' will be provided in 1.3.2.

[7] The definition of 'complex' will be provided in 1.3.2.

Contrarily, as Nahndra argues, the image one presents in social networks can be associated with the Jungian concept of 'the persona': "what we would like to be and how we wish to be seen by the world" (Johnson, 1991, p.3), it is "that face we present to the outside world" (Stein, 2019, p.37). Thus, considering commerce is based on adaptive attitudes that favour exchange in collective life, in general, social media activity only allows for a particular type of communication: one that leaves aside unadapted unconscious drives, which, according to depth psychology are among the most powerful drives that motivate artistic processes in order to attain self-expression and, eventually, improve psychological balance (Jacobi, 1973, pp.109-114). Therefore, in order to contact possible clients or companies, most illustrators who use social platforms tend to adopt a commercial attitude and mainly show their best professional skills and artworks, rather than posting self-expressive or experimental illustrations, perhaps because these could be regarded as socially unadapted or unprofessional by followers and potential clients.

1.1.5. The end of illustration?

As I explained in the introductory chapter, the reasons for the crisis within the field of illustration are diverse (social, political, economic, cultural), but technology has been crucial in many aspects. It is not accidental that the crisis of illustration has been increasing ever since the digital explosion. Nevertheless, although digital technologies that could be applied to illustration appeared in the 1980s (Male, 2014, p.37) and these were followed by the development of the Internet in the 1990s (Schwab, 2017, p.7), the crisis in the field only became public in the 2000s and, for instance, Heller described some possible reasons for the phenomenon in his article "The end of illustration", where he indicated the risks that digital technologies implied for the profession (2000, pp.23-28). Klaus Schwab (2017) sees the development of the Internet as the last stage of the third industrial revolution but at the same time thinks that "a more ubiquitous and mobile internet" is a key element of "the fourth industrial revolution" (p.7). Indeed, since the beginning of the new millennium many commentators have pointed to a radical change in illustration (Glaser, 2004, pp.205-209; Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.29).

The transition from traditional (or analogue) illustration to electronic-based media and the development of the Internet facilitated the proliferation of stock-house merchants, which was, and still is, a concerning issue for illustrators because many companies and clients prefer to buy digital stock images for cheaper prices rather than commissioning original work from illustrators (Holland, 2000, pp.73-87; Graphic Artists Guild, 2013, p.215). It is worth mentioning that currently some stock websites offer images (photographs, vectors, illustrations) for free. For instance, see Pixabay (2020). Besides, stock images almost eradicated a starting point marketplace for novice illustrators to train/learn about the rudiments of the profession before progressing to undertake more complex assignments (which require more skills).

However, as some experts indicate, the cause for this alleged decline of illustration might also be aesthetic. Adrian Shaughnessy (2006) explains there are many reasons for illustration's problems, including art directors' preference for photography but, above all, graphic design's capacity to convey clearer or, compared with illustration, less ambiguous messages. But, as discussed in the introductory chapter, perhaps even art directors' 'aesthetic' preference for photographers and/or graphic designers — rather than illustrators — is an indirect consequence of digital technology, as it provided tools to graphic designers to make images without the need to have the work commissioned from an illustrator. Moreover, with the use of certain computer programs, photographers are also able to produce imagery that only illustrators could provide in the past. Nevertheless, what might have started as a consequence of the digital explosion, has became a cultural and aesthetic trend. Charles Hively comments that frequently art directors, editors or publishers do not even consider the possibility of commissioning illustration work. He states, "illustration isn't even on the radar; it's an art form that hasn't been discovered yet. Or it has been forgotten", and he also points out art directors are not trained to present illustration to clients as an option (Hively, cited in Heller, 2006b). Poster illustrator Drew Struzan explains how film studios currently prefer photography rather than illustration (Drew, 2013).

These comments suggest that — at least in some media — illustration has been abandoned in favour of other art forms in the digital era.

Today, still in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, and only eight years after the beginning of industry 4.0 the crisis of the field of illustration seems far from being over. Schwab (2017) explains the term 'industry 4.0' was coined at the Hannover Fair in 2011 and refers to this last stage of technological development as "the fourth industrial revolution", which involves the fusion of state of the art technologies and their interaction across various domains (physical, digital and biological). He characterises it as spreading much faster and more widely than the previous industrial revolutions (Schwab, 2017, pp.6-9).

Consequently, numerous illustrators and illustration professional associations have reported the precariousness of the working conditions within the field (APIM, 2016, p.15 and 2017, p.4).

FADIP indicates there is a real deterioration in fees for illustration that is making illustration a profession that it is very difficult to sustain (2011, p.76). The Graphic Artist Guild explains, "Some artists are reporting being asked to do work at fees that make it impossible to make a living" (2013, p.215). If one compares the pricing charts of the 2013 and 2018 guides of The Graphic Artist Guild, one might observe that, in some cases, whereas some of the highest values are currently higher than they were, the lowest values are even lower than before (2013, pp.218-243; 2018, pp.236-261). Luise Vormittag points out, "Traditional models for operating as a commercial illustrator are being affected by a rapidly changing media landscape and a reduction of commissioning budgets" (2014, p.41). Some professionals go even further. Chris Oatley declares: "All the nails aren't in the coffin yet, but 'freelance illustration' as we knew it is DEAD" (2013 — emphasis in original). Christoph Niemann argues,

> Many of the magazines that just a few years ago employed scores of art directors and fed armies of illustrators are gone, or have been reduced to a fraction of their former size to a degree, this is a natural evolution in any industry, but the speed and swiftness with which it has destroyed businesses and radiant careers are still terrifying. This revolution is not over. It will continue at an ever faster pace. (2016, p.130)

As APIC's last report informs, from a sample of 269 professional illustrators, 70 per cent of them communicate that they need another form of work to compensate for the reduction of commissions in order to make a living (APIC, 2016a, p.15), while APIM's report of 2017 states illustration is an undervalued activity (in cultural, social and economical terms) and a precarious profession (APIM, 2017, p.4).

Nonetheless, there are some commentators who are very optimistic about the present and future of illustration. Zeegen (2009) argues that contemporary illustrators have never been so well regarded (p.54) and he points out that illustration's crisis is predominantly centred around the print media because the video game industry continues to grow (p.56). Evan Pricco writes: "It feels like every few years, someone utters the proclamation that illustration is dead." but he is very positive about the current situation of the field (Oh and Pricco, 2011, p.9).

Illustrators are indeed finding new marketplaces to show their talent (Gallardo cited in Amiguet, 2017, p.60; O'Brien, 2020) and, for instance, some practitioners are decorating or branding hotels or restaurants (O'Reilly, 2015d; Mora, 2018, pp.31-33). Rob Alderson informs illustration is in demand again (2016, pp.58-68), Héctor Márquez argues enthusiastically about the boom of illustrated books in Spain (2017, pp.6-9), and Sandra López and Ángel Domingo state we are currently enjoying a boom of illustration (2018, p.19). Similarly, Lou Bones claims, "there's never been a better time to be an illustrator" but she also acknowledges that there are "tonnes of illustrators out there" and that some of the new opportunities involve "high-risk clients for illustrators" (because some of these clients do not understand about copyright and licensing). Nonetheless, she is overall very optimistic about the current situation of the field (mainly because, due to the economic collapse, there is an emergence of start-up companies; children's books are selling better; there is an interest in the moving image; and VR companies are hiring illustrators). For this reason, she also points out the need for illustrators to be skilled cross-disciplinary (Bones, cited in Snoad, 2018).

And even Heller, who announced the end of illustration in 2000, now states, "I shall now unequivocally proclaim that we have definitely entered a new golden — if not platinum or titanium — age of illustration" (Heller, 2019, p.11).

Accordingly, various surveys and commentators report that illustrators are having more workload than a few years ago (O'Brien, 2019 and 2020).

But the Insight Report into Creative Careers and Starting Out of 2018 informs that, despite the fact that there is currently more work for illustrators, salaries are not increasing to compensate clients' demands (as they want more work for less money). Additionally, according to this report, illustrators' starting salaries are £13,000 — £4,000 less as compared with other professionals such as animators or photographers, who have the next lowest rate (Lecture in Progress, 2018b, p.4). Nevertheless, the information gathered in Ben the Illustrator's 2018 survey indicates that 41 per cent of illustrators earn less than £9,999, which demonstrates why 73 per cent of the practitioners report they do not earn a suitable amount to live sustainably (O'Brien, 2019). As discussed in the introductory chapter, the data collected in Lisa Maltby's survey, confirmed this information (2019a and 2019b). Ben the Illustrator's third survey conducted in the latter half of 2019 scrutinized the answers of over 1,300 illustrators and 60 per cent of full time illustrators said that they do not earn the £20,000 that the AOI would like them to earn, and 66 per cent manifested mental health or confidence issues (O'Brien, 2020). As a consequence, a number of commentators concluded that this last survey reveals that "illustrators are still grossly underpaid" (Hilder, 2020) and the "continued financial struggle of profession" (Long, 2020). As I mentioned, according to the last surveys, in Spain things are not very different (APIC, 2016a and 2016b; APIM, 2016). Hence, it is not surprising that the perception that illustration is enjoying a higher cultural status these days is contested by a considerable number of illustrators' associations and professionals in the field (APIM, 2017, p.4; Ferrer, 2017) because social recognition is not balanced with earnings. Thus, positive opinions about the present situation and the future of the field are really scarce because for most commentators and illustration professional associations things are not improving as the traditional commercial model is providing work for very few illustrators and

working conditions are precarious (APIC, 2016a, p.42; APIM, 2017). Considering this information, in my opinion, in the near future traditional commercial illustration will only provide work for a very reduced number of professionals. Moreover, according to my last working experiences, nowadays, illustration commissions come with questionable conditions: substandard art direction, incredibly short time frames, low budgets, and delay in payments. Considering the poor quality of external incentives — at least for me —, it is almost impossible to find fulfilment and flow in commissioned work. And, with respect to the idea of working in other industries, such as animation, video games, films or TV series, one has to keep in mind that illustration jobs within these fields have a rather reduced number of positions for illustrators and the working conditions are generally different from those that illustrators knew in the past (for instance, when working from home).

What seems to be clear is that there is a big displacement from print media illustration to digital technologies (Cortabitarte, 2010, p.39). Kane comments, "new models would be required for cultural activities in the new post-capitalist, post-consumerist landscape" and concludes that we are now moving into a new 'folk' culture (Kane, cited in O'Reilly, 2015c, p.61). Similarly, John O'Reilly states:

> The old commercial model based around the professional hierarchies of print media (newspapers, magazines, books, traditional advertising) *has broken down, never to return*. Many in our illustration community are having to invent new models of earning money, new networks and platforms. (2015c, p.60 — my emphasis)

For this reason, many illustrators are finding the need to generate creative strategies to make an income by promoting themselves in different ways, including the use of digital platforms. Matter-of-factly, illustration seems to be booming in social media and some illustrators have managed to adapt very well to the digital shift and have thrived by generating their own business models. For instance, Fran Meneses has almost 300,000 followers in Instagram and 1,400 subscribers in Patreon (López and Domingo, 2018, p.136).[8] But, whereas some illustrators are very successful in social networks

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[8] Currently, Fran Meneses has more than 314,000 followers in Instagram (Meneses, 2020a) and 1,814 subscribers in Patreon and she makes U$S4,705 monthly (Meneses, 2020b).

and crowdfunding platforms, the great majority are not able to make a living out of them. So, although there are a number of success narratives of how hard work is compensated by subscribers in Patreon — such as Meneses' story (cited in López and Domingo, 2018, p.136) —, there are no guarantees that full-time dedication to this digital platform will provide the desired rewards (Knepper, 2017). And, according to some commentators, only 2 per cent of Patreon content creators earn monthly more than the minimum wage (Houghton, 2018; Sanchez, 2018). For photographer Brent Knepper, "No one makes a living on Patreon" and money concentrates in a few hands at the top (2017). This is consistent with the opinions of some critical experts who explain social networks and crowdsourcing platforms could be extremely alienating and refer to this socioeconomic phenomenon as "platform-capitalism" (Srnicek, 2018). Additionally, digital platforms have the right to change terms and conditions — including algorithms —, which most of the time affects artists in very negative ways. For example, in 2017 Patreon changed its payment system by increasing service fees, which impacted patrons and affected thousands of content creators, who lost many of their subscribers and their incomes (Sanchez, 2018); and although Patreon's founder Jack Conte apologised (2017), many content creators lost trust and left the platform. Furthermore, some commentators indicate that Patreon's mistake reveals that the platform's model is not sustainable and can crash unexpectedly (TechsTickles, 2019), which means that creators could lose all the work uploaded in the platform at any time. As regards modifying the algorithm, Facebook changed it a couple of years ago and made it much more difficult for users to visualise pages by diverting organic, natural and free traffic towards friends and family publications only, in order to force professional users to pay if they want their content to be seen by other people in this social network (López and Domingo, 2018, p.120). And after Instagram changed the algorithm last year; some illustrators comment it is much harder to build a real following in this digital platform these days (Woodger, cited in Lee, 2019; Elliott, 2019). Furthermore, as discussed in 1.1.4, currently, a number of commentators are indicating the negative aspects of social media and their effects on mental wellbeing. For instance, many describe the anxiety produced by the difficulties to attract followers and, as a consequence, the

repercussions on their businesses, concernment of feedback dictating the kind of creative output they should be making, and confidence issues derived from comparing themselves with more successful artists who have more followers and likes (Lecture in Progress, 2019; Elliott, 2019).

Finally, social networks and crowdfunding platforms enable the fuzziness of play and work. To describe this phenomenon, Julian Kücklich forged the term "playbour" (2005). Referring to this concept, Christian Fuchs (2014) argues: "Play and labour have traditionally been two separated spheres of activity, the first taking place during spare time in private and public spaces and the second during working time in factories and offices". Fuchs warns that the risk of this fuzziness is that it leads to exploitation because one is unaware that one is working while playing and, thus, producing value for the platforms' owners (2014, p.357), which, in turn, is conducive to alienation because workers, in this case, the creators of contents of the social networks, are separated from the products of their labour — as they are poorly compensated or not compensated at all. Unpaid user-generated content is precisely what characterises the way of operating of digital platforms (Dyer-Whitherford, 2015, p.91).

As I will discuss in chapter 3, by contrast to the extrinsic motivation that drives participation in social media (such as likes, comments and followers), the type of play I propose is focused on intrinsic motivation. And, even when my approach shares certain elements with digital networks (both utilise games' mechanics and both involve unpaid work), I seek autotelic experiences with the use of my play-based creative framework that provide me with intrinsic rewards (which means I do not utilise it to obtain social recognition); and, although I produce unpaid illustration work with Hyperdream, afterwards, I tend to feel empowered, instead of alienated, because I am generating value for myself rather than doing it for digital platform owners.

1.1.6. Self-initiated projects

The terms 'self-initiated', 'self-generated' and 'self-motivated' refer to projects undertaken outside the constraints of the industry (Brazell and Davies, 2013, pp.102-103; Rees, 2014, pp.113-115). (It is worth mentioning that the

meaning of 'self-motivated' and 'autotelic' is almost the same). This concept is central to my investigation because I argue that the thinking and creative processes involved in these self-motivated projects should be radically different from those used in commissioned work. Self-motivated practice is not client-oriented; it usually operates without a brief, it is predominantly centred on the exploration of the expressive possibilities of the field, and it often uses an experimental approach. Referring to his self-motivated practice, Klimowski states, "this playing with form and indulging in one's own obsessions was vital to keep work fresh and lively. Sooner or later the experimentations would find their way into commissioned work" (2011, pp.31-32).

Illustrator Christoph Niemann explains how significant experimental self-motivated projects are for him:

> I take very specific time off for this kind of free creation because I know it's basically impossible to do under a deadline. [...] Creatively I am extremely dependant on these sparks and it only works when loosening up without an assignment, without deadline, with just kind of creating and not worrying so much about where the whole thing goes. But I think it does never happen to me that I try something new on a big deadline. (Abstract: The Art of Design, 2017a)

Niemann's opinions are very relevant to my study as he indicates there are two very distinct ways of facing work. As I discuss in 1.3.2.1, the creative free flow described by Niemann could be related to 'fantasy thinking' while the clear goals and tightness of a deadline could be associated with 'directed thinking'. Nevertheless, as Niemann indicates, these two approaches are complementary.

Zeegen comments that all illustrators enjoy the possibility of working outside of commission guidelines and the need to create personal projects can emerge from the frustration, repetition or dullness of conventional work (2005, p.114). Zeegen sees experimentation as "playtime" and he encourages this type of practice: "Take time away from commissions, and use this time to really explore new ways of working. Bring new methods to the working pattern" (2007, p.150).

Regarding the subject of creativity in these times of uncertainty, Heller and Arisman state, "Now that the shifts in the field have necessitated the illustrator's re-examination of his or her role, the larger issue of creativity

needs to be refocused" (Heller and Arisman, 2008, p.126). I agree; considering the critical situation of the discipline, there is a need for a reassessment of the question of how ideas and illustrations are created. With the decline of external incentives, illustrators do not need to carry on doing things the way they did within the commercial paradigm based on external rewards. Nonetheless, Darrel Rees warns of the difficulties posed by self-motivated projects: "The initial motivation can falter quite quickly in the face of other work pressures, but this depends on your personality type and how disciplined you are" (2014, p.113). I agree: a key problem is that one tends to give priority to paid work and hence to abandon autotelic projects. Additionally, another important problem with self-initiated projects is that they offer too many possibilities: being free to experiment with a diversity of elements (subject matter, materials, formats) might seem positive at first glance, but having endless pathways of action can overwhelm one, and eventually lead to creative block. Thus, it is essential to establish some rules beforehand to help meet the challenges in testing one's skills against pre-defined limitations (as discussed in 1.1.2). Furthermore, creative projects that are genuinely motivational would encourage continued engagement with them no matter how busy one might be with commercial practice.

1.1.7. Authorial illustration

The term 'authorial' refers to the identifiable voice of an author — manifested through recognisable images that illustrate individual subject matter. These images tend to be expressive and they usually serve to narrate stories. In some cases the illustrator herself writes these stories. Frequently, these narratives might have some autobiographical references.

Braund comments, the term 'authorial' "has been used to describe work in which the illustrator's voice is more evident in the work"; and he points out that it can be defined as "personal, individual, original, and intelligent" (Braund *et al.*, 2012, p.16). Thus authorial defines the path of those who search for visual individuality.

Referring to authorial illustration, Adrian Shaughnessy stresses that in the current context developing a personal voice, more than a choice, has become

a necessity (2011, p.195). I agree: considering the stock-house market currently covers most of the 'impersonal' illustration marketplace, finding an authorial voice might be the best strategy to cope with the current crisis within the field.

Arisman and Braund do not see an opposition between authorial and commercial practice; they actually see authorial as a complement to working to commission (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.94; Braund, 2012, p.7). However, authorial illustrators generate their own artwork, which is generally created as self-initiated projects rather than being a commercial application produced for an external client (Brazell and Davis, 2013, p.30).

Braund explains: "I think that authorial illustration is by its very nature expressive because it refers to a practice which foregrounds the author's personal voice or signature" (2017). From my perspective, the authorial expressive approach should be reinforced with the development of new and singular methods of producing images, which, in turn, should help the illustrator to find his/her subject matter, personal stories, and particular narrative styles.

About the need for an authorial approach, in 2000 Arisman makes a visionary statement:

> the vocabulary of the illustrator has to be expanded into authorship. [...] The ability to deliver the complete story will be crucial. [...] Who is speaking and what they are saying in words and images is going to be more important than ever. (Heller and Arisman, 2000, pp.xxi-xxii)

In chapter 4 of *Inside the Business of Illustration* (Heller and Arisman, 2004), Arisman expands on the importance of being an illustrator-writer (p.89-98) and, additionally, in the unpublished essay "We Tell Stories" (2013, pp.29-33). As for the different media that illustrators could use for authorial self-expression, Arisman explains:

> The delivery system of graphic novel, illustrated novel, comic-book, short film, Web site, interactive media, etc., has broadened the base for self-expression. When business was good, illustrators were content to be a creative service for the editor and author. Now that the business of illustration is not so good, illustrators have to individually redefine their role and reassess their talents. (Heller and Arisman, 2004, pp.94-95)

Furthermore, Arisman argues, "Authorship demands that writing become an integral part of the illustrator's creative process" (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.98). Thus, for him, authorial illustrators should be able to write their own stories.

Braund points out that the term authorial is used to describe projects that often involve:

> narrative and storytelling, and the design of sequential imagery, such as children's books, graphic novels, picture essays, comic books or other forms of graphic literature, digital formats, screen-based production, installation or gallery work. (Braund, 2012, p.9)

Nevertheless, some commentators point out that the authorial path is not suitable for everyone because authorship does not imply just writing the stories but it might also involve producing and selling the projects (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.89-93; Braund, 2012, pp.7-8). It could be argued that authorship requires entrepreneurship. In reference to the autonomy needed to work in self-motivated projects in authorial illustration, Braund comments:

> as digital forms shatter old models of working practice, opening up a free and more democratic space for the use of imagery in creative-problem solving, it is quite clear that a new and more autonomous illustrator is emerging, one who *is* able to work on their own terms, author their own material, develop their own projects, be enterprising and generate their own employment: in short to take up their rightful, well-deserved and full artistic status. (Braund, 2012, p.8 — emphasis in original)

Thus, in general, the authorial approach demands higher levels of motivation because it requires more involvement to develop and promote the whole project. In regular commissioned practice illustrators just need to illustrate the assigned work, whereas in authorial practice they have to invent the project, illustrate, often design it, sometimes print it, promote and sell it. In many cases inventing the project involves writing a script or text. Designing is a time-consuming activity that could imply book/magazine/fanzine graphic design and/or tablet app/web design. In some cases, illustrators have to print or publish hard copies of the material they have created. Promotional activities could include publicising the project in diverse social network platforms (such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, etc.) and/or the use of crowdfunding platforms (this promotional activity could be extremely time-

consuming (Carreras, 2017; López and Domingo, 2018, p.52) as it implies generating rewards for those contributors who support the project, which usually involve printing the material and then sending it via mail) and/or letting booths at fairs or conventions and/or exhibiting their work at galleries. Finally, illustrators have to sell the material they have produced finding the best channels to do so (direct sales, internet commerce, etc.). These steps and activities might vary considerably depending on the type of project the authorial illustrator initiates (for instance, the types of tasks involved in the creation of a deck of cards are not the same as those required to design an app or a graphic novel) but what it is quite clear is that the authorial approach implies a higher involvement on the part of illustrators and also the use of skills that transcend illustration training (writing, graphic/web design, programming, marketing, search engine marketing, public relations, etc.).

1.1.8. Graphic novel

As my practical proposal involves the development of a sequential visual narrative project that can be labelled as a 'graphic novel' (discussed in 3.2.2), in this section I introduce this term by explaining its possible origins and discussing some of the main characteristics of this genre or medium. For Jan Baetens and Hugo Frey 'graphic novel' "is not just a genre but also a medium", which, in turn, is part of wider cultural fields such as visual storytelling or graphic literature (2015, p.7). However, I must state that I adhere to those authors who indicate there is still no general, single or final definition for the label 'graphic novel' (Baetens and Frey, 2015, p.7) or even to those who make clear it is a "disagreeable term" but at the same time acknowledge it is helpful to define a number of concepts associated with this particular art form (Campbell, 2010 [2004]).

For some authors the term 'graphic novel' emerged in the late 1970s with Will Eisner's *A Contract with God* (1978), and other adult comics' projects such as Frank Miller's *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (Miller *et al.*, 1986), Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1973-1986) or Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons' *Watchmen* (1986-1987) (Weiner, 2003, pp.17-20, 32-38). Paradoxically, as

Baetens and Frey explain, neither Spiegelman nor Moore are fond of the label 'graphic novel' preferring the earlier term 'comics' (2015, pp.1-2).

Santiago García argues that graphic novels are comics for adult readers and indicates the label has been consolidating for more than thirty years (2012, p.15) but he explains that the term does not mean much and is misleading because many graphic novels are not actually novels (García, cited in Rodrigues Martin, 2018, pp.439-440). Nevertheless, he states that 'graphic novel' is used to refer to the seriousness of the contents and thus to differentiate this medium from comics for children or teenagers (García, cited in Rodrigues Martin, 2018, pp.444-446). José Trabado (2012) comments that 'graphic novel' serves to restore the reputation of graphic narrative language (p.14) and for him the term implies liberation from the restrictions of the comic industry (p.9). Similarly, García explains that graphic novel authors write about subjects they choose — not those imposed by editors (García, cited in Rodrigues Martin, 2018, pp.429-432).

Another distinctive feature is that artists are not restricted by format limitations and they can use as many pages as they need to tell the stories they write/illustrate (Trabado, 2012, p.9; García, cited in Rodrigues Martin, 2018, p.430). García argues authors are essential for the development of graphic novels in which they can work in a literary mode, operating like novelists without having to consider the length of work, owning the reproduction rights, and receiving a percentage per copy sold (García, cited in Rodrigues Martin, 2018. pp.427, 431-432). His ideas align with the new model of production discussed in 1.1.7 in which authors (illustrator/writer or writer and illustrator) do not respond to a request from a printing company but generate their own work.

However, there is still no final consensus about certain formal aspects that could help to establish a difference between 'children's picture book', 'illustrated book' and 'graphic novel' — such as the combination of single image and sequential illustrations (Tan, 2006, 2010, p.6 and 2011, p.2; Earle, 2016, p.395), the use of comic balloons (Schnatz, 2015), and the balance between text and image (Amidon, 2015). For instance, currently there is a new hybrid that is half-graphic and half-novel. As for this recently developed

format, author Gail Sidonie Sobat argues, "I think the graphic novel is changing and in flux, and that is part of the beauty of its form." Nonetheless, she agrees that images are essential to tell the story in this type of narrative (Sidonie Sobat, cited in Amidon, 2015). Sidonie Sobat's ideas are interesting as she stresses that the term's lack of definition can be used to explore new visual narrative strategies in which the balance of the interactions between text and image are not necessarily anchored to traditional comics' sequential storytelling languages.

1.1.9. Fantasy as a genre in illustration and comics

As my project involves the concept of 'fantasy', in this subsection I analyse 'fantasy' as a genre in illustration and comics. 'Fantasy' is important in the performance of play activities in general but I explain that relationship in 1.2.1 when I discuss the connections between play and culture and in 1.2.2 when I bring forward some of the antecedents of the use of play as a creative strategy in artistic practice. Additionally, in 1.3.2 I recover the subject of 'fantasy' as related to aspects of the theoretical framework by discussing Jungian ideas of 'fantasy thinking' (1.3.2.1), 'fantasy' as being the active principle behind play (1.3.2.2) and 'fantasy' as linked to active imagination (1.3.3.3).

Fantasy as a genre might be described as a type of fiction based on imagination usually involving tropes such as magic, adventure and settings in supernatural and/or parallel worlds. A central theme of all fantasy narratives is the opposition between the real and un-real (Jackson, 2001, p.20). Lin Carter explains that the essence of fantasy stories is magic (1973, p.6). For him fantasy narratives require "the construction of an invented milieu" in which magic works and, thus, it is an integral part of the imaginary world created by the author (Carter, 1973, p.6 — emphasis in original). Diana Wynne Jones states, "The primary assumption is that magic is possible in the world of fantasy, and the exact nature of this ambient magic strongly influences the narrative" (1997, p.616). For Brian Stableford "A magical event is one that occurs outside the normal working of cause and effect, by virtue either of the intervention of some supernatural agency or the accomplishment of some

kind of formulaic spell" (2005, p.263) and Marina Warner sees strong connections between magic, imagination, dreams and fantasy (2011, p.23).

Walter Schurian (2005) sees a long tradition of fantastic art that originates in Paleolithic art (p.9) and argues that the fantastic transcends historical movements and creates a continuity that connects ancient and modern art schools (p.7). Ron Tiner explains that the origins of fantasy illustration can be found in medieval illuminations of the 13th and 14th centuries and indicates that the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century caused a gradual increase in book production that propelled the genre of fairy tales' books. For him, modern fantasy illustration begins in the first years of the 19th century (Tiner, 1997, p.492). Walter Albert (1999) indicates that Surrealism shows the major influence of contemporary fantasy illustration and explains that Surrealist fantasy is so prevalent in contemporary culture that it might well be considered an accepted convention. For him, Surrealism has fulfilled its objective of altering human consciousness, but its appropriation by popular culture came with a price: the movement was domesticated and, thus, became a part of the establishment it intended to transform (Albert, 1999, p.573). Heller and Chwast state that the best fantasy art outcomes combine the mysterious with the humorous and explain, "Surrealism, which combined both of these characteristics, was an offshoot of what we are calling fantasy style" (2008, p.100).

Pascal Lefèvre argues that fantasy is very difficult to define as a comics' genre because it includes many heterogeneous subgenres (2001). He explains that, for instance, the label 'fantasy' includes science fiction, superheroes, horror, sword and sorcery, oneiric comics, parallel worlds, fairy tales, angel and demons' stories, magic realism, and so on (Lefèvre, 2001). For Trabado, fantasy in comics, rather that a narrative style, constitutes a distinguishing feature of the medium itself because some of the earliest comics, such as Windsor McCay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland* (1905-1914) or *Dreams of the Rarebit Fiend* (1904-1919), used a precise grammar that allowed to gradually shift between everyday reality and a distorted unreality producing and effect of surprise and uneasiness (Trabado, 2017, p.9). *Little Nemo in Slumberland* dealt with the world of dreams, whereas *Dreams of the*

Rarebit Fiend explored nightmarish realities (Sabin, 1996, p.20; Trabado, 2012, pp.19-20) this is probably why Heller and Chwast label McCay's comics as "proto-surrealist stories" (2008, p.240). As a matter of fact, Trabado suggests that McCay drew images that produced unfamiliarity and uneasiness years before Freud made public the concept of the uncanny in 1919 (Trabado, 2017, p.9), and he asserts that early 20th century comics were a sort of popular avant-garde (Trabado, 2012, p.251). Additionally, some commentators defend that George Herriman' *Krazy Kat* (1913-1944) had acceptance by the Dadaist artists (Inge, 1990, p.41; Sabin, 1996, p.24). García argues that comics and films were probably influential for Max Ernst when he created his image novels (2012, p.87) and Heller and Chwast point out, "surrealistic illustration was created long before the term — and movement — Surrealism was coined" and note that a number of cartoonists and illustrators in fantasy created dislocated and dreamlike imagery, which gave Surrealists visual elements to develop their language (2008, p.70). According to some commentators, the work of 19th century caricaturist J. J. Grandville was inspirational for Ernst's narrative collages (Heller and Chwast, 2008, p.70; Petersen, 2011, p.65). These opinions indicate that some fantasy elements of popular art might have been appropriated by Surrealism. Nonetheless, following Schurian's argument, it is also possible to see the fantastic as a common denominator that transcends artistic trends, schools and periods and erases the differences between 'high art' and 'low art'.

1.2. Play, culture, creativity and illustration

Continuing with the literature review, in the following subsections I present play as related to culture, some antecedents in the use of play-based creative strategies, and I discuss the emergence of play in the field of illustration.

1.2.1. Play and culture

Play has ambiguous definitions (Sutton-Smith, 1997, p.1); nevertheless, there is a consensus about certain structural elements that define the activity. In the following pages I name, analyse and evaluate some of those key components. All these elements are significant in understanding the concepts

I keep in mind to design the play dynamics of my own creative framework.

Most commentators agree that the first to stress the crucial importance of play for art and culture was Friedrich Schiller (Caillois, 2001b, pp.162-163). In the fourteenth letter of the *Esthetical and Philosophical Essays* (1795) Schiller introduces the idea of play as the balancing instinct between the formal impulse, which he associates with reason, finiteness and time, and the material or sensual impulse, which he relates to sense, infinitude and freedom (Schiller, 1902, p.51-54). As I explain in 1.3.2, this argument is helpful in understanding Carl G. Jung's concept of the transcendent function and active imagination as derived from this threefold scheme presented by Schiller.

Another important early study of play was Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1938). Huizinga (1949) defines play as a significant function intimately related to the construction of culture (pp.ix, 5). As for the characteristics of play, Huizinga argues that it is a free activity standing quite consciously outside ordinary life (pp.4, 8); being not serious (p.5), and at the same time with the capacity to absorb the player (p.13). Huizinga explains that play creates order, because for him "[play] *is* order" (p.10 — emphasis in original). Huizinga also mentions 'magic circles' — another crucial concept derived from anthropology — and he remarks that they allow for "temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart" (p.10). Huizinga comments that the play-world resists, even considering its relativity and fragility, due to the existence of the rules of the game, which are binding and do not allow any doubts (p.11). He states that play is an activity "connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it" (Huizinga, 1949, p.13). In my opinion, it is important to specify that no material or economical profits can be obtained by playing but play can be profitable in other senses because the experience of play transforms one. And I see that fact as a gain because I see play as a liminal activity that implies transformation — the redirection of psychic energy from one pathway into another (usually an iteration between directed thinking and fantasy thinking) — and allows me to generate new symbols, which enriches my life experience and, thus, increases my levels of motivation (this will be further discussed in 1.3.2.3, 3.1, and 4.1.2). This is consistent with my

worldview and with the Jungian theoretical framework used in this study. For Jungian psychology, the transformation of psychic energy is essential in the process of individuation (Stein, 2005, p.68).

In Man and the Sacred (1939) Roger Caillois contests Huizinga's position by arguing that play is the serious activity par excellence (2001a, pp.152-162). Caillois (2001a) sustains his argument by saying that play and rituals have many things in common, therefore, the experience of play can be related to a sacred experience (pp.154-162). Caillois explains that when one plays, one is "removed from reality" (p.158). One enters in a particular state of mind in which what happens outside the symbolic space of play is irrelevant.

Caillois attempts to arrive at a more precise definition of play in *Man, Play and Games* (1958). He argues that play is "free" (playing cannot be obligatory and that, if it were, play would immediately lose its attraction and not be appealing) —; "separate" (it is bounded within limits of space and time predefined in advance); "uncertain" (the results cannot be determined beforehand); "unproductive" (play does not create goods, nor wealth) — he indicates that one ends in a situation that is identical to that existing at the beginning of the game —; "governed by rules" (these are conventions that suspend ordinary laws that have to be respected); "make-believe" (play is accompanied by a particular awareness of a "second reality or a free unreality" as opposed to real life) (Caillois, 2001b, pp.10-11). Again, I only contest "unproductive", because I think play always implies a transformation, something is not the same at the end of the game.

Caillois attempts a further division about the types of games. He divides them into four main rubrics: "agôn" or competition; "alea" or chance; "mimicry" or simulation; and "ilinx" or vertigo (2001b, p.12). Caillois' arrangement presents another classification: the concepts of "paidia": diversion, spontaneity, turbulence, free improvisation, and "ludus": arbitrary, imperative, tedious conventions, games subordinated to the framework of rules (2001b, p.13).

Similar to Huizinga and Caillois, cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1974) sees a connection between play and ritual but also links play to the generation of symbols and the concept of liminal experiences. Additionally, he points out differences and possible relationships between liminal and 'flow' experiences.

Turner, following ideas developed by Arnold van Gennep's in *Rites de Passage* (1909), associates the concept of liminality with ritual practices in which individuals and societies experience transformation of phenomena within the community (Turner, 1974, p.56-75). However, Turner (1974) refers to the ludic experiences of complex societies as *liminoid* to distinguish them from the liminal experiences of traditional societies (p.85), which are driven by social necessity, tend to have an obligatory character and are performed collectively. In complex societies, even liminoid experiences might be collective, they are often individual products and are not cyclical (p.85). Nevertheless, while Turner points out important distinctions between liminal and liminoid (pp.84-86), he agrees that both experiences might share certain aspects, including play (p.86), the generation of new symbols (pp.84, 90), and 'flow' phenomena (pp.87-90). Turner's concepts of liminality are important for this study because they are intimately linked with the potential of play to enable the generation of new symbols and induce transformative experiences that involve 'flow'. These characteristics could be associated with Csikszentmihalyi and Jung's theories (discussed in 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 respectively). Additionally, as I comment in 3.1, Stevens sees a connection between liminal experiences and lucid dreaming (1995) and Jeffrey Miller connects liminal experiences with the transcendent function of the psyche and creativity (2004, pp.105-106).

Aligned with Huizinga and Caillois' idea of the importance of setting rules to make games possible, Bernard Suits explains that players need to adopt a specific psychological attitude that he coins as a "lusory attitude": the acceptance of the arbitrary rules of the game to guarantee the resulting playing experience (1990, p.40). Suits argues:

> To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude]. (1990, p.41 — emphasis in original)

This concept is useful to understand my approach as I set rules for the play-based activities beforehand (that is why I refer to them as 'illustration games'). Artistic practice in general can involve a lusory attitude if artists create their

own rules and then accept these self-imposed limits in order to enjoy a ludic experience.

As my practical proposal involves diverse ludic activities, there is one more aspect to consider: the difference between the apparently similar concepts of 'play' and 'game'. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (2004) present the paradox of games being a subset contained by play and vice versa (pp.72-73). In reference to games being a subset of play, they argue that play represents diverse types of playful activity, and some of those activities are games. So, following this logic, games are included within play. Conversely, respecting play as a subset of games, these authors point out that games are complex phenomena that can be understood in many different ways, including rules, play and culture as three key aspects, so, from this perspective, games comprise play (p.83). Salen and Zimmerman state, "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome" and, "A quantifiable outcome is what usually distinguishes a game from less formal play activities" (2004, p.80). Hence, it could be said that, even if in both activities one has to respect certain rules, play activities are less ordered and directed towards goals than games, which are designed experiences that involve more complex sets of rules and provide quantifiable outcomes. Hyperdream includes both play activities and games. However, the results of my games are not quantifiable in terms of numerical scores.

A pattern that emerges from the concepts of the previously mentioned authors is the necessity of defining a separation between ordinary reality and the play-world by the use and the acceptance of rules in order to be able to enjoy play experiences. In relation to my study (and as discussed in 1.1.6), I argue that connecting illustration with play by predefining rules is essential to increase the levels of challenge in self-motivated projects. But I also think that, even if one practises illustration by playful activities of a more experimental nature (less oriented towards results), designed 'illustration games' (that provide concrete outcomes) could be more effective to increase one's levels of motivation and, hence, to keep on working in autotelic projects — without abandoning them.

1.2.2. Antecedents in the use of play as creative inspiration

In fine arts practice and criticism the link between play and creativity has been extensively recognised; for example, David Getsy (2011) argues, "Games are, at base, representational activities, and artists and critics saw the game as an analogue to art practice, a metaphor for creativity" (p.x). In addition, Getsy points out that play and games transcend diversion and have a potential for subversion and critique (p.xii).

The Dadaists and Surrealists anticipated the connections between creativity and play (Prager, 2013; Laxton, 2019) and the Surrealists left behind a number of 'games' (Pierre, 1979, p.74; Brotchie and Gooding, 1995).

With reference to the context of the Surrealist use of play, Meredith Malone comments, "With the rise of fascism in Europe in the 1930s, chance, accident, and play acquired a sharper political edge" (2009, p.5). But, as a matter of fact, the Dadaists started this reaction against the insanity of war in 1916 (De Micheli, 1999, p.131-147). The irrationality of play was a mirror they faced against the rational system of thought that was leading the human race to warfare. Among other things, the Dadaists and Surrealists viewed play and games as irrational because they are not economically productive or materially functional. In the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) André Breton states, "Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought" (2010, p.26). Anne Kern explains that the Surrealists sought two objectives with their ludic practices: "diversion above all [...], the pleasure principle; and a path or 'royal road' back to the unconscious, to use Freud's terminology" (2009, p.10). But, in a general sense, Surrealists used playful activities as a means to induce a poetic attitude (Pierre, 1979, p.74).

In his only essay on games, Breton (1954) comments that the Surrealists persistent playing of games was done for the following reasons: entertainment, experimentation, bonding, and self-discovery. He praises Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* because it demonstrates the relevance of play as an activity related to beauty, magical power, and poetry that gives meaning to life and, thus, reaffirms existence and he points out that the non-seriousness of

games is useful to remove contradictions such as: work and leisure, wisdom and folly, action and dream, sanity and madness, high and low. Breton states, "It is clear that to shut oneself off from game-playing, or at least from the play of the imagination as adult discipline prescribes it, is to undermine the best of one's own humanity" (Breton, 1954, cited in Brotchie and Gooding, 1995, pp.137-138). This way Breton expresses his ideas about the importance of play as an activity that transgresses ordinary life and thus, in his view, helps people to release their creative potential.

Elza Adamowicz argues, "The common denominator to all surrealist games is that they articulate a syntactic or compositional rule, and a semantic or iconic transgression." She further explains: "Surrealist games are both polemical weapons which defy rational and stereotypical discourse, and mechanical devices set up to produce metaphors and narratives whose overreaching principle is the chance encounter (Adamowicz, 2005, pp.56-57). This "chance encounter" represented the emergence of what the Surrealists understood as 'novelty'. Thus, one of the interests of the systematic use of strange juxtapositions was to produce surprises, which might have been conducive to wonder.

Roger Cardinal and Robert Short mention that the Surrealists gave games the status of research experiments and enjoyed games as non-utilitarian activities (1970, p.118). But if games were "research experiments" this means they were functional at a certain level. One of the key benefits of the use of play in creative practice is precisely the possibility of making novel connections between things, which in turn, might lead to findings and, consequently, opens the possibility to the construction of new knowledge.

In *A Book of Surrealist Games* (1995), Alastair Brotchie and Mel Gooding comment:

> it was through games, play, techniques of surprise and methodologies of the fantastic that they [Surrealists] subverted academic modes of enquiry, and undermined the complacent certainties of the reasonable and respectable. Playful procedures and systematic stratagems provided keys to unlock the door to the unconscious and to release the visual and verbal poetry of collective creativity. (p.10)

In my case, play is a strategy I use to gain access to unconscious material, which I express through illustration practice.

In *The Third Mind* (1978), Burroughs and Gysin — drawing from Dada and Surrealism — argue in favour of introducing chance in the creation of texts and videos. They state, "The cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years". With this they aim to introduce randomness into creative writing by means of a technique they acknowledge was invented by Tristan Tzara in the 1920s and explain that the cut-up technique is aimed at producing accidents (Burroughs and Gysin, 1978, p.29). I associate this concept of 'provoked serendipities' with experimentation and allowing oneself to make mistakes.

Another antecedent in the systematic use of games for creative practice is Gianni Rodari's *The Grammar of Fantasy* (1973). Rodari, inspired by Novalis and Surrealism, attempts to develop a theory of the fantastic that allows him "to discover the art of invention" (1996, p.1). Rodari's approach stresses the importance of fantasy thinking and a playful attitude to produce creative results.

A further historical antecedent in the use of games in artistic activity can be found in the working methods of Alejandro Xul Solar (often associated with Surrealism, magic realism and the fantastic). The Argentinian artist invented a particular board game called Pan Chess, which could be used for the creation of poetry, literature and art (Cristiá, 2011, pp.72-76; Nelson, 2012, 26-27). Solar's game allowed him to produce creative works using a combination system that permitted infinite possible variations of subjects. Nevertheless, combinatory art techniques have older antecedents, including Catalonian philosopher, theologist, poet and linguist Ramon Llull's device to produce logical and poetic combinations known as *Ars Combinatoria* (Vega, 2016). The main interest of random combination games in my own work is that they help me to avoid repetitive patterns and to find new motifs.

English paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott (1971) associates play with creativity. He argues, "in playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative" (Winnicott, 2002, p.53). Furthermore, Winnicott stresses that what makes life worth living is creative apperception (2002, p.65). This mental process in which a person perceives that s/he is being creative while making something is a key element of my approach

because, in contemporary illustration, where the possibility of getting proper commissions is becoming more and more difficult, it is vital for me to develop strategies to connect with intrinsic rewards and feel that my artwork is enjoyable — even without external rewards or recognition. Thus, creative apperception becomes a reward in itself. Another meaningful concept that I draw from Winnicott is that, according to him, in the process of adaptation to external reality there are risks of losing one's own voice. He refers to this phenomenon as "compliance" (Winnicott, 2002, p.65). As discussed in 1.1.5, unfortunately, I can relate this phenomenon to most recent commissioned work experiences. Therefore, this might serve to explain one of the most important reasons for designing Hyperdream: to stimulate creative apperception through artistic playful activities.

1.2.3. Play in the context of contemporary illustration

In the field of illustration the activity of play as a creative approach was neglected until quite recently. This phenomenon is quite curious if one considers the great importance of Dada and Surrealism in illustration history (Heller and Chwast, 2008, pp.70-71, 145-156; Male, 2017, p.68). Wigan comments, "Surrealism has had an enduring influence on illustration" (2009b, p.227). But illustration practitioners never seemed to have incorporated one of the most important creative methods of these avant-garde movements: play and games.

It is also strange that — having undergone significant changes since the beginning of the new millennium — illustrators have not yet opened to the possibility of seriously reflecting about the importance of play in creative practice. Nevertheless, the connection between illustration and play started to be established in recent years, when some illustrators began to recognise the importance of a playful attitude towards creative illustration practice (O'Reilly, 2015b, pp.2-7; Cheverton, cited in Davies, 2019; Charmicael, cited in Jelly London, 2019). Arisman states, "Most discoveries come when you are 'playing', not when you are seriously trying to make a portfolio" (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.84). In the last few years this interest has increased even more. Javier Mariscal recommends, "It's very important to play, play, play.

And right now people are starting to understand" (Mariscal, cited in Dickens, 2011, pp.17). Braund explains, "the creative process has to be enjoyable, playful and intuitive, both engaging and rewarding attention" (Braund *et al.,* 2012, p.84). In 2014 the Illustration Conference Icon centred its eighth edition on the subject of "Work and Play" (ICON, 2014) and *Varoom! The Illustration Report* dedicated the whole issue 30 to the subject of play (O'Reilly, 2015a).

For O'Reilly play allows one to try new ways of working and creating, which in turn produces different perspectives of one's work. He comments, "Play liberates us from the familiar perspectives we have about work, ourselves and the world" (O'Reilly, 2015b, p.2). Additionally, O'Reilly argues play is very important because it allows one to invent new relationships with the world (2015b, p.5). He states:

> Illustrators underestimate their creative instinct for play, their understanding that play shifts the environment a little, how play opens the borders between the real and the imaginary, an incredibly powerful and liberating feeling and practice. (O'Reilly, 2015b, p.7)

In "Try and Make More Mistakes" (2013) Sinead Evans discusses the importance of play as an experimental method that can be applied to illustration classes to encourage students to make more mistakes with the hope that errors might lead to new findings (p.1).

These opinions demonstrate that the subject of play is starting to emerge in contemporary illustration practice. Therefore, my research might find a more receptive context among illustration practitioners and commentators to engage a critical debate about ludic approaches to practice and the implications of the relationship between illustration and play.

1.3. Theoretical framework

After years of observing my intellectual and emotional reactions towards playful activities related to creative practice, I felt the need to develop what I now call "illustration games". Reading Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990) helped me to articulate many of the thoughts and emotions I experienced while playing and creating artworks. Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow serves as a significant theoretical framework that allows me to analyse experiences in terms of flow.

Csikszentmihalyi started his research studying the psychology of creativity and particularly of artists' descriptions of subjective experiences (2000, p.xiv). The major outcome of his research was in establishing a common pattern respecting the motivational aspects behind creative practice that could be translated to a wide range of other activities (Csikszentmihalyi 2000, pp.xiv-xv). The theory of flow has been tested and adapted to other fields for more than forty years (Csikszentmihalyi 2000, pp.xiv-xv). But, to my knowledge, it has not been studied in relation to play as connected to illustration practice.

But, as Csikszentmihalyi's theory is chiefly focused on the effects of general experiences, and not on the particular details that motivate each individual, I need a secondary theoretical framework to use in examining my cognitive and emotional sources of individual motivation.

As one of the most important thematic sources of inspiration for designing the play-based creative framework are dreams and fantasies, I use a Jungian approach. A Jungian theoretical framework also provides me with many elements to analyse the unconscious aspects of my creative process and to interpret the artistic works that I produce.

In reference to Jungian psychology, I draw from it for several reasons: firstly, because Jung believes play is a good catalyst for connecting with the repressed contents of the unconscious (aligning with Jung, not Freud, I do not think the artistic process can be reduced to a sexual phenomenon or 'sublimation'); secondly, Jung argues that there are two types of thinking: directed thinking and fantasy thinking (also called 'dream thinking'); the latter is related to the fantasy creative function of the psyche and, as my practice is inspired by dreams, fantasy, visions and myths, this interests me greatly; and, finally, because it aligns with my worldview; that is, Jungian psychology is the one that best explains certain phenomena that I experience/d (the fact that Jung was an artist himself might partly explain this similarity in perceptions of reality).

About the compatibility of these two different theoretical frameworks and psychological schools, both Csikszentmihalyi and Jung assert that they use phenomenological approaches (Csikszentmihalyi 2000, p.xiii and 2014b, pp.209; Jung, 1969, par.2); Csikszentmihalyi does not deny the unconscious

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p.263) and agrees that the flow experience can also be viewed using a depth psychology construct — he even refers to it as a synchronic experience (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 2014c, p.27) —; both psychological schools focus on working on the present-future — rather than on the past, as Freudian psychoanalysis does; the two approaches are concerned with transcendent and spiritual experiences (Jung, 1969 and 1970b; Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a, p.9 and 1993, pp.238-239); finally, Csikszentmihalyi recognises that Jung was a great influence upon his work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014a, p.xiv and 2014b, p.xii).

The authority of these theoretical frameworks has been extensively demonstrated. Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow has been influential in many contemporary play studies (Chen, 2007, pp.31-34; McGonigal, 2011, pp.35-51; Schell, 2015, pp.138-142). Jung's theories of the human psyche have resisted the passing of time (Hobson, 1988, pp.65-68; Stevens, 2002; Haule 2011a and 2011b) and are essential for the study of fantasy and fairy tales (Clute, 1997a, pp.525-526; Warner, 2011, p.152 and 2014, p.125).

As regards to differences, the concept of psychic entropy is not described in the same way; for Jung it is "a condition of general equilibrium" (Jung, 1972, par.3), whereas for Csikszentmihalyi it is "a state of disorder in the self system that results in decreased efficiency of that system, inasmuch as less attention is left over to relate to new information" (2014c, p.157). However, Csikszentmihalyi acknowledges, "Entropic self-consciousness is often the necessary precondition for artistic accomplishment and creativity in general" (2014c, p.157), which is comparable with Jung's views about the necessity of inner tension to produce transformations of psychic energy (Jung, 1972, pars.48-49).

1.3.1. Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow

Csikszentmihalyi studied what he called 'flow' experiences: states of peak enjoyment, creativity, concentration and energetic focus lived by persons who engage (or merge) with the activities at hand, reporting high levels of enthusiasm and excitement (2000, pp.36-40). Csikszentmihalyi analysed these experiences and detected certain patterns in the phenomenon. To

experience flow a number of conditions are required: 1) goals are clear; 2) feedback is immediate; 3) skills match challenges; 4) concentration is deep; 5) problems are forgotten; 6) control is possible; 7) self-consciousness disappears; 8) the sense of time is altered; and 9) the experience becomes autotelic (2014c, p.133).

For Csikszentmihalyi, activities such as games, arts, and sports are designed to provoke an optimal experience of absorption with the activity at hand and, thus, he defined that state of completely focused motivation as flow or autotelic experience; "the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement" (2000, pp.36, 49).

Csikszentmihalyi points out, "Flow is experienced when people perceive opportunities for action as being evenly matched by their capabilities" (2000, p.50 — see figure 2, below). However, he explains that if challenges are too demanding, people experience anxiety; and when skills are higher than opportunities for action the result is boredom (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.49). Hence, the flow model directs attention to factors that influence the subjective challenges perceived in an activity and the skills brought to it (Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura, 2014, p.192).
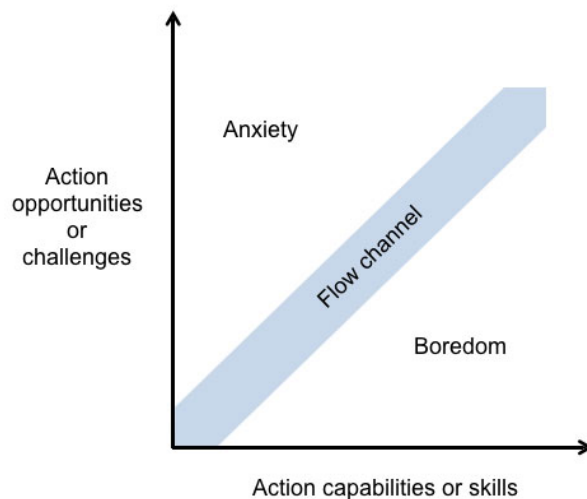
Figure 2. Graphic of the flow state.

On the subject of play and games, Csikszentmihalyi states, "Games are obvious flow activities, and play is the flow experience *par excellence*" (2000, pp.36-37 — emphasis in original). He comments, "One is led to believe that

[play's] function is to provide a specific state of experience, which we have called 'flow'" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.191). Csikszentmihalyi explains that it is possible to achieve this kind of extreme engagement outside of playful activities or games, for instance in creative practice, rituals, rock climbing, etc. (2000, pp.1, 37). However, in order to achieve flow efficiently within any activity, a precise combination of self-chosen goals, personally optimised obstacles, and continuous feedback must be present. He stresses, "Play is clearly intrinsically motivated [...] people play because it is enjoyable" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1988a, p.5) and he points out that flow activities are done for pure enjoyment rather than for status, money, or obligation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, pp.1, 47). However, Csikszentmihalyi explains that rules are not always sufficient to produce flow in games and most people need some inducement (2000, pp.41-42). This implies that one needs to find particular motivational elements to get involved in the game.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) also associates flow with creativity. He argues that flow stimulates the intrinsic motivation necessary to make creative work (Csikszentmihalyi and Wolfe, 2014, pp.170, 173) and sees creativity as an autotelic experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, pp.27-28; 1996, p.121-122). All these concepts are of extreme importance for my investigation, because, if play is an autotelic experience, then it might help me to counterbalance the reduction of extrinsic motivational factors coming from the illustration marketplace.

Autotelic and flow states of mind are also associated with eudemonia (Kimiecik, 2016, p.361). *Eudemonic* means "conducive to happiness" (Simpson, 2009a). Csikszentmihalyi explains that for Aristotle eudemonia is the theory in which "the goal of individual life is to achieve happiness by fulfilling one's potential" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2006, p.15). In turn, fulfilling one's potential is linked to pleasurable feelings. Csikszentmihalyi explains *Funktionlust* means "the pleasurable sensation that an organism experiences when it is functioning according to its physical and sensory potential" (2000, p.24). For Gerard Hughes, in the Aristotelian sense, eudemonia means "achieving one's full potential" hence it transcends happiness as contentment or pleasure, thus, eudemonia is linked to the capacity of being able to do

one's work or function (2013, p.20). One of the urges that drove me to design Hyperdream is precisely to define challenges according to my perceived abilities and, thus, to try and achieve my full creative potential.

In reference to the relationships between work and play, Csikszentmihalyi indicates that flow can be found at work because it is an activity that shares many aspects with the play experience: clear goals, feedback, timeframe, rewards (2000, pp.185-190; 1997, p.59-61). Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura argue, "The most synergistic use of human potential is when psychic energy gets invested in activities that are simultaneously autotelic and productive" (2014, p.182). But what happens when autotelic and productive activities are opposed or do not allow to release one's creative potential? Referring to my thesis, this is very important because I am arguing that in the current context, when the marketplace is not providing as many challenges as it did in the past — or is offering challenges that are not at the level of the perceived skills —, illustrators could compensate for this lack of 'opportunities for action' with autotelic experiences (here I am using Csikszentmihalyi's terminology to refer to challenges as opportunities to act and demonstrate what one thinks one is capable of doing). But, from my previous experience, it is not easy to remain working in self-initiated projects — probably this is due to the lack of clear goals, rewards, and feedback — and one tends to abandon them (as I discuss in 1.2.6).

Csikszentmihalyi differentiates two ideally contrasting states in the self: psychic entropy and psychic negentropy (2014c, p.157). Psychic entropy is "disorder in consciousness" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014b, p.166). He refers to negentropic experiences as flow. These experiences are related to fun, enjoyment, involvement, serenity and lack of self-consciousness and are usually derived from play and leisure (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014c, pp.157-159). This differentiation would be useful to describe states of mind derived from the experience of testing the play-based creative framework.

Csikszentmihalyi states that the contributions of his investigation add to Huizinga's argument that culture develops out of earlier play forms by providing insights about "a specific operational analysis of the structures that produce playfulness, and hence of the ways in which optimal cultural forms

can be created" (2000, p.193). This aspect is precisely what interests me about Csikszentmihalyi's theory: the possibility of designing certain play-based activities to create illustration work, which, in turn, might induce psychic negentropy and flow experiences.

1.3.2. Jungian ideas of fantasy thinking, play, and active imagination

While undertaking my art therapy diploma between 2008 and 2009 (as one of several paths that led me to play but, as I explain in 3.1, there are other reasons as well), I observed that when I connected with certain psychic material ('complexes' and 'archetypes') I found an extra source of creative energy. Inspired by the images I visualised in my unconscious, I could work in total concentration for hours afterwards. In Jungian psychology, a 'complex' is an emotionally charged group of ideas or images (Sharp, 1991, p.37). Jung sees the complex as "the image of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness" (1972, par.201). 'Archetypes' are "primordial, structural elements of the human psyche" (Sharp, 1991, p.27), innate psychic structures or instinctual patterns of behaviour that "present themselves as ideas and images" (Jung, 1972, par.435). I also noticed that the technique that initiated this process was always the same: play. The ease of my connection with fantasies and repressed material stemmed from the apparent innocence of play (something that is usually very difficult to do). The dynamics were actually simple: once playing, I lowered my defence mechanisms and the psychic energy simply flowed from my unconscious towards the artistic activity at hand. I observed that creative apperception increased, and, in turn, my self-esteem. Consequently, I realised that working with material drawn from the unconscious was self-rewarding.

It is worth mentioning that, as discussed in 1.2.2, Freud inspired Surrealists' practice, whereas Jung's theories inspire mine. Therefore, although there are shared elements between both approaches (for instance, the belief in the existence of the unconscious, the interest in dreams), there are important differences in other aspects as well. Jung explains, "The *via regia* to the unconscious, however, is not the dream, as he [Freud] thought, but the

complex, which is the architect of dreams and of symptoms" (1972, par.210). For Jungian psychologists, "The phenomenology of the complex reveals a wide diversity of forms" (Jacobi, 1971, p.15), whereas for Freud there is just one complex: the sexual complex (van den Berk, 2012, p.19). Jung grants great importance to complexes and sees them as psychic components that need to be integrated and which actually contain the potentiality that allows for developmental growth (Jacobi, 1971, pp.19-22). As I will discuss in 1.3.2.3, Jung developed the method of active imagination to creatively integrate psychic material that is repressed or has not yet manifested in consciousness.

In comparing the approaches of Jung and Freud, Allan Hobson makes a good point by arguing "Jung's dream theory emphasises transparency and creativity, in contrast to Freud's emphasis on obscurity and psychopathology" (Hobson, 1988, p.65). So, even though I use most play-based activities as a means of accessing unconscious material, I do not think the material I produce shows a 'manifest' façade that hides 'latent' content, but rather see it as 'transparent'. What might happen is that, at the moment of its production, I do not have all the elements to see what the material means.

Another important difference between my approach and that of the Surrealists is that in using Hyperdream I am not trying to illustrate Jungian theory — as Surrealists did with Freudian motifs (Fer, 1994, p.180) — but I use it as a theoretical framework that allows me both to reinforce certain aspects of the activities' design (for instance, thinking in terms of 'affect') and to interpret them once they are finished. In Jungian psychology 'affect' means "emotional reactions marked by physical symptoms and disturbances in thinking. Affect is invariably a sign that a complex has been activated" (Sharp, 1991, p.15). For Jung, "affects occur usually where adaptation is weakest" and he attributes the reason for these weaknesses to feelings of inferiority, arguing that they demonstrate the existence of a lower level of personality where emotions are uncontrolled and one is "incapable of moral judgement" (1968b, par.15).

1.3.2.1. Jung on Fantasy thinking

In the second chapter of *Symbols of Transformation* (1952)*,* Jung argues that there are two kinds of thinking: directed thinking and fantasy thinking (1967a,

pars.4-46). The former is "logical thinking or reality thinking" and can be related to processes based on "directed attention" (1967a, pars.11, 17), the latter "turns away from reality" and "sets free subjective wishes" (1967a, pars.19-20). Considering that my practice is inspired by dreams, fantasy, visions and myths, this aspect of Jung's thought is of great interest in relation to my work. In *Jung on Art* (2009) Tjeu van den Berk argues that rational thinking consists of thoughts and is related to the *logos* while fantasy thinking consists of images and is related to the *mythos* (2012, p.46). I am in agreement with van den Berk, particularly when he stresses, "this capacity for images is the same as our creative capacity" (2012, p.46) because, according to Jung, it is through fantasy thinking that we have access to the unconscious. He states:

> Through fantasy-thinking, directed thinking is brought into contact with the oldest layers of the human mind, long buried beneath the threshold of consciousness. The fantasy-products directly engaging the conscious mind are, first of all, waking dreams or daydreams [...] (Jung, 1967, par.39)

What Jung aims to say is that it is through these fantasies that directed thinking can have knowledge of its oldest foundational layers. In addition, van den Berk states that fantasy thinking "is the engine behind creative processes" (2012, p.46).

The concept of fantasy thinking is key for the later development of Jung's therapeutic method of active imagination in 1913 in which he associates fantasy with the symbol-creating function of the psyche. Van den Berk argues, "Symbols originate from our fantasy thinking, which is irrational in nature" (2012, p.48).

The importance of inner-images or symbols might be of varying significance for others but, from my point of view, they are vital for the artist and particularly for those — like myself —, interested in the subject of fantasy.

1.3.2.2. Jung on play

The concept of play is also central in Jung's life (Jung, 1989, pp.17-18, 173-175) and in the therapeutic method of active imagination, which emerged after

his rediscovery of the symbolic play of childhood (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.1). Jung connects play with fantasy and dreams. He actually explains that fantasy is the principle behind play and argues fantasy and dreams share the same thinking process (Jung, 1967a, par.39). He states:

> Every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination, and have their source in what one is pleased to call infantile fantasy. Not the artist alone, but every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy. The dynamic principle of fantasy is play, a characteristic also of the child, and as such it appears inconsistent with the principle of serious work. But without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable. (Jung, 1971, par. 93)

Thus, Jung makes very clear the connections he sees between imagination, fantasy, play and creative work. According to Jung, the imagination is "the reproductive or creative activity of the mind in general [...]. Fantasy as imaginative activity is identical with the flow of psychic energy" (1971, par.722).

For developing the relationships between play, fantasy and creative work, Jung draws from Schiller's ideas, but begins by referring to Schiller's "play drive" as the "transcendent function" (Jung, 1971, pars.184, 205). Jung makes clear that this third element or function — the drive that Schiller calls the play-instinct — has the power to unite conscious and unconscious reality, rationality and irrationality (1971, par.169). Jung points out that Schiller's form drive can be related to the conscious mind, while the sensual drive can be associated with the unconscious (Jung, 1971, par.184). He explains that Schiller is trying to present a synthesised model that attempts to join thinking and feeling by the uniting force of an aesthetic function that he named "play drive". However, Jung (1971) criticises the way in which Schiller solves this conflict of opposite forces by only giving the play drive an aesthetic mood and, after bringing aesthetics to the front, retires the play drive to the background (par.188) because by sending play to the background Schiller is also sending fantasy, the principle behind play, to an even more remote place. He challenges Schiller's ideas by saying that what is behind this whole process is something much more powerful: the symbol-forming activity of the psyche or creative fantasy (par.187).

Jung defends the ambiguous character of play being serious and not serious at once and relates it "to everything creative" (1971, par.196). He states:

> It is not, of course, a matter of *wanting* to play, but of *having* to play; a playful manifestation of fantasy from inner necessity, without the compulsion of circumstance, without even the compulsion of the will. *It is serious play.* (Jung, 1971, par.196 — emphasis in original)

This means that the moment one connects the sensuality of play with one's psychic life, play becomes, as Jung defines it: "a profound inner necessity" (1971, par.196). Furthermore, Jung argues:

> If play expires in itself without creating anything durable and vital, it is only play, but in the other case it is called creative work. Out of a playful movement of elements whose interrelations are not immediately apparent, patterns arise which an observant and critical intellect can only evaluate afterwards. The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect, but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity. The creative mind plays with the object it loves. (1971, par.197)

This way Jung makes a distinction between the unproductive and the transformative aspects of play. For him play is a "necessity" because it is a creative activity that reinforces the dynamics of the psyche and helps maintain the equilibrium between conscious and unconscious processes.

Jean Chodorow argues:

> The great joy of play, fantasy and the imagination is that for a time we are utterly spontaneous, free to imagine anything. In such state of pure being, no thought is 'unthinkable'. Nothing is 'unimaginable'. That is why play and the imagination tend to put us in touch with psychic material that is ordinarily repressed. (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.5)

Thus, Chodorow is arguing that play can be used as a technique to get in touch with fantasy thinking and with psychic material that, otherwise, is not accessible.

1.3.2.3. Jung on 'active imagination'

Jung developed a technique to bring to consciousness the material gathered in dreams, in daydreaming or in fantasies; he named this method "active imagination" (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, pp.3-4). Jung states, "Imaginative activity goes on all the time. It is expressed in many ways including play, dreams, fantasy, creative imagination and active imagination" (Jung and

Chodorow 1997, p.5). For Jung working artistically with one's dreams or fantasies is a key method for engaging with what he called "the transcendent function" (later, in 1935, he referred to it as 'active imagination'), which was inspired by his own playful experiences (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, pp.3, 5) and Schiller's ideas of the play drive (Jung, 1971, pars.171-172). According to Stevens the transcendent function is the psychic function that represents the unconscious will to heal (2005, pp.116-117). Active imagination is what serves to trigger this balancing psychic function. The transcendent function operates as a uniting principle that, in turn, allows the emergence of a symbol that facilitates the connection between consciousness and the unconscious (see figure 3, below).

Transcendent Function

Reconciled opposites

New Symbol

| Consciousness | Active Imagination | The unconscious |
| Directed Thinking | Fantasy / Play | Fantasy Thinking |
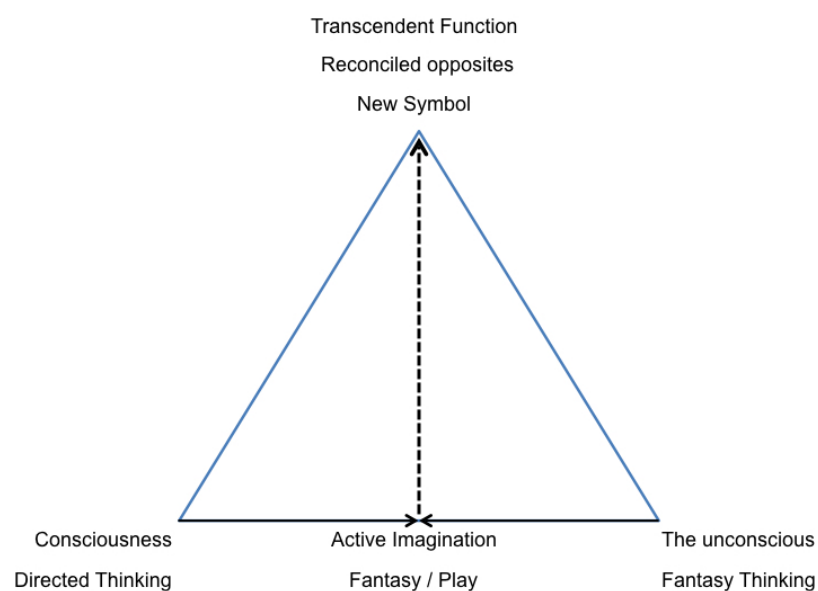
Figure 3. Graphic of the transcendent function: tension between opposites and their union.

Practising active imagination is a key step in the process of individuation, which helps to shape one's personal voice and vision of reality. This method is based on what Jung calls the "natural healing function of the imagination" (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.1). The method suggests an evocative meditative procedure — aimed to suspend one's rational critical faculties — followed by a concentration on inner voices or images (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, pp.3-4). Usually, these psychic images are given form through artistic activities —such as painting, sculpting, drawing, writing, dancing, and so on (Jung, 1966a, par.102; Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.7). There are two basic

stages in the use of the technique of active imagination: first, letting the unconscious manifest itself; and second, reconciling with the unconscious (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.10). My interest in this Jungian technique is because it is based on the image-creating function of the psyche and, thus, is a powerful tool for visual artists, like myself, who want to work inspired by the material that emerges from the unconscious. (Jung himself used the technique to know more about his unconscious mind as manifesting through artistic activities (van den Berk, 2012, pp.72-85). By using this technique I might be able to activate fantasy thinking and to channel it by artistic activity. (Even though active imagination is a technique used in analytical psychology as a healing technique, some of its elements can be utilised in illustration practice, especially in self-initiated or authorial projects. As a matter of fact, Jung came across this technique after his break with Freud by writing and illustrating *The Red Book* (*Liber Novus*) in a compulsive way (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, p.1; Jung and Shamdasani, 2009). For Murray Stein, active imagination is central in dealing with the fifth stage of the development of consciousness in the individuation process, in order "to approach the archetypal images and to relate to them consciously and creatively" (2012, p.186). Therefore, as the method of active imagination uses one's own unconscious material, I use it to reinforce my individuation process. This might be useful to finding subject matter that is meaningful to me and to find my own voice as an authorial illustrator.

Summary

Illustration is hard to define because it overlaps with other disciplines (such as graphic design and/or painting), the field contains many subfields, and sometimes professional illustrators practice in other domains, thus, illustrators use different approaches to image making and have different understandings of the field. However, its main characteristics can be summed up as: the action of making clear or evident to the mind by setting forth a message pictorially. Illustration implies the use of storytelling and a rather decipherable visual language, which makes it a popular art form. Illustration is related to

authorship; illustrators grant clients a licence for a particular use of their artwork (reproduction rights).

After the explosion of digital technologies, illustration has been undergoing a fast process of transformation that has altered the way in which the field is understood in terms of contents, production, distribution, and market. This phenomenon has generated numerous changes that are affecting the discipline. These include: the increasing separation of illustration from printing companies and advertisement agencies; the emergence of new marketplaces; the novelty of works produced with digital tools; the possibility of self-promotion, self-printing and self-distribution; and the new (and higher) social status of illustrators. Conversely, there has been a tremendous decline in the quantity and quality of the work that is commissioned from illustrators.

As a consequence of the reduction in the number of commissions, many professional illustrators have started to work in self-motivated projects. This practice has been an important counterbalance to the decrease in commissioned works and it might be a chance to connect with more enjoyable and less mediated creative experiences. In these self-imposed assignments illustrators explore new ways of expressing visual ideas and/or telling stories. Therefore, the current crisis has made illustration less dependent on the marketplace and, in turn, offers an opportunity to reconsider the definition (and direction) of the field, including the ways in which illustrators generate their work.

Authorial illustration is a quite new way of understanding the field. In authorial projects the voice of the illustrator is more in evidence. The authorial voice is manifested through a recognisable style and subject matter, which are personal, original, individual, and intelligent. Authorial illustration is expressive and it serves to narrate stories. Even though these stories could be co-authored with professional writers, in many cases, illustrators themselves might also write them. Additionally, some of these stories have autobiographical references. For the most part, authorial projects are self-initiated.

Even though the relationship between play and art has a strong and long tradition, only in the last few years it has begun to be linked to illustration

practice. Therefore, scholarly material on the connection between illustration and play is almost non-existent. My research addresses this particular gap in knowledge.

Flow is a feeling of peak enjoyment, excitement, energetic focus, and creative concentration that is experienced by people who engage in activities such as art, sports and games. For Csikszentmihalyi, play is the flow activity par excellence.

Jung sees a connection between fantasy, play, and art and develops a technique called active imagination that allows coming to terms with the unconscious through the use of artistic activities. Active imagination is used in the last steps of the process of individuation.

In the next chapter I will present the research methodology, and the particular methods I utilise to generate and examine the data produced using the play-based creative framework.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I specify the phenomena that will be studied in this investigation using a philosophical approach that develops out of the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review. I introduce the methodology and explain the relationship between the philosophy and the empirical aspects of the research design; I describe the methods for acquiring data and presenting findings; and I explain how the data collected will be analysed in chapter 4.

2.1. Object of my study

The object of this study is to establish and analyse the relationship between illustration and play in theory and praxis.

In the case of my studio practice I intend to analyse my own creative process of authorial illustration practice by applying Hyperdream, a play-based creative framework for self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration, to identify the implications of the use of play in illustration practice. During this part of the study I focus on the examination of the changes in my motivational levels as a consequence of using this framework. Hence, an important aim of my research is to identify whether I can induce autotelic experiences in my illustration practice to study how I creatively react to the use of illustration games as motivators. Thus, what I study are the effects of this ludic-artistic approach at both the practical and emotional levels. Consequently, my study presents certain difficulties: firstly, as Csikszentmihalyi indicates, when in flow, "action and awareness are merged" and "self-consciousness disappears" (2014c, pp.134, 137; 1996, pp.111-112) because, when experiencing flow, the phenomenon becomes extremely elusive as the moment one reaches flow, one merges with play and, for that reason, one ceases to be an objective observer (as I explain later in this chapter, from my point of view, this elusiveness of the play experience justifies the use of diverse recording tools to reflect-on-practice because, due to this 'fusing' phenomenon, it is more difficult to reflect-in-practice). Secondly, in *Truth and Method* (1975) Hans-Georg Gadamer argues, "[T]he mode of being of play does not allow the player to behave

toward play as if toward an object" (2004, p.103). Ideally, in order to experience play, one has to be immersed in it and, thus, play becomes something that transcends its own materiality because it is more than its material components: play is an experience. For that reason, one cannot fully know what play involves if one does not play. Initially, play happens outside oneself — as a relation with objects, rules, space, time, and others — but, at the same time, it happens inside oneself. And it can be argued that play also happens through oneself or even that one becomes play. Gadamer states, "Play fulfils its purpose only if the player loses himself in play" (2004, p.103). I agree; in play there is no middle ground; one is either within or without "the magic circle" of play (Huizinga, 1949, pp.10-12, 19).[9] Therefore, the insights that are implicit in the play experience are not revealed without playing. For this reason, and as discussed in the introductory chapter, a foremost aim of this investigation is to study the subjective aspects of play-based illustration practice and the first-person descriptions of these ludic experiences (as they involve psychic phenomena such as motivation, enjoyment, levels of engagement and 'flow'). This justifies the practice-led approach of my research.

With reference to the limits of my investigation, fantasy authorial illustration is the subfield where I situate my study. Hence, my approach does not deal with other subfields of illustration (i.e. scientific illustration, reportage, fashion illustration). Nevertheless, even though my creative framework is designed for fantasy illustration, I argue that it can also be applied to other subfields of illustration that deal with imagination and fantasy (science fiction illustration, concept art, character, vehicle and background design, graphic novels, children's picture books).

I would like to emphasise that my play-based creative framework is solely aimed at the ideation stage of the creative process. Therefore, I only focus on that aspect. However, I also show evidence of some of my illustrations that are initiated using the creative framework and finished using traditional methods and techniques as this might add to Hyperdream's viability as an idea generator.

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[9] I introduced this concept in 1.2.1.

I would also like to add that my play-based approach does not substitute for formal training in illustration; on the contrary, it is fed by my previous theoretical and technical artistic background (drawing skills, composition, perspective, colour theory, knowledge of materials, techniques, etc.). For that reason, it works as a complement to traditional approaches to illustration — not as a replacement.

2.1.1. Research philosophy

Due to its pragmatic aspects, this study would fit within the "performative paradigm" proposed by Brad Haseman as a practice-led research alternative to other paradigms — such as quantitative or qualitative (2007, pp.150-151). This performative paradigm will be crucial to answer some of the practical questions proposed in this investigation (discussed in 3.1). However, even though practice will effectively lead my research, this study is concerned with the quality of the subjective experiences involved in image-making using a play-based approach (including analysis of the elements that drive me to produce illustrations and descriptions of what I feel while I create them). Furthermore, beyond studio practice, this research will deal with general aspects of illustration, such as the coexistence of self-motivated practice with commercial practice. Thus, a number of points of view (e.g. professional practitioners describing their perspectives on creative practice and participants' subjective experiences gathered after the workshops) will be considered and compared with mine to build new knowledge (discussed in 4.2 and 4.3). Consequently, the knowledge that might emerge from this study will integrate the reflections of my own subjective experiences testing the play-based creative framework and other discourses of the field of illustration (commentators, interviewees, and participants).

To reflect on the subjective experience of playing illustration games in my studio practice, I draw from psychological phenomenology and autoethnography.

The first approach, phenomenological psychology, is described as "a type of human science psychology that emphasizes close attention to, and rigorous, detailed description and understanding of, personal lived experiences within

respective lifeworlds" (DuBose, 2010, p.678). As for the congruence of this approach with the theoretical framework, both Csikszentmihalyi and Jung use a phenomenological approach (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.xiii; Jung, 1970c, par.165; Brooke, 1991 and 2010). For Csikszentmihaly phenomenology is the most suitable method to describe the subjective quality of flow experiences and intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihaly, 2014b, pp.209-210; Hektner *et al.*, 2007, p.10) and Jung's approach to psychology cannot be understood without appreciating his phenomenological method (Brooke, 2010, p.489). Thus, psychological phenomenology, with its focus on subjective introspection and descriptions of conscious experiences, is the most suitable approach for conducting a research project focused on subjective experiences that involve changes in states of consciousness and centres on human meanings and intrinsic motivation. This research method will be particularly useful to achieve the second objective of this study (my subjective experiences of play as related to illustration will be described in 3.3).

About the hermeneutic tradition of psychoanalytic phenomenology, George Atwood and Robert Stolorow explain, "Psychoanalytic phenomenology is a depth psychology of human subjectivity devoted to the illumination of meanings in personal experience and conduct" (2014, p.3). Jung states that the unknown characteristics of the symbols that emerge from creative fantasies justify the use of hermeneutic interpretation, which consists in adding further analogies to those provided by the symbol one is analysing, because it widens and enriches the meaning of the initial symbol (1966a, pars.490-493). In Jungian psychology this technique is known as 'amplification': "A method of association based on the comparative study of mythology, religion and fairy tales, used in the interpretation of images in dreams and drawings" (Sharp, 1991, p.15). Dale Mathers explains that in depth psychology, hermeneutics (or symbol decoding), help to elucidate concepts that emerge from the communication between the unconscious and consciousness and recommends the use of archetypal metaphors to describe these dialogues. He argues for "open signification" and defends negotiated meaning using a constructivist approach when one is dealing with liminal phenomena such as play or active imagination (Mathers, 2001, pp.9, 11).

Hermeneutics and amplification will be useful when interpreting the work produced with Hyperdream (the use of these methods in my research will be particularly visible in 3.3).

Autoethnography, the second approach to the experience of play as related to illustration in this study, is an investigative method that uses the researcher's autobiographical material to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices and experiences (Adams *et al.*, 2015, p.1). The utility of this method is that it allows various levels of consciousness to link the personal with the cultural (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p.739). In my case autoethnography will be particularly helpful to analyse the way in which my subjective experience as an illustrator intersects with the existing constructs of the field. In practical terms I will keep a diary that includes records of my autoethnographical reflections.

Workshops will be useful to gather participants' descriptions of their subjective experiences after testing the play-based creative framework and hence to attain the third objective of this investigation. As for participants' accounts recorded after the workshops, John Creswell indicates that phenomenological research is a type of enquiry that originates in philosophy and psychology, in which the researcher describes the experiences lived by a group of participants. This account results in defining the essence of what was described in the experiences (Creswell, 2014, p.14). Hence, this method will be helpful in gathering data that I can compare with my own points of view after the use of Hyperdream and the relationship between illustration and play in order to question my assumptions and, thus, to come to better informed conclusions and it will serve to complete the first and fourth objectives of this study.

Interviews and workshops will be a type of early dissemination trial that will allow me to share information and receive feedback from participants. This might also serve to establish the impact of the praxis (Nelson, 2013, p.99). Additionally, some of the works produced during the study will be shown in an exhibition in order to observe the reaction of an audience to my creative approach and to collect comments on their impressions (see Appendix #1.2).

2.1.2. Methodology and research design

This study will include internal and external data sources. Internal data sources will comprise studio practice and reflections recorded in research journals, which are the practice-led element of this research. External data sources will include interviews with professional practitioners and information gathered through workshops.

At a practical level, the objective of this study is to generate artefacts through studio practice (the practice-based element of the research) but, more importantly, at a psychological level, the focus is the observation of my own subjective experiences (motivation, emotions, reactions) and those of workshops' participants as derived from these ludic illustration activities.

With respect to methodology, I utilise a multi-method approach (see figure 4, below). Carole Gray and Julian Malins argue, "[A] characteristic of 'artistic' methodology is a pluralist approach using a multi-method technique, tailored to the individual project" (2004, pp.31-32).
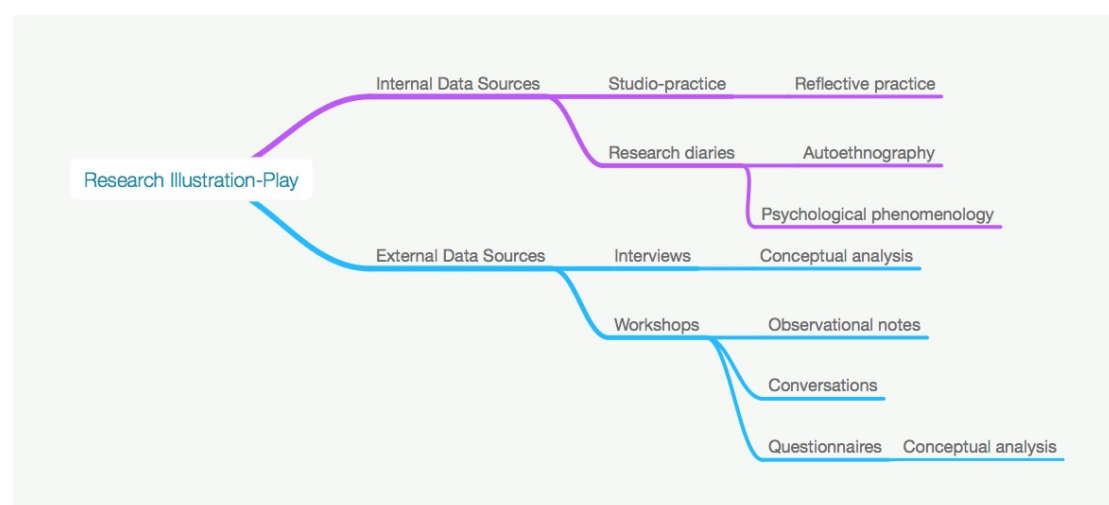
Figure 4. Research design.

As for the research design of my thesis, I use a triangulation approach (as seen in figure 5, next page) — combining studio practice and research diaries with interviews and questionnaires gathered after the workshops and field notes to test and evaluate the practice — as this should add to

the reliability of the study.[10] As Gray and Malins indicate, triangulation is used as a strategy to achieve "a more meaningful and balanced understanding of a research issue by the use of two or more research methods" (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.121). The need to use various methods emerges from: firstly, the diversity of sources (myself, interviewees, workshops' participants — each requiring a particular methodology), secondly, the type of information I will be researching (i.e. in order to observe intrinsic motivation there has to be studio practice, which, in turn will generate evidence that can be analysed), and, thirdly the stage of the research process (e.g. hermeneutics will be used to interpret the symbols of the artefacts once studio practice is over). Triangulation will also enable me to double-check findings (Huberman and Miles, 1998, p.199). This design aims to generate various sources of information (my studio practice, interviews to professional practitioners and workshops) that allow for comparisons at the end of the study (discussed in 4.3).

Figure 5. Triangulation schematic.

As shown in table 1 (next page), the methods included in the triangulation and the type of data that I expect to collect are:

a) studio practice, to collect artefacts, photographs, audio recordings,

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[10] I am aware that crystallisation as proposed by Laurel Richardson (cited in Lincoln and Guba, 2003, pp.279-280) might be a better concept to define my aim to have multiple angles but, even if the corners of the prism of my research have multiple facets, they also fit within three clear edges: myself, other professional practitioners, and workshops' participants.

video recordings; and research diaries using reflective practice and autoethnography to gather my own perceptions of play as related to illustration after testing Hyperdream;

b) interviews with professional practitioners to gather opinions about their perceptions of the relationship between their creative practice and play;

c) observational field notes, conversations, and questionnaires answered by workshops' participants with their opinions about play as related to illustration and their descriptions of their experiences testing Hyperdream.

Source	Subject/s	Data collection type	Tools
Internal	Myself	- Studio practice - Psychological phenomenology - Autoethnography - Reflective practice	- Research diaries - Digital camera - Digital recorder
External	Professional practitioners	- Interviews - Testing *Hyperdream* (four participants)	- Digital recorder - Computer - Field notes
External	Workshops' participants	- Observations (field notes) - Conversations - Questionnaires - Descriptive statistics	- Field notes

Table 1. Triangulation table.

By comparing my own perceptions and narratives with those of the other participants, I will fulfil the objective of double-checking my assumptions and, thus, I hope reduce bias.

With reference to the use of interviews and workshops as a method of enquiry, the objective in obtaining data from these external sources is not to validate my own creative practice but to bring forward the importance of play as related to illustration as a creative approach. Therefore, this data might help me to determine the significance of my study's intersection with the wider field of contemporary illustration.

In the last stage of the data analysis (and once I finish with the individual examination of the three data sources), I will make a comparison between the three with the hope that the triangulation approach I have designed might offer new insights and perspectives on the relationship between

illustration and play (discussed in 4.3).

2.2. Strategies and methods of enquiry

In terms of academic research, illustration is still trying to find its way, mainly by drawing from other fields of knowledge (such as fine arts, graphic design, social sciences). Stephanie Black argues, "Illustration research is relatively new and still developing, therefore this is an appropriate time to be exploring what illustration research might be and equipping ourselves with the tools to do so" (Black, 2014a, p.277). Black explains, "Illustration does not have a specific subject matter, and therefore the methods used for investigation will vary from project to project" (Black, 2014b, p.10). I agree with her. Paradoxically, although this academic immaturity of illustration research could be regarded as a negative aspect at first sight, it might also allow for the emergence and testing out of new investigative methods.

2.2.1. Internal data sources

In the following sub-sections I describe and explain the two main internal data sources of this research: studio-practice and research diaries.

2.2.1.1. Studio-practice as research

One aspect of this study is research *into* practice focusing on the historical and theoretical perspectives on illustration (Frayling, 1993, p.5) that I addressed in the literature review. Another central aspect is research *through* practice (Frayling, 1993, p.5), which aims to communicate the practical experiments that I will conduct in the studio (my italics).

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, I justify the use of practice-led investigation as the most suitable mode of enquiry to answer the research questions because I am aiming to gain access to knowledge that derives from the play-based illustration activities that I will conduct in the studio.

The term 'practice-led' was forged by Carole Gray, who defined it as:

> Firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions,

> problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of
> practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is
> carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and
> specific methods familiar to us as practitioners. (1996, p.3)

My approach to research coincides with Gray's definition, as this enquiry
was initiated in practice almost two decades ago and only some years
before starting this investigation incorporated the contextual and
theoretical elements that served me to develop the hypotheses that
eventually led me to initiate an academic study (as I explained in the
introductory chapter, in 1.3 and in 1.3.2).

Yet, for Candy (2006), there are two kinds of practice research: in practice-
based research "the creative artefact is the *basis* of the contribution to
knowledge", whereas in practice-led "the research *leads* to new
understandings about practice" (p.1 — emphasis in original). Early in my
investigation, I realised that my study majorly fitted within the practice-led
category, as it is mainly focused on new understandings about practice that
emerge from the use of my play-based approach as applied to illustration.
Nevertheless, the role of practice and the artefacts produced with it will be
central, as they will allow me to test the procedural aspects of Hyperdream.
This process of making artefacts in the studio is precisely what will enable me
to reflect about practice in order to generate knowledge that will emerge from
that iteration between practice and reflection. Thus, studio practice will lead
me to new understandings about Hyperdream (both in terms of procedures
and insights about the particular motivational aspects that move while I use
Hyperdream). At the same time, it will allow me to produce artefacts, which, in
turn, will enable me to reach deeper levels of reflection (about processes,
materials, meanings, symbols, and also about the motivational aspects
involved in the making).

The reflection strategies I will use both in my studio-practice and in my
research diary are reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983, p.62-63 and 1987,
pp.26-32, 39) and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983, 61-62 and 1987,
pp.26, 31). I will use reflection-in-action while I illustrate and I will reflect-
on-action after the illustration process is over. Hence, reflecting-in-practice
and reflecting-on-practice will help me to determine what dynamics,

materials and tools work better for certain exercises; which of them would increase the playful approach and, thus, the autotelic experience; and which of them would need to be improved or discarded.

Donald Schön describes reflection-in-action as

> [W]e may reflect in the midst of action without interrupting it. In an *action-present* — a period of time, variable with the context, during which we can still make a difference to the situation at hand — our thinking serves to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it. (1987, p.26 — emphasis in original)

For Schön, reflection-in-action functions as a critical process that helps to question the structured assumptions derived from knowing-in-action. This enables one to restructure one's strategies of action, one's understanding of phenomena and one's ways of framing problems (Schön, 1987, p.28). He states "In reflection-in-action, the rethinking of some part of our knowing-in-action leads to on-the-spot experiment and further thinking that affects what we do" (Schön, 1987, p.29). In addition, Schön also recommends to reflect-on-action. He argues, "We may reflect on action, thinking back on what we have done to discover how our knowing-in-action may have contributed to an expected outcome" (1987, p.26). Schön explicates that one may reflect after the fact or in the midst of action to stop and think (1987, p.26). This reflective method is helpful to articulate knowledge that is usually embodied or/and tacit.

However, as my aim is to test whether the playful activities and games really work as motivators, the questions are: Am I enjoying the experience? Do I feel motivated to carry on doing it now? Will I do this activity for its own sake in other occasions?

About reflection-on-action, I will use research journals in which I will write all the reflections that emerge from my investigation (including the analysis of my own works and the field notes) and, as certain things may not be perceived while illustrating or that are not evident in the practical outcomes, I therefore will use a number of recording tools (camera, video recorder, and voice recorder) that will help me to remember the process followed in certain illustrations. I will also reflect on processes, and I will try to observe things that I tend to do automatically, such as where and how I

start a new work.

Illustration practice will be the central activity that will allow me to advance in my investigation. Thus, practice-led research is the most appropriate strategy for obtaining data from the play-based creative framework because it is guided by the illustration experiments that take place in the studio, which, in turn, will provide the information I want to analyse: levels of motivation, enjoyment, and engagement.

Collaborative exercises will be exclusively focused on the play aspects of the experience by employing artistic materials that are easy to utilise, whereas some of the activities that I will perform in the studio will be more complex in terms of technique and materials. Hence, there will be some variations in the type of materials employed in shared experiences and those used in individual practice: those that will involve play-testing previously existing games and/or a play companion generally will involve the use of A4 paper and biro pens or fine line markers, whereas for my individual practice I will utilise sketchbooks, scrapbooks, cardboards, fine line markers, coloured pencils, coloured inks, brushes, pens, and Indian ink. Therefore, it could be said, that for the play-based activities I will employ permanent and fast materials (such as fine liners, biro pens, Indian ink) rather than non-permanent and slow (such as charcoals, pencils, graphite bars, pastels, oil painting).

My studio practice will be structured around three basic activities: play-testing previously existing drawing/illustration games; designing new drawing/illustration games; and, playing drawing/illustration games in the studio.

The first activity of my studio practice will consist in testing existing games that can be applied to my illustration practice (such as Exquisite Corpse, cut-ups; collage; stamping). After each activity I will take notes of my experiences and ideas as related to the design of my play-based creative framework.

The second activity will be designing new play-based activities that could be useful for my illustration practice (this will also include the improvement of previously designed activities or the transformation of an existing artistic

ludic activity; e.g. Exquisite Corpse).

The third activity will involve testing the adapted or invented play-based exercises. It is worth mentioning that the stages where I will produce illustration evidence are the first and the third.

Once an activity is finished, I will evaluate my responses to verify if the experiences correspond to the flow phenomenon. I will answer this flow questionnaire after the play sessions as a whole (i.e. to an exquisite corpse 'play session' — not to each Exquisite Corpse). For this will I use the model provided by Csikszentmihalyi worded as a Yes/No questionnaire. After I test the play-based activities, I will answer the following questions and situate the experiences within a flow graphic. I will also provide qualitative reflections by responding to the last open-ended question ('Comments').

The objective of this self-interrogating activity is to confirm whether the play-based exercises will indeed be responding to the nine characteristics of the flow pattern (see figure 6, below).

Name:

Date:

Play-based activity:

	FLOW QUESTIONS	Y	N
1	Were goals clear?		
2	Was feedback immediate?		
3	Did skills match challenges?		
4	Was concentration deep?		
5	Were problems forgotten?		
6	Was control possible?		
7	Did self-consciousness disappear?		
8	Was the sense of time altered?		
9	Did the experience become autotelic?		
10	In the graphic below, where would you place your play experience ?		
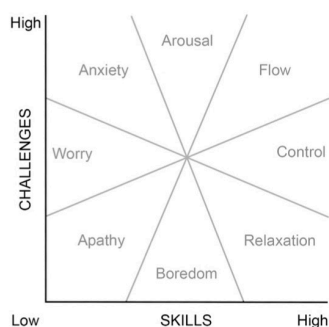
Opinions:

Figure 6. Flow survey that I will answer after testing every play-based activity.

2.2.1.2. Research diary

I will keep a research diary in which I will write down observations, reflections on my own creative process as an illustrator, reflexive notes, etc. This research diary, rather than forming a core part of the final thesis, will be used as a reflective tool, to aid my own analysis and critical thinking about the research project throughout.

Gray and Malins explain that keeping a research diary "is a purposeful process and framework for helping to expose and explore various models of practice" because it allows one to have "more effective conversations with ourselves" (2004, p.113). In my case I will use research diaries for gathering information about my thinking processes and also for planning the research methodology. Basically, they will contain different types of information (written words and drawings). I will write down observations and thoughts about my current practice as an illustrator and they will help me to recapitulate my own history in this field as an illustrator. This process will include asking myself why I wanted to follow this profession (illustration) in the first place — this apparently innocent question was what eventually led me to conduct this research. The illustration career has become so anomic and alienating for me that I decided to return to the source of joy that initially led me to follow this pathway: illustration as play. Therefore, other key questions related to positive psychology are: Is illustration practice making me happy? How could I be happier as an illustrator?

I will also use research diaries to reflect about methodology, the research plan, and the contextual review. Additionally, I will make notes of the key bibliography and the documentaries I watch. As an extra resource in data gathering I will carry an autobiographical diary in which I write about key emotional moments in my illustration career and the evolution of my responses to the creative framework, but only focusing on the motivational and sensitive aspects of my research. These auto-ethnographic diaries will have a crucial role in helping me to articulate the emotional side of my history or *mystory* as an illustrator. Norman Denzin states, "[A] *mystory* text begins with those moments that define a crisis, a turning point in the person's life" (2014, p.32 — emphasis in original). These diaries will be particularly useful to

talk about my most important crisis as an illustrator (I will discuss this in detail in 3.1) and I will use them to reflect about my feelings in relation to practice and to detect the intersections between my subjective experience as an illustrator and the wider field of illustration.

2.2.2. Interviews

In addition to the previously mentioned methods of information gathering, I aim to conduct a number of interviews with professional practitioners (mostly illustrators) to collect data on the perception of play as related to illustration practice in order to compare their responses with my own ideas.

As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, there is very little data available on the subject of the connection between illustration and play, for that reason, I decided to interview a number of professional practitioners. Thus, the objective of these interviews is to gather information on how these professional practitioners perceive the relationship between illustration and play — if they are able to integrate work and play —, what strategies they use to generate ideas (techniques, sources of inspiration, etc.), how they start self-initiated projects, and what motivates them to work or discourages them from working. I also expect to obtain information about their approach to commissioned and self-initiated work and the affective emotions that surround these two types of method.

The format of the interviews will be individual and the medium chosen will vary (face-to-face, videoconference, or via email/Facebook correspondence — as it will depend on participants' locations).

Andrea Fontana and James Frey explain, "Interviews can be structured, semistructured, or unstructured" (2000, pp.645-646). Email interviews will be structured (participants respond to a list of questions) but face-to-face or videoconference interviews will be semi-structured (I will leave participants enough freedom to elaborate original responses and to introduce related subjects about their individual professional experiences). Thus, the type of interviews I plan to conduct in most cases will fit within the semi-structured type described by Creswell (2014, p.246) and Hashemnezhad (2015, pp.60-61).

As for the format of the interviews, I will present participants with a set of written questions: all interviews will share a number of discussion topics that include coded words or concepts (for instance, in all of them I will ask about the relevance of play as related to professional practice). Questions will be open-ended and will slightly vary from interview to interview: depending on the interviewee's particular area of expertise, and they will present discrete variations (e.g. Braund's interview will be centred on authorial illustration, Moore's interview will be more focused on fantasy, Ferrer's interview will concentrate on aspects of contemporary illustration practice — see Appendix #2).

These interviews will be analysed in the evaluation and comparison stage (4.3.1).

2.2.2.1. Participants of interviews

The list of professionals I will interview consists of: Alan Moore; Isidro Ferrer; Steve Braund; Genís Carreras; Josep Alcaraz; David Faüchs; Fanny Espinet; Pablo Navarro; and Gemma Rabionet. I selected a significant number of practitioners because, in order to arrive at more informed conclusions, I want to have as many opinions as possible.

The reasons why I selected these professional artists in particular are as follows: most of the interviewees practice in different disciplines (many participants are illustrators and graphic designers) or, even if they are practising other professions at the moment, they started their careers as illustrators. This professional profile is very important for my research because the information I want to obtain is also related to the thinking processes involved in the creative process. Alan Moore, for example, is widely recognised as the author of some of the best graphic novels of all time, he has a background in illustration, and extensive knowledge on the subject of fantasy. Isidro Ferrer, from my point of view, is one of the most playful authorial illustrators in the scene of contemporary illustration; he self-initiates projects, and he is also a graphic designer and illustration instructor. Steve Braund is an illustrator with expertise in authorial illustration and he leads the MA Illustration: Authorial Practice at Falmouth

University (UK). He has been directing the Authorial Illustrator Forum since 2000 (he is one of the editors of *The Authorial Illustrator,* 2012), and is the editor of Atlantic Press (which edits authorial illustration projects). Genís Carreras is a graphic designer who operates in an in-between space that overlaps with illustration and he is also a lecturer. Josep Alcaraz is an illustrator, graphic designer, and illustration instructor. David Faüchs is an illustrator, art director, set decorator, graphic designer, and illustration instructor. Fanny Espinet is an illustrator, art director, set decorator, graphic designer. Pablo Navarro is an animator and an animation instructor at JOSO and began his career as an illustrator. Gemma Rabionet is a costume and pattern designer, illustrator, and graphic designer.

Additionally, I will conduct two interviews with lecturers who use gamification in their courses in other disciplines (distinct to illustration) to compare their perspectives with my approach. These lecturers are Pere Cornellà, expert in gamification and pedagogy from the University of Girona, and Jordi Márquez, expert in multimedia, graphic design, and gamification from EU ERAM.

2.2.3. Workshops and questionnaires

Considering that in addition to being an illustrator I am a lecturer and that the outcomes of this study might be useful for illustration classes, I should clarify that my research has no explicit educational objectives (nevertheless, in the long-term, it may indirectly be relevant in educational circles). The key purpose of these workshops as with the research strategy is to gather qualitative information about the attitudes of participants towards playful activities as related to illustration practice, in order to compare their reactions with mine. I want to evaluate their reactions to a play-based approach to illustration practice and observe if participants' perspectives present differences and/or commonalities with mine.

These workshops will include: a) presenting the creative method I am using; b) introducing the techniques and games; c) survey sheets filled in at the end of the workshop in which students answer some questions and

offer their opinions on the use of the play-based creative framework.

To acquire the data, I will use the following information-gathering techniques during the workshops: 1) observation techniques (recorded in field notebooks); and 2) questionnaires. This will allow me to compare what I observe during the workshops with participants' accounts of the experiences.

Apropos observation techniques, James McKernan states:

> Observation may be *obtrusive and interactive*, as in the case of 'participant observation', or *unobtrusive and non-reactive*, as in the case of 'non-participant observation'. The style will depend upon the nature of the research problem and the skills of preference of the researcher. (McKernan, 1998, p.59 — emphasis in original)

Therefore, I plan to use what McKernan refers to as observational and narrative research methods: that is, field studies based on narrative that uses "naturalistic observation in the natural setting of the behaviour researched" (McKernan, 1998, p.59). I will write my observations up as field notes by recording the narrative data of the workshops, and including anecdotal records (brief accounts of events), diaries and logs (McKernan, 1998, p.60). There are two basic styles of observation: participant and non-participant. In the former the researcher is a member of the group (the researcher participates in the experience); in the latter the researcher tries to remain unobtrusive (McKernan, 1998, p. 61). The position I take in the workshops corresponds with 'participant' because when I present the play-based creative framework and explain how the exercises work I am personally involved. And, even though I will try to be as unobtrusive as possible when the students are testing out the framework — I am available for them (for instance, when they have doubts) — this is only sporadic, as most of the time I let them play on their own. By the end, after they have answered the questions, there will be time for dialogue in which I assume a more participative role again. So, within the participant style of observation, I am more visible at the beginning and end of the workshops.

2.2.3.1. Participants of workshops

In the case of this study, the workshops will be introduced to seven groups of participants (see table 2 on p.99). These include: three groups of illustration students of Years 1, 2 and 3 of the University of Northampton; two groups that include illustration students and ex-students and professional illustrators; and two groups of transdisciplinary students of EU ERAM (these transdisciplines include: graphic and multimedia design, film, photography, animation, and illustration).

The total sample will comprise 132 participants with diverse levels of experience in drawing/illustration, different ages, genders, ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds. It includes 37 participants interested in illustration (mostly illustration students and some practitioners) and 95 participants (students of a transdisciplinary programme). Thus, the former group corresponds to participants specifically interested in illustration and the latter to participants mostly interested in other disciplines and 5 per cent of people interested in illustration. These differences in professional interests will allow me to establish comparisons concerning the use of play as related to idea generation applied to image making and storytelling, particularly in terms of the possible applications of play-based approaches to illustration. What justifies the size of the sample is that it will allow me to gather enough qualitative information on participants' responses to support my conclusions.

Respecting illustration students, I will test the play-based creative framework with 21 participants of the University of Northampton of Year 1, 2 and 3. In this case the number of participants ranges between three to twelve students per group. The average age is between 18 and 20 years and they have different ethnic origins and diverse cultural backgrounds.

I plan to deliver eight workshops to two groups of 8 participants each (four sessions each group). The first group will be composed of female participants of ages that range from 24 and 51, which will include participants with a level of illustration equivalent to Year 3 illustration and also some professional illustrators. The second group will be composed of female and male illustration students of ages that range from 20 to 26 years and have a level that is equivalent to Year 3 illustration. The fact that their levels of experience

in illustration are different (some participants are professional practitioners and others are beginners) might be an important element in detecting variations in their answers.

WORKSHOPS' PLAN

UoN ILLUSTRATION Y1, Y2, Y3 STUDENTS	
UoN Y1 - 27/04/2015 - Male and female	11
UoN Y2 - 29/10/2015 - Male and female	3
UoN Y3 - 29/10/2015 - Male and female	7
Number of participants	**21**
EU ERAM TRANS-DISCIPLINARY STUDENTS Y2	
EU ERAM - 08/10/2015 - Male and female	47
EU ERAM - 27/10/2016 - Male and female	48
Number of participants	**95**
EXPERTS' GROUP 1	
Group 1 - 06/05/2016 - Female	
Group 1 - 28/05/2016 - Female	
Group 1 - 17/06/2016 - Female	
Group 1 - 23/09/2016 - Female	
Number of participants	**8**
EXPERTS' GROUP 2	
Group 2 - 17/02/2017 - Male and female	
Group 2 - 10/03/2017 - Male and female	
Group 2 - 24/03/2017 - Male and female	
Group 2 - 08/04/2017 - Male and female	
Number of participants	**8**
TOTAL number of participants	**132**

Table 2. Workshops' description, date and number of participants.

In order to have more information about the reception of play as related to illustration, I will also test the play-based creative framework with two groups of 47 and 48 transdisciplinary students of Year 2 of EU ERAM - University of Girona of an average age of 19. 95 of the 132 participants are transdisciplinary students. The diversity of their interests (film making, graphic and multimedia design, photography, animation, illustration) might add valuable information about the reception of ludic approaches to creative practice from perspectives that are not necessarily those of students whose main interest is illustration. These two groups will also include participants with different ethnic origins and diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, I will test the play-based exercises of the creative framework with four practitioners (Navarro, Espinet, Faüchs and Rabionet) as their

professional opinions based on their practical experiences in testing a ludic approach to illustration could be helpful in providing new insights about the relationship between play and illustration.

By testing play-based illustration activities with different groups I aim to obtain information on possible variations of motivation levels depending on illustration level, age, and gender. Csikszentmihalyi explains that the flow phenomenon is one which everyone feels about and describes the same way, irrespective of age or gender, cultural background or social class (1996, pp.109-110), I want to verify if this statement also applies to the levels of motivation of the participants selected for this research project. At the same time, as one can never be sure that what motivates one person will motivate another in the same way, by analysing the answers to the questionnaire, I want to observe if certain play-based activities are more universal or produce more motivation than others; how time is perceived during the experience; and, finally, what levels of creative apperception are attained during and after the activities.

2.2.3.2. Workshops

The objectives of these workshops are:

1) to observe how participants react to the idea of bringing play to illustration;

2) to observe participants' reactions and level of engagement to play-based approaches to illustration and to receive feedback about it;

3) to test if fantasy thinking can be induced by utilising some of the play-based exercises of the creative framework;

4) to examine their reactions and experiences by practising these ludic exercises and collect data (in terms of motivation, flow, creativity);

5) to exchange perceptions and receive comments about play as a research approach in contemporary illustration practice.

This corresponds with the aim of my research questions to provide answers to the third objective of this study and contributes to the investigation effort.

2.2.3.3. Questionnaires

To acquire information about how participants react to the idea of play as related to illustration and how they perceive the play-based exercises of the creative framework, I will design a questionnaire that allows me to examine their responses to my approach without the need of a face-to-face interview. Even though some of the exercises will include group activities, the questionnaire aims to gather information about individual perceptions and experiences, and participants' answers in response to the playful activities will be analysed in relation to flow, motivation, and creative apperception.

These questionnaires will be expanded with in-situ observations using the methods described in 2.2.3.

2.3. Tools for acquiring data, analysing information and presenting findings

Apart from the artefacts and field notes produced in the studio, I will use a number of recording systems to reflect-in-practice and to reflect-on-practice. These will be either an audio recorder or a digital photographic camera with video recorder depending on the type of play activity. Following Gray and Malins' advice (2004, pp.86-89), since the outset of my study I have been using a number of different systems to evaluate what best helped me capture the embodied or tacit thoughts that emerged while experimenting in the studio. As mentioned in 2.1, I would like to restate that the thoughts I have while playing and/or creating are very elusive. Therefore, the action of transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge is also extremely difficult. For this reason, using different recording systems is very helpful to capture evasive feelings and thoughts that otherwise would not be visible in the artwork and which, as discussed in the introductory chapter, in 2.1.1 and in 2.2.1, are central to this study. Additionally, these tools will be useful to analyse the information recorded during studio practice afterwards and also to present findings in the format of photographs and videos.

Summary

The objective of this research is to analyse my own reactions towards play-based activities in illustration practice and to contextualise them by establishing a wider range of responses from students and practitioners. The central focus of the study is motivation and autotelic experiences as related to play in illustration.

With reference to epistemology, methodology, ontology, and methods of data collection and analysis, I will use an epistemological and ontological point of view based on psychological phenomenology and autoethnography to analyse my subjective experiences when testing Hyperdream.

In this investigation I use two type of information sources: in the first place, the main data source is internal: my own studio practice and research diary reflections based on my experiences and reactions towards play; in the second place, I use external information that originates from interviews with professional practitioners and participants to whom I deliver workshops followed by an open-ended questionnaire. These two external data sources will also assist me in reinforcing the intersection of my research with the current context of contemporary illustration practice. And, in the case of workshops, they might help me to observe how other people react to play as related to illustration empirically. In turn, both external data sources will aid me to establish comparisons with my own perceptions of play as related to illustration. This triangulation design consisting of studio practice, research diary, interviews and workshops, will enable me to compare the information gathered, and, therefore, assist me to build new knowledge.

In the following chapter I will explicate the importance of studio practice to obtain the type of knowledge I am interested in, I will describe the components of the play-based creative framework commenting on the creative method, techniques, and games to be used; I will explain the practice undertaken in the studio as related to the practical proposal:

'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game'; I will elucidate the creative process I will follow in order to produce illustration works; I will interpret some of the illustrations I produced with Hyperdream; and, finally, I will reflect upon studio practice as a research method.

CHAPTER 3: STUDIO PRACTICE

In this chapter I discuss my practical experiences using the Hyperdream play-based creative framework. I explain how I produce a number of drawings, collages, illustrations and some graphic novel pages under the general title 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' (my PhD practical project).

This chapter is divided into four sections: in 3.1, I discuss the importance of studio practice as a research method and I explain the type of knowledge I am aiming to generate through this study, and in 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, I analyse the components of the creative framework (method, techniques, and games); in 3.2, I describe and reflect upon the practical proposal called 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' where I test the play-based creative framework and I report on the creative processes I followed to make some of the pages of my graphic novel project; in 3.3, I discuss some concepts and motifs of the fantasy genre that appear in the illustration work produced with Hyperdream; and in 3.4, I reflect on studio practice as a research method and I explain why it is essential to obtain the type of data I am interested in.

3.1. Studio practice as research

The type of knowledge I am aiming to yield with this investigation is mainly psychological but the practical component is also essential. Graham Higgs (2008) argues in favour of the use of art practice with psychological goals. He states, "Because psychology is the study of behaviour and mental processes of the individual, it is then conceivable that art can be studied for its psychological meaning" (pp.547-548) and concludes, "All arts-based research is psychological because it involves the reflexive subject engaged in psychological processes related to the psychological construction of self and world" (p.549). Thus, for Higgs, "The psychological questions of interest to arts-based researchers in psychology would most likely relate to some phenomenon of the subject's experience" (p.549). In my case, I explained the psychological nature of the research questions of this study and also the reasons for conducting a practice-led investigation in the introductory chapter and in 2.2.1.1: as I cannot have access to this kind of knowledge without an experiential and pragmatic approach, I need to test Hyperdream in the studio,

which is actually the place in which this research originated (following my concerns about the psychological experiences surrounding my practice as an illustrator — as I discussed in the previous section). So, arguably, the pragmatic aspect is essential to and indivisible from my central argument and the sort of knowledge that I am searching. For this reason, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, I align myself with the performative paradigm defined by Haseman (2007), which defends the "primacy of practice". He also adheres to Gray's nomenclature of 'practice-led', as practice is essential for practitioner researchers "not to merely 'think' their way through or out of a problem, but rather they 'practise' to a resolution" (Haseman, 2007, p.147), a notion which is consistent with my own experience in this study, as practice allowed me to move forward the investigation.

Henk Borgdorff (2012) argues that artistic research generally operates in the sphere of "knowing *how* to do something", which involves practical, embodied, implicit and tacit knowledge, rather than in the area of "knowing *that* something is the case" (theoretical, propositional, explicit, focal knowledge). Nonetheless, he indicates that even in artistic research the accent is in the former type of knowledge, the latter, explicit or propositional knowledge is also relevant. Thus, for him, "artistic research could be described as an articulation of the non-propositional forms of knowledge and experience in and through the creation of art" (p.122). In the case of this research, initially it seeks non-propositional knowledge (pragmatic, implicit, embodied, material, procedural, and experiential). This type of knowledge will be generated in the studio by testing the play-based activities that compose Hyperdream in a practical and experiential way (this corresponds with the idiographic aspect of the study). However, Michael Biggs and Daniela Büchler (2011) argue that first-person experiences are problematic in academic research because, as experiences are something personal, they cannot be shared with other people. Hence they explain "the academic choice for the argument-driven thesis reinforces the value that the community places to the transferability of impersonal knowledge" and even they acknowledge the value of the linguistic form as it allows detaching from the particular to discuss in general terms (p.94). For this reason, a further stage of my research will include the analysis of my own

experiences in the studio by scrutinising my psychological responses to the illustration games and, afterwards, I will compare my own ideas with those of interviewees and my own experiences with those of workshops' participants in order to generate theoretical conclusions that can be generalised (this corresponds with the nomothetic aspect of the study). Hence, with this I aim to build propositional knowledge (discussed in chapter 4 and conclusion).

3.1.1. Play-based activities

In the following pages I enumerate just a few of the play-based illustration activities that I practised during this study and I explain how I tested them.

A brief description of some of the other exercises I designed and practised during this research were part of the exhibition, *Hyperdream: A Play-based Creative Framework for Illustration Practice*, held at the Avenue Gallery of the University of Northampton, February 15-18, 2016 (see Appendix #1).

Some of the games I tested exist already: such as the stain method, the Exquisite Corpse (both text and drawing), collaborative drawing and writing, collage, digital collage, cut-up, and scrapbooks. Some were adaptations: for instance, adaptations of the stain method, adaptations of Exquisite Corpse. And others I personally devised such as free play drawing, using the concertina sketchbook as a combination of free play and Exquisite Corpse, and 'Dream Cards' (a deck of cards I invented to produce random associations) that served me to stimulate drawing and writing.

I acknowledge that some of the 'games' I am mentioning might also be regarded as 'artistic techniques' but I define a sharp distinction between the two concepts: an 'artistic technique' involves a procedure in order to obtain a result, whereas 'games' are designed to produce optimal experiences (as discussed in 1.3.1). 'Artistic techniques' imply the use of certain materials following a number of steps to create an artefact (illustration, drawing, collage). Thus, what is relevant is the result, rather than the experience of producing it. Contrarily, the 'games' that compose Hyperdream use game mechanics that involve rules, a lusory attitude,

make-believe, etc. (as discussed in 1.2.1), which guarantee enjoyment and a fulfilling experience rather than being aimed at the by-products of the ludic activity. Hence, the difference between 'games' and 'artistic techniques' might seem subtle but it is quite significant for this investigation. Arguably, this understanding varies on the perspective one takes, but considering the goal of Hyperdream is to increase motivation and flow, I see the aforementioned activities as 'games'.

With reference to the use of a time frame, I defined a strict time limit only on rare occasions; while in the rest, time was 'naturally' defined by the game itself. However, in certain exercises (such as Exquisite Corpse or drawings produced using the Dream Cards) the element of time was defined as a limiting rule and, even though this produced more tension, the experiences were also enjoyable.
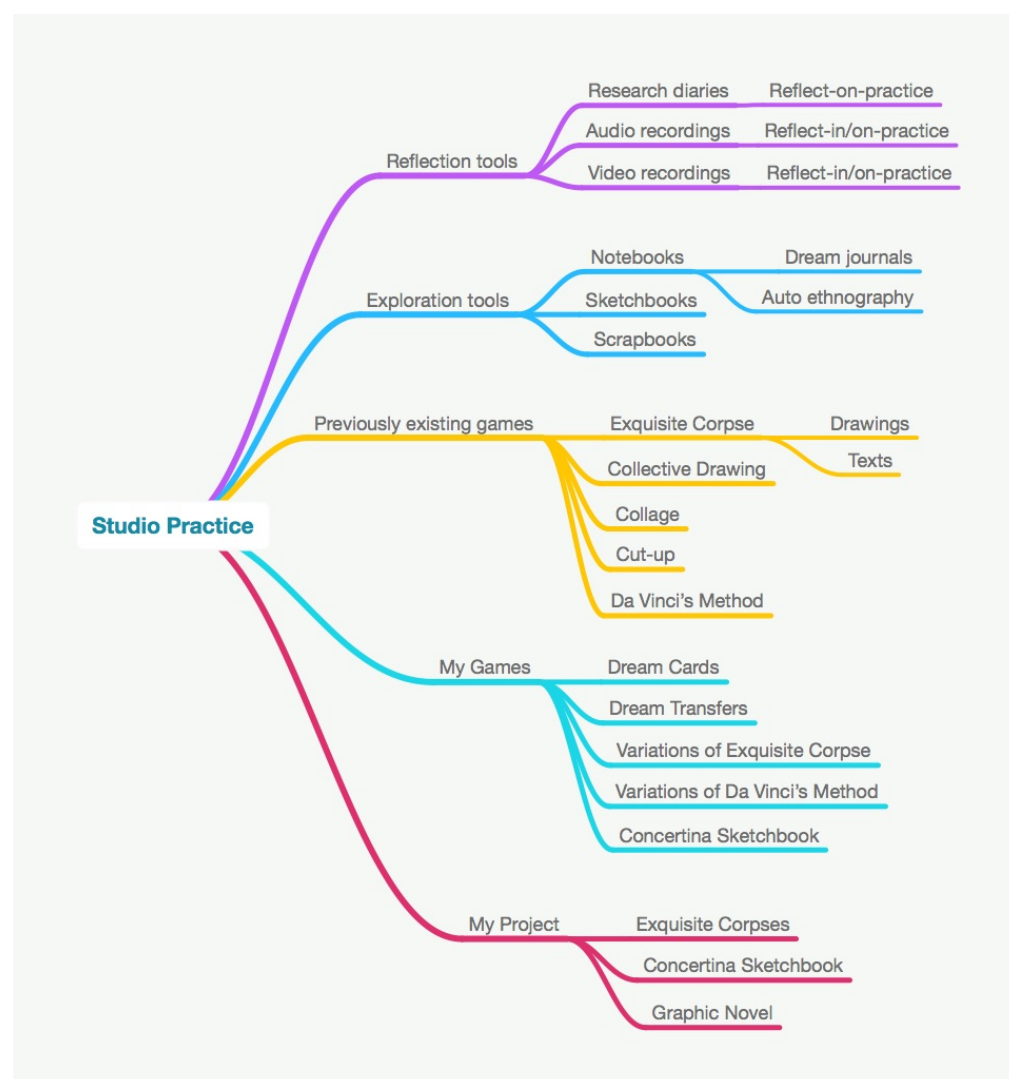
Figure 7. Scheme of the studio practice.

To explain better the diverse play-based exercises or games, I have divided the following sections as: '3.1.2: Play-testing previously existing games' and '3.1.3: Adapting and designing new illustration games' (see figure 7, previous page).

3.1.2. Play-testing previously existing games

The tasks I undertook during this research had the objective of testing different existing creative graphic games that other artists designed and played. I experimented with them to make critical reflections and to obtain information on how to design my own games.

3.1.2.1. Drawing and painting games

One of the games I tested extensively during this study was the Exquisite Corpse, a game invented by the Surrealists in 1925 (Breton, 2002, p.288; Eburne, 2008, p.122).

The Exquisite Corpse was an adaptation of a previously existing parlour language chain game called the game of consequences (Breton, 2002, p.289; Passeron, 1978, p.259). The game involves several people composing a sentence, text or drawing on a folded paper in which none of the participants is allowed to see what the rest are drawing in their respective segments (Pierre 1979, pp.71-72; Brotchie and Gooding, 1995, p.73). Through this process of collective creation, the final images show strange juxtapositions that can be related to the apparently random association process that operates in dreams. Eventually, when the final piece is read or revealed, the results are always surprising and unexpected (see figure 8, next page). Surrealists used the Exquisite Corpse with the purpose of "sending the mind's critical mechanism away on vacation and fully releasing its metaphorical potentialities" (Breton, 2002, p.290).
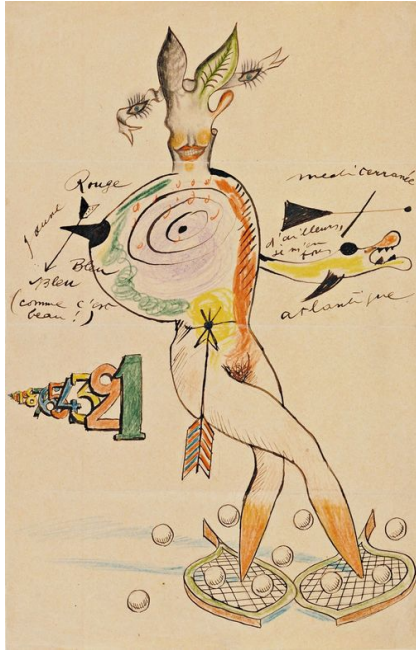
Figure 8. Tanguy, Yves; Miro', Joan; Morise, Max; Man Ray: 'Cadavre exquis': Nude, (1926-27) Composite drawing of ink, pencil, and colored pencil on paper. 14 1/8 x 9" (35.9 x 22.9 cm) Purchase DIGITAL IMAGE © 2020 Photo Scala, Florence. The Museum of Modern Art/Scala, Florence

Susan Laxton (2009) sees exquisite corpse as a type of play activity that questions drawing and paper (p.34) and the crease, which makes the game possible, "trashes the drawing" (p.36), denying the commercial value of the piece. This implies that the Surrealists were more interested in the pleasure derived from the play experience than in the materiality of the artefacts produced with the game. Additionally, the Surrealists were interested in having access to the unconscious (Kern, 2009, p.10). Following Freud's ideas, the Surrealists' activities could be considered a type of dream-work that aims at transforming latent, unconscious or dream thoughts into manifest ones (Walsh, 2013, p.11). The reason for their interest in dreams was based on Freud's dictum that 'dreams are the royal road back to the unconscious' (Freud, 2010, p.604). The dream was a way of connecting with psychic material that was repressed in waking life (Fer, 1994, p.180). Freud (1899) identified two types of content in dreams: manifest and latent; manifest refers to what is apparent, latent is what is hidden behind the visible aspect of manifest content (Freud, 2010, pp.160-161). Freud inspired the Surrealists in different ways. In some cases they sought to represent Freudian motifs in a literal way — for instance, Max Ernst's representations of Oedipus (Fer, 1994,

p.180; Walsh, 2010, p.9) — or by using key elements of Freud's interpretation of dreams to produce artworks that were inspired by psychoanalytic concepts. According to Freud (2010) the four strategies used by the censor to disguise latent content are: condensation, displacement, symbolisation, and secondary revision. Condensation consists of compressing separate thoughts or feelings — latent content — into a single image: the manifest content (p.310). In artistic terms, this could be achieved, for example, by creating an image combining diverse elements into a single character or composition (figure 8, previous page, is a good example of condensation). In displacement, the censor disguises latent content by means of confusion between relevant and irrelevant dream elements (pp.324-325) such as lower parts of the body displaced to the upper region. Symbolisation is another strategy used to evade the confrontation with latent content, which consists in symbolising repressed elements with different objects (pp.247, 349, 356). For instance, replacing a sexual organ with something else. Secondary revision allows the dreamer to unify the dream or to make it more consistent by adding elements that were not originally present in the dream that complete the gaps in order for him or her to recall it in a more intelligible way (pp.496-497). Thus, the Surrealists aimed at gaining access to psychic material that was otherwise repressed by the purposive use of irrationality — for instance, by practising non-productive activities such as playing games. Exquisite Corpse was a central activity among other ludic practices that allowed them to try Freudian theory in practical terms to produce collaborative drawings that reminded collective dream images or, as Breton argues, to make "composite productions" that are "stamped with a uniquely collective authority" (Breton, 2002, p.290).

With reference to the use of this Surrealist game in contemporary art, Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren, Davis Schneiderman and Tom Denlinger state, "The Exquisite Corpse, following a simple but continuously elaborated algorhythm, endlessly reinvents itself and reappears in a number of different contexts" (2009, p.xix). Indeed, since the Surrealists invented the pictorial version of the Exquisite Corpse, the game has been played by a number of artists, including Jake and Dinos Chapman (TATE, 2018); Steve Wolfe, Ashley Bickerton,

(Schaffner, 2009, p.111); Jan Hashey or Christian Marclay, Olivier Mosset, and Alix Lambert (Schaffner, 2009, p.115); Roy Dowell, Tom Knechtel, Megan Williams, and Lari Pitman (Schaffner, 2009, p.118); Marilyn Minter, David Sandlin, and Sue Williams (Schaffner, 2009, p.123).

However, as discussed in the introductory chapter, the systematic use of games in illustration practice is rather uncommon. Nevertheless, some illustrators and graphic designers also appropriated the Exquisite Corpse. Regarding the use of this Surrealist modern game in contemporary illustration practice, it is worth referring to Heller and Chwast (2008), "In illustration, the Postmodern sensibility was not a revolution against Modernism" (p.167) and "Expressionist and Surrealist illustration was the first sign of Modernism in this field. But Postmodern illustration embraced these Modernist forms" (p.168). As Heller and Chwast (2008) explain, Surrealist aesthetics have been used in illustration in different genres, including: Polish posters (p.91), conceptual (p.259), fantasy (pp.100-103) or neo Surrealism (pp.145-156). Arguably, contexts are different and, thus, separated from the poetical, sociopolitical, psychological and philosophical goals of Surrealism, the art produced under the label 'Surrealist' is not Surrealist at all (for instance, there is no interest in dealing with 'latent' content, hence the only Surrealist aspects are superficial and, separated from a Freudian theoretical framework, not even 'manifest').
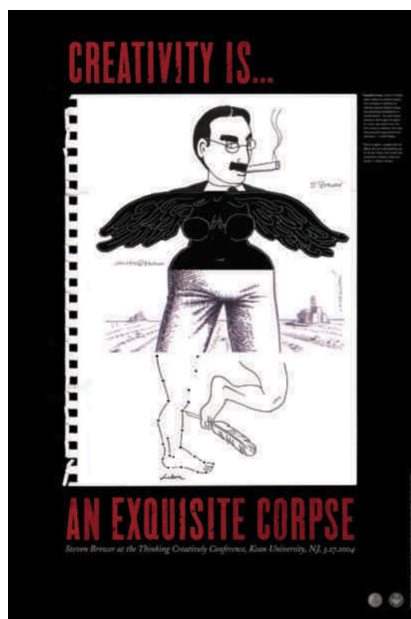
Figure 9. Steven Browner, Milton Glaser, Mirko Ilic, and Luba Lukova: Exquisite Corpse poster created for the "Thinking creatively" conference (2004). Kean University. © 2011 Robin Landa and Wadsworth Cengage Learning

With reference to specific cases or practitioners who experimented with Exquisite Corpse, Steven Brower, Milton Glaser, Mirko Ilic, and Luba Lukova drew a poster for the conference "Thinking creatively" using this Surrealist game (held at Kean University, 2004). In the final image made by these artists the Exquisite Corpse represents individual creativity in a collaborative profession such as graphic design (Landa, 2011, pp.72-73 — see figure 9, previous page).

Furthermore, there are several examples of comic books inspired by the Surrealist game and the idea of collective creation such as *The Narrative Corpse* (Spiegelman and Sikoryak, 1995 — see figure 10, below) or *La noche del apocalipsis* (Accorsi, 1999). In both cases the game consisted of drawing a chain story that involved many professional artists who drew one comic page each. The first artist defined a narrative direction that was in turn continued by the following artist.

Figure 10. Art Spiegelman and R. Sikoryak (eds.) *The Narrative Corpse* (1995). Raw Books/Gates of Heck.
© 1995 Raw Books

Inspired by Spiegelman and Sikoryak's comic project, another example of the adaptation of the Exquisite Corpse to the medium of comics was the exhibition "The Narrative Corpse" (2013) curated by Craig Willms (the exhibition took place at The Cube (Vancouver, Canada) from January 18 -

March 23, 2013). In this case the dynamics of the game were similar to those of the collaborative comic book but this time the artists had to draw/paint three panels directly on the walls of a gallery that were continued by other artists. The project continued in other media that included animation, projection, 3D works and another gallery exhibition.

The reason why Exquisite Corpse is significant to this study is because it contains key elements of play dynamics including: the rules are very simple (hence it is quite easy to explain the game to another person); it generates great interactivity among players (which, in turn, increases motivation and reinforces human bonds); it has a good deal of surprise (no one knows what the result will look like until the very end); one is able to manage the balance between skills and challenge (according to one's singular abilities); it creates intertextuality by the juxtapositions of distant elements in ways that create new symbols and meanings; and, finally, it is inspired by depth psychology. All these concepts can be applied both to drawing and storytelling. Moreover, Exquisite Corpse was very useful to my goals in illustrating a graphic novel because this medium, especially considering sequential art, is based on the juxtaposition of images and texts.
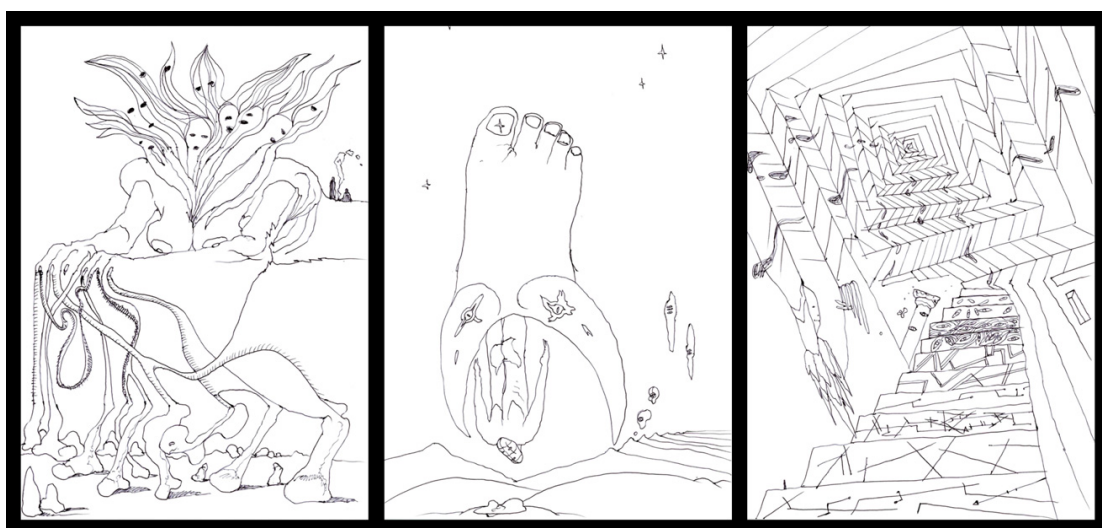
Figure 11. Carlos Ruiz Brussain and Gemma Rabionet: Exquisite Corpse drawings (08/2016). Fine line markers on A4 print paper.

The materials used to practise this play-based activity were either biro pens or black fine line markers (in general 0,3) on A4 print papers. I intentionally proposed the use of the exact same material for all the players to avoid

evidencing the 'patch' of lines. Strangely enough, in the case of the exquisite corpses I drew with my wife, we are the only ones who can recognise who did what (every other person thinks that the images were done by the same hand). This is interesting because Spies mentions that Max Ernst did not like the exquisite corpse game because afterwards people tried to identify the authors of each segment (Spies, 2011b, pp.200-201). In the case of the exquisite corpses I have been drawing, the intention is precisely to achieve the most perfect blending of the lines to grant prominence to the unconscious connection between the participants (see figure 11, previous page). Burroughs and Gysin refer to this phenomenon as the "third mind": the collective mind that emerges with this type of interactive practices (Burroughs and Gysin, 1978).
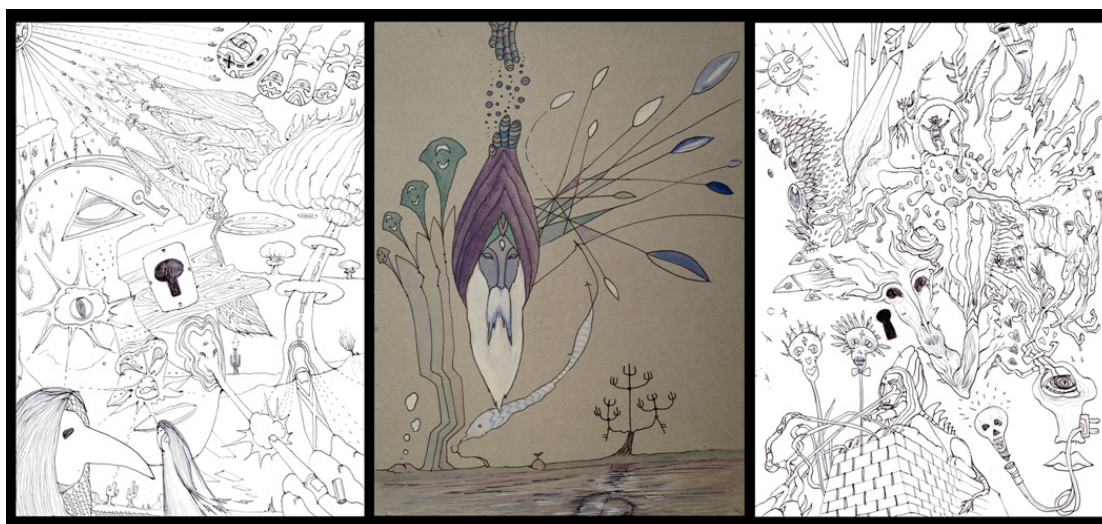
Figure 12. Carlos Ruiz Brussain and Gemma Rabionet: Collaborative drawings (2016). Left and right: fine line markers on A4 print paper. Centre: fine line markers and watercolours on A4 card paper.

Another game the studio research incorporated is collaborative drawings and paintings. This game consists in drawing with one or more people in turn until all are satisfied with the result and/or feel that it is finished (see figure 12, above). Although presenting some similarities in terms of game mechanics, one of the key differences between this exercise and the Exquisite Corpse is that in collaborative drawing one is able to see the whole piece all the time.

As Ingrid Schaffner argues, "The challenge in collaboration is striking the delicate balance between retaining commitment and relinquishing control" (2009, p.116). Indeed, considering illustration is a rather individualistic activity,

this exercise is very valuable for observing how one reacts to or interacts with other people and what kind of results are produced together through this dialogical drawing exercise. Hence one of the key difficulties of collective drawing is to sacrifice one's ego and to deal with the results without losing motivation.

3.1.2.2. Cutting and pasting games

A further activity I carried out during my research was to test different techniques of collage (using photographs, old illustrations, digital images). The way I practice this technique is similar to the traditional version; I first choose a number of images that I find in magazines, newspapers or the Internet and that motivate me (due to aesthetic reasons or symbolic meaning) and then I start to compose them on a background until I am satisfied with the layout. Only in the last stage I adjust all the elements to make it look like a finished piece.

To experience it as play, I avoid having a strong preconceived goal (as it would be the case of the use of this technique in commercial practice; in which one has to adapt to external demands). One strategy to achieve this is by forcing the use of provocative elements that come out of one's preferred topics or by adding images that clearly break with the iconographic logic.

For the Surrealists, collage can be understood as the "meeting of two distant realities" (Breton, 2010, p.275). By combining different images to produce new associations, collage transcends its own materiality and can be related to the experience of dreaming. Max Ernst states: "I... see in collage the exploitation of the chance meeting of two distant realities on an unfamiliar plane [...]" (Ernst, 1936, cited in Poling, 1996, p.56 — see figure 13, next page). The practice of uniting or juxtaposing distant realities alters one's regular perception of reality and allows one to see unforeseen connections. Thus, collage could also be used as a method of conceiving metaphors, similes and stories.
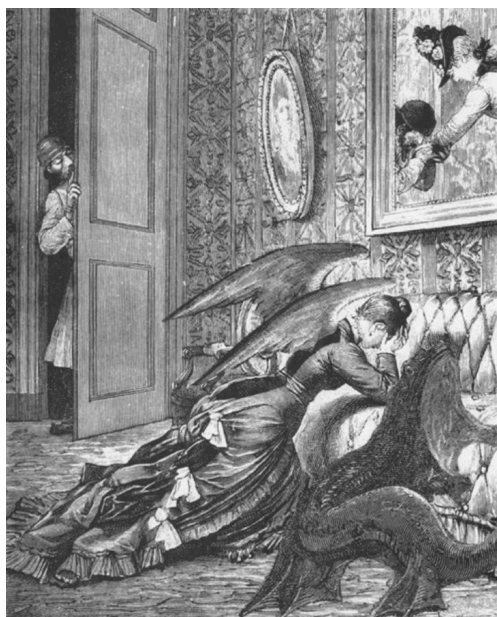
Figure 13. Max Ernst: *A Week of Kindness*. Vol. III: "The Court of the Dragon" (1933-34). Collage. Cut-out images from encyclopaedias and novels of the 19th century. 10 5/8 x 8 1/16". © 2020 VEGAP

Adamowicz sees Surrealist collage as a ludic activity: "Above all collage is a cosmogonic game, 'le jeu de patience de la création', a playful activity and hence a liberating force" (Adamowicz, 2005, p.22). She argues,

> The recycling of images distances them from their original meanings while retaining the traces of these meanings, and invests them with new meaning, so that the psychic material is recorded in ludic manipulations. (Adamowicz, 2005, p.22)

As discussed in 1.2.2, Adamowicz detects a common denominator in all Surrealist games: the alteration of an iconic or semantic transgression that defies rational and stereotypical discourse producing a chance encounter (Adamowicz, 2005, pp.56-57).

Florian Rodari thinks Surrealist collage is "midway between dreaming and reality" (1988, p.89). I use collage to induce dream/fantasy thinking, which, in turn, allows me to produce new combinations of images using techniques of juxtaposition, contrast and disjunction aimed at creating de-familiarization, surprise, and distance (by separating images from their original contexts).

For Werner Spies there might be a number of technical modes and intellectual aims in the use of collage: "[It] breaks in continuity within an image; a breaking out of the level of meaning on which works of art have traditionally existed" (2011a, pp.25-26). Indeed, collage breaks with continuity but the fact

of trying to 'bridge' two very distant realities many times produces a strangeness that pervades the work.

Figure 14. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Collage (2016). Magazine images pasted on A4 card paper.

Renée Riese Hubert explains how collage was used to produce novelty among surrealist artists:

> The collage, the archetype of these innovations, undoubtedly played a key role as an agent both of subversion and experimentation. *Its presence can be detected in works that do not bear the name or label of collage*. It includes paradox in its structure and is composed of elements that refuse to relinquish their identity as they intermingle. Collage affirms the differences among the parts that simultaneously compose the image and interfere with one another. Such relationships guarantee the equilibrium will never be restored. (1988, pp.25-26 — my emphasis)

I have a similar opinion: decontextualizing images produces an inner tension that might still be perceived in the final piece (see figure 14, above). At least in my case as a reader/viewer, this imbalance increases interest and interaction with the text/image. Additionally, as Riese Hubert indicates, the method can be applied to a diverse range of works that go beyond the label of collage (for instance, it can be applied to illustration, comics or film-making).

Collage is the underlying concept behind most of the playful activities that compose Hyperdream, and is valued because the juxtaposition of images helps me to see new visual syntaxes and possible narratives. This is the case of the free play drawings and the ideation process of the graphic novel —

activities that seem to be different from cutting and pasting — as the thinking processes behind them resemble those used to make a collage.

Figure 15. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Cut-up text (2016). Cut-up words on black background.

Cut-up is another game that I tried during this research. This is a literary technique that consists in rearranging existing text by cutting it up and ordering it in a random way to produce new texts and, thus, different meanings (see figure 15, above).

It was initially developed by Tristan Tzara in the 1920s and rediscovered many years later by artist Brion Gysin who, in turn, shared it with writer William Burroughs — who quickly adopted it and used it for writing, recording and making experimental videos (Burroughs and Gysin, 1978, pp.29, 32). Oliver Harris points out the similarities between "Burroughs' cut-up game" and Exquisite Corpse including group interaction and the pleasure of engaging in a collaborative play activity in which one produces something that is more than the sum of the parts (Harris, 2009, pp.87-88).

Figure 16. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Scrapbook (2017). Cut-ups and images pasted up on an A4 sketchbook.

I also see scrapbooks as a type of game activity. I use scrapbooks with three purposes: to provide inspiration, to explore art direction, and to prompt storytelling. I paste images and texts that interest me for some reason or are motivational enough to make a drawing/illustration or to arrive at a new idea. These images and texts serve me to find a particular aesthetic path for each project. The arrangement of the images and texts, even when pasted with a certain intention, opens unexpected narrative possibilities that are often original (see figure 16, above).

In terms of procedure, I usually cut a significant number of images and words from photocopies, magazines, brochures, etc. and I organise them in ways that are meaningful to me. Then I distribute them in the pages of a sketchbook without pasting them. I organise the images in order to create connections between motifs, tones or symbols and then I paste the images. I often leave some space in the pages to paste more images or words' cut-ups in order to create narratives. One particularity of my approach is that I leave a number of blank pages between the ones in which I pasted the images because, afterwards, I try to paste images that have none or little connection with the previous ones, which forces me to build conceptual bridges. I do this in order to find new meanings or to alter the ones I have created when I pasted the first images. Eventually, the

scrapbook reads as a non-sequitur narrative that presents similarities with the structure of dreams. In *The Third Mind* (1978), Burroughs recommends the use of scrapbooks as 'cut-up' devices in which one can experiment with new connections between words and images (Burroughs and Gysin, pp.1-2). Almost quoting the Surrealists, Burroughs asks about the nature of the dream and he answers that a dream is a juxtaposition of word and image (Burroughs and Gysin, 1978, p.1). Following this logic, he argues that scrapbooks are ideal tools for emulating dreamlike feelings that might lead to fiction (Burroughs and Gysin, 1978, p.1).

In terms of motivation, scrapbooks allow me to discover new connections between concepts that interest me visually and/or conceptually, which, in turn, enable me to expand my repertoire of motifs and narratives. In addition, as I cannot anticipate the final results of these visual/conceptual associations, I experience them as surprising.

3.1.3. Adapting and designing new illustration games

Adapting and designing new illustration games was a very relevant activity in my research. This allowed me to explore the possibilities of inventing something that was especially thought to enhance my particular skillset and, thus, to liberate unreleased creative potential. Csikszentmihalyi states,

> The universal precondition for flow is that a person should perceive that there is something for him or her to do, and that he or she is capable of doing it. In other words, optimal experience requires a balance between the challenges perceived in a given situation and the skills the person brings to it. (1988b, p.30)

Almost every play activity, even if it has been entertaining when tried for the first time, can eventually seem repetitive once one has improved one's skills. Csikszentmihalyi explains, "To remain in flow, one must increase the complexity of the activity by developing new skills and taking on new challenges" (1988b, p.30). My creative framework is no exception, so I systematically need to increase the complexity of some of the exercises I design to keep on having flow experiences. Of course, this is not an easy task. As for the difficulties to design games that produce flow experiences, Raph Koster argues, "The problem is that precisely matching challenges to

capability is incredibly hard" (2014, p.98). Actually, when the balance between challenges and skills is disturbed (for instance, if challenges are too high in relation to one's current skillset or vice versa), one will not enjoy flow; on the contrary, one might experience either anxiety or boredom.

Figure 17. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: 'Dream Cards' and some illustrations created with them (2015). Fine line markers on A4 print paper.
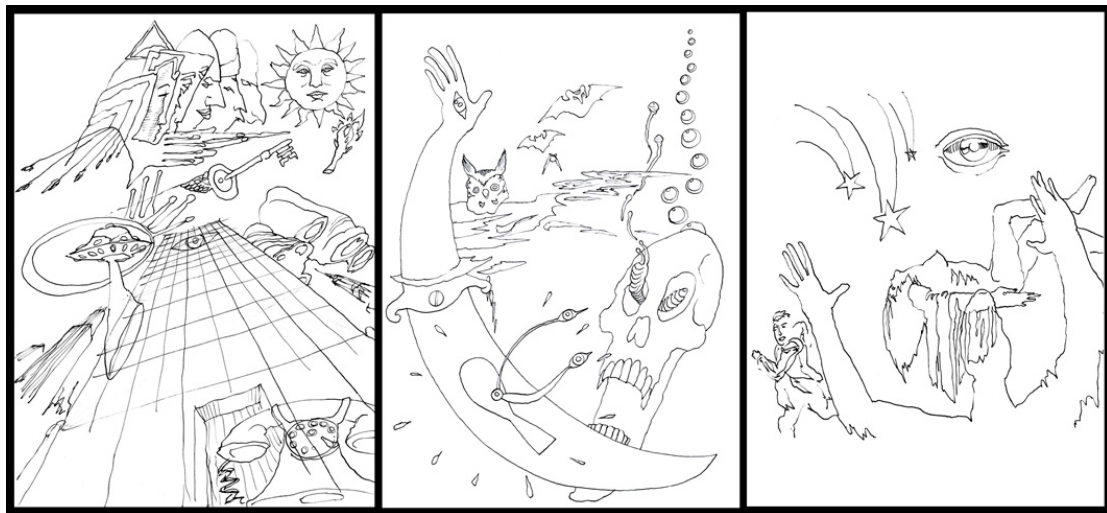
Figure 18. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Illustrations made using the 'Dream Cards' (2015). Fine line markers on A4 print paper.

A strategy I used in order to avoid the repetition of subject matter and to increase the level of challenges, is in utilising the 'Dream Cards', a deck of printed cards that serves as a creative game and/or as an idea generator and that operates as a sort of brief to illustrate and/or to write stories.

The game contains 72 cards, 3 sand timers, and 2 dice. Similar to Tarot decks, each card shows an image and a word. Players have to draw cards

from the deck and then throw both dice. The objective of the game is to translate the associations of the cards into illustrations or stories (to produce strange narratives, unfamiliar creatures and oneiric situations — see figures 17, previous page). Players have to respect a limited time frame and the order in which the cards were drawn from the deck (or not) to draw or write depending on the dice colours. Players have more or less time if the dice is yellow, red or blue (between 1 and 3 minutes — each colour corresponds to the colour of a sand timer) and they also have to respect the order in which the cards are drawn: red means they have to respect the order and green means they can combine them randomly (this only makes sense for writing games, as it is more difficult to respect the order in which the cards were drawn to write a story with limited time, whereas in illustration games the order of the cards).

These cards provoke an interruption in the normal stream of consciousness through the unexpected connections that result from the random juxtaposition of the different images and words printed on the cards, which forces the illustrator and/or writer to abandon the comfort zone of familiar motifs by expanding subject matter. For that reason, in order to avoid repetition, I have been adding cards. Many of the cards contain motifs such as "Death", "Accident", "Roadkill" and so on, with the purpose of inducing not just a dream feeling but a nightmarish one as, out of experience, I found that these themes were more motivating and, thus, more interesting, in terms of creative outputs. This coincides with the Jungian acceptation of the concept of psychic entropy, which involves producing inner tension to induce motivation and hence movement in the player (as discussed in 1.3).

Figure 19. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Free play drawings (2016). Fine line markers on A4 print paper.

A further game I tested is free play drawing, which consists in constructing an iconographic schema that serves as a starting point for drawing improvisation. I usually begin drawing familiar motifs and then jump to variations. To reinforce the effect, I usually draw listening to free play jazz or experimental music. For Stephen Nachmanovitch, the heart of improvisation is the free play of consciousness — which could be expressed through playing, making music, drawing, painting, writing, etc. —; and allows raw material to emerge from the unconscious (1990, p.9). I consider free play drawing as a type of game precisely because it enables me to create a diversity of compositions by combining different subject matter without knowing the result beforehand. Thus results are unexpected and often surprising, which engages me to carry on practising this activity. In order to practice this drawing game, I generally use biro pens or black fine line markers, which prevents me from erasing. In reality a significant technical aspect of free play drawing is that I always draw without sketching, which is something that I never do in commercial practice or in drawing studies. In commercial practice I generally use sketching to explore ideas for illustrations to present concepts to clients. In personal practice, I use it to study from direct observation (still life compositions, plants, animals, or figure sketches). I attribute this difference to the goal of Hyperdream, which is idea generation, rather than preliminary construction.

Sketching usually involves a number of rough or unfinished lines that seek to represent what one is studying or copying. For instance, in observational or

analytical drawing one is constantly making visual judgements, checking preliminary assumptions against what one is actually seeing (Ching and Juroszek, 2010, p.31). The continuous reassessment of previous' decisions often manifests in multiple lighter marks upon which one adds darker lines that progressively lead to the final drawing. This gradual development of the drawing is useful when one is studying an external object or drawing from imagination. Hence, sketching reveals the artist's thought processes as if they were leading towards a final statement. Additionally, sketching can be understood as a preliminary stage that leads to a final piece (e.g. a painted illustration). For Deanna Petherbridge sketches are "part of a chain of evolution". She refers to sketches as "underdrawings" that have the functional role of prefiguring or rehearsing a more finished work (Petherbridge, 2010, pp.29-30).

Free play drawing presents important differences with sketching. These manifest both in the results and in the thinking processes involved in the practice. Firstly, free play is not a type of "underdrawing," there is no approximation process. Each drawing is a final piece not a preliminary stage. This is similar to Frantisek Smejkal explanation of Yves Tanguy's drawings as "an independent means of expression" that did not have a preparatory role as it did in other Surrealist painters (Smejkal, 1974, p.26). Secondly, free play does not show the unfinished appearance of sketching because fine lines delineate figures, objects and backgrounds with clearly defined limits (see figure 19, previous page). Using Betty Edwards' classification, the lines I use in free play drawing could be labelled as "pure" and they are usually not "bold," "broken", nor "lost-and-found" (Edwards, 2008, p.25). As a matter of fact, the fine line I use is often labelled as "ligne claire" or "clear line" (Swarte, cited in Jiménez, 2012; Moebius, 1990, p.97). Thirdly, my approach to free play drawing seeks to induce a state of mind that could be compared with lucid dreaming. This is akin to what Jean Giraud 'Moebius' explains regarding drawing as a state of lucid dreaming (as cited in Sadoul, 2015, p.60) and also presents similarities with the descriptions of the hypnagogic moods sought by Lynn Imperatore to produce her visionary drawings. She explains, "The work of art, the drawing, serves to turn interior vision inside out – externalizing and

extending its existence within the visible" (Imperatore, 2016, p.41). In my case, when I reach that state of lucid dreaming, my hand moves inspired by fantasy thinking as if I were seeing interior images or objects. Therefore, free play drawing is a type of drawing based on "creative imagination" because I recombine previous experiences or stored mental images to produce imaginative drawing (Ching and Juroszek, 2010, p.285). Even though I do not claim that free play drawings are the result of automatism, I acknowledge that my approach owes much to the technique developed by the Surrealists, particularly regarding their interest in releasing unconscious contents (Jones, 2012, p.51). Clark Poling explains that, with automatic drawing practice, André Masson tried to avoid rational thinking processes in order to declare the unconscious foundation of the self. He points out Masson's automatic drawings show a disintegrated self opposed to a suggestion of unity (Poling, 2008, p.5). My free play drawings also exhibit fragmented imagery that makes new wholes (as if they were drawn collages). This actually manifests in many of the artworks produced with Hyperdream: new associations of previously separated things. Thus, the play-based activities could be regarded as deconstructive methods that aim at building new unities from broken pieces, which suggests the following pattern: stasis, fragmentation, new wholeness. Mine is an iterative process of destruction and reconstruction or, using Rollo May's description, from tearing apart (*dia-bollein*) to putting together *(sym-bollein)* (May, 2007, p.138). This mercurial or hermeneutical play with images and meanings could also be related to the alchemical process of *solve et coagula* (dissolve and coagulate) or analysis and synthesis (Jung, 1968b, par.410).

3.2. Practical proposal: 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game'

In the following sections I show how I apply the play-based creative framework to the PhD project. This project includes a number of illustrations with a more finished level of rendering and the initial development of a graphic novel project in which I also tested Hyperdream as an idea generator that allowed me to create characters and the synopsis of a script. Therefore, different from the previous exercises,

which had a rather discontinuous nature, the PhD project served me to trial Hyperdream in more complex and challenging projects and to observe its worth in a practical way.

The artefacts I show in the following pages are presented as indicators of practical, procedural and experiential knowledge and serve to demonstrate some of the material results of my investigation.

3.2.1. Single-image illustrations

'Nocturnal Key' and 'Parliament of Dead Birds' (see figures 20 and 21, next page) were made using the technique of free play drawing: working with no preconceived ideas and without sketching. The materials I utilised to make these illustrations were coloured pencils on A2 black card paper.

These single-image illustrations were useful to test out the possibilities of free play drawing on a bigger scale and with a more detailed rendering than the one I had been using until the moment (before making these works, I had only been utilising this technique in small-scale drawings and with black markers and biros — see my comments on free play drawing in 3.1.3). This allowed me to foresee possible professional uses of this technique and even to consider utilising it as a particular style that defines the fantasy world in some sequences of my graphic novel.

These artefacts were included in the solo exhibition that was held at the University of Northampton on 15-18th February 2016. Thus, they were also functional to early disseminate my play-based approach to illustration practice and were very well received by the audience (see appendix #1.2, p.249) as visitors perceived the technique as quite original.
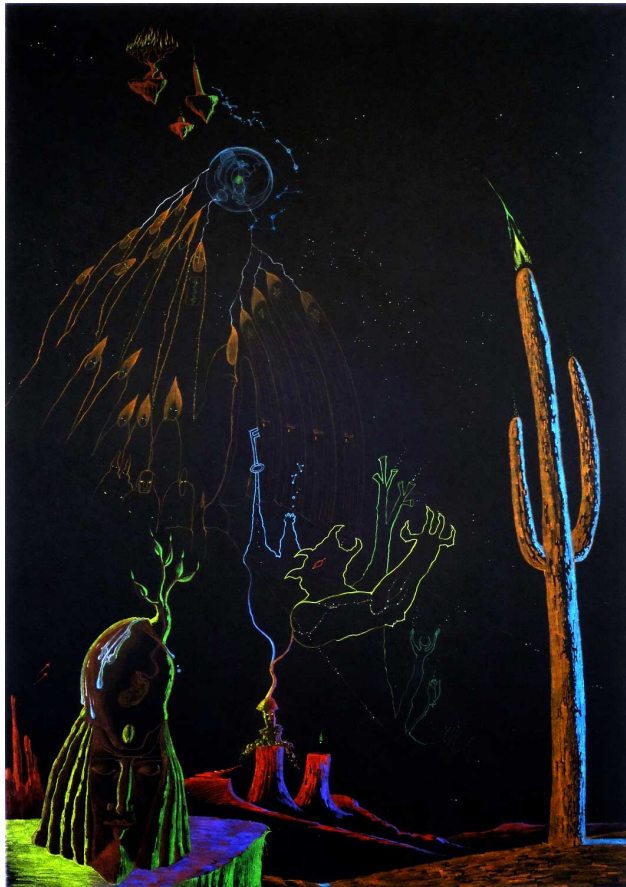
Figure 20. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: 'Nocturnal Key' (2016). Coloured pencils on A2 black card.

Figure 21. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: 'Parliament of Dead Birds' (2016). Coloured pencils on A2 black card.

Playing with a concertina sketchbook allowed me for recombining other games including exquisite corpse and free play drawing. This exercise consists in drawing in a free play style on a concertina sketchbook using the folds to produce 'exquisite corpses' (by creating half-drawings or making lines in the matching parts on distant segments of the sketchbook — see figure 24, next page). Therefore this play-based exercise uses game mechanics that are a combination of free play drawing and exquisite corpse, which adds to the effect of surprise and unexpected results.
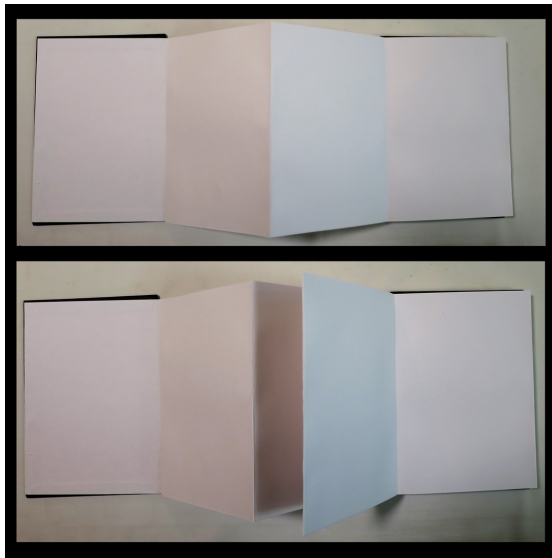
Figure 22. A5 Concertina sketchbook.
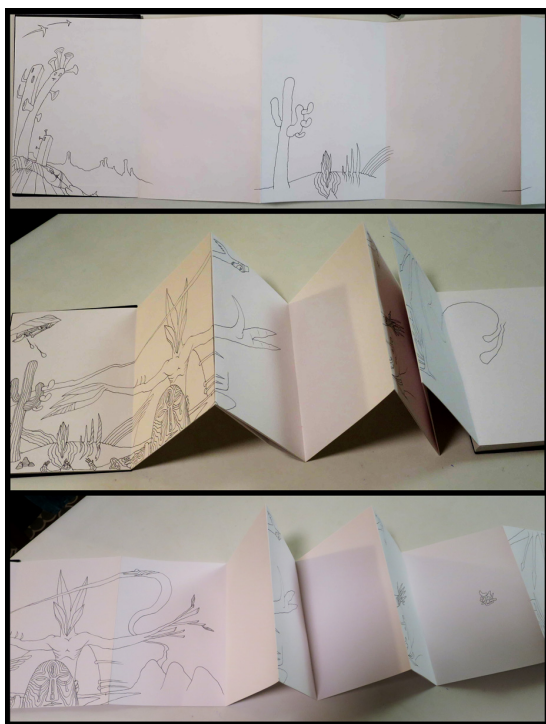
Figure 23. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Creative process (2017). Fine line markers on A5 Concertina sketchbook.

This play-based activity, which uses the concertina sketchbook as a material, is made possible by the particular accordion-folding design of the sketchbook (see figures 22 and 23, previous page).

It is worth mentioning that I conceived this game after making many exquisite corpses and free play drawings. Hence, I want to stress that certain complex play activities emerge naturally only after trying simpler ones for a rather long period of intensive practice.
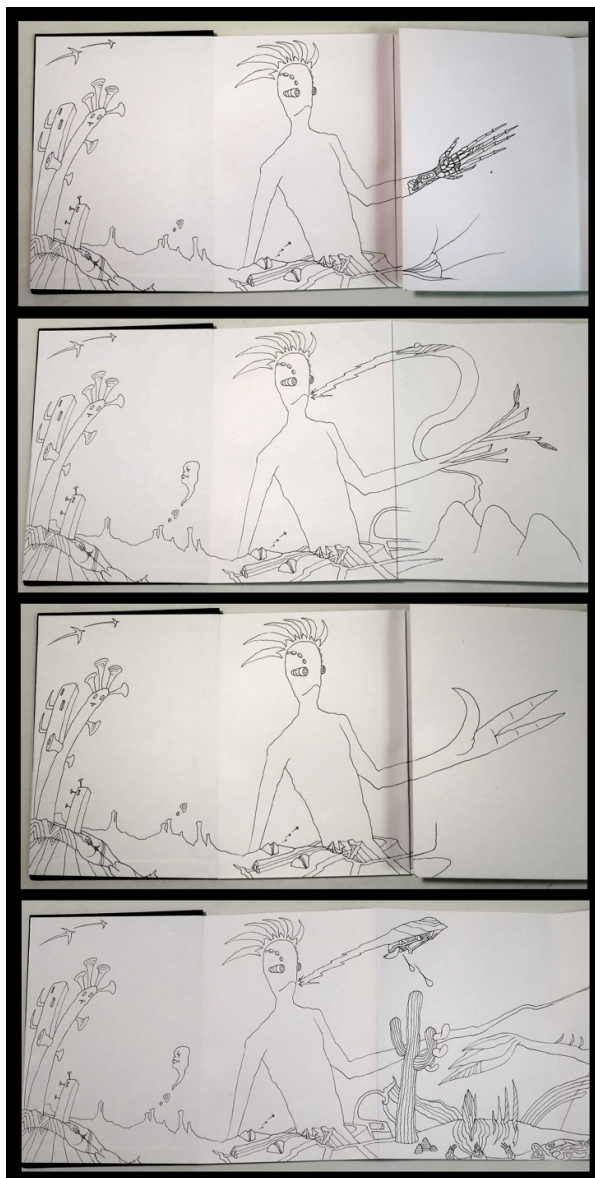
Figure 24. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Creative process: the folds produce juxtapositions of distant elements (2017). Fine line markers on A5 Concertina sketchbook.

Another interesting aspect of this drawing game is that the resulting

artefact retains part of the playfulness involved in the act of creating it. With this I mean that if a future observer were given the chance of manipulating the object s/he would be able to make a number of juxtapositions by folding the pages to produce unexpected combinations (as shown in figure 24, previous page). Thus, the illustration of the concertina sketchbook contains a number of possibilities that are not evident in the panoramic single-image (see figure 25, below). Hence the final artefact preserves a ludic feature that enables playful interaction. This is worth noting, as the same cannot be said of many of the play-based activities I have been testing (or the objects produced with them).
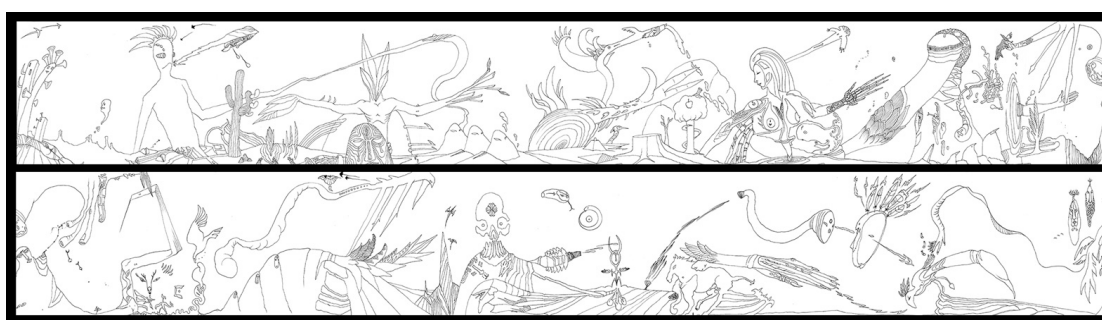
Figure 25. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Free play drawing (2017). Fine line markers on A5 Concertina sketchbook.

Once the illustration is finished I scanned it and made a short moving image video with it (see figure 26, next page).

The video is available at: https://vimeo.com/240690653. This digitized version shows a different aspect of the final piece (one in which folds are no longer visible). This transformation of a play-based activity into a moving image is worth noting as it implies sharing knowledge with a public audience — instead of merely circulating in academic circles. These are positive and distinctive aspects of arts-based research that, according to Patricia Leavy correspond with "public scholarship". She argues that these types of material can circulate in spaces accessible to public audiences and are useful to demonstrate that research is important beyond the usual limits of the research academy (Leavy, 2018, pp.10-11).

Figure 26. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Moving image video (2017). Digital editing.

3.2.2. Graphic novel

At a certain point of my research I decided to make a graphic novel because I thought that a sequential visual narrative project would provide me with real challenges to test out the effectiveness of Hyperdream as an idea/script generation method and it would also allow me to detect possible flaws.

I consider this practice a type of game because I approached the graphic novel by developing the 'story' through recombining images of previous works to create new narratives (these previous works included drawings, prints, paintings, hand-made and digital textures, photographs, and still frames from experimental videos I made beforehand). It is worth mentioning that this working method is radically different from those used in commercial contexts. Normally, there are two basic professional methods used in the comic/graphic novel industry: the first (and more common) is the classical one, which consists in receiving a full script and then illustrating it (Gibbons, Kidd, Essl, 2009, pp.65-67); the second is known as 'Marvel style' and was developed by Stan Lee. In the latter, the comic artist receives a plot that outlines the basic characters and situations of the story and — as the plot does not include dialogues like the full script method — the illustrator can develop visual passages with more freedom (Lee, 2011, ch.5; Gitlin, 2010, pp.59-60). I argue that my approach is different because I did not have a script like in the classical method and I did not have a plot as in the 'Marvel style'. In the case of this graphic novel I started with images and only after I had enough visual material I wrote a plot that eventually transformed into a text or script. Consequently, the initial pages I composed are of a non-sequitur nature but, once I explored the images using the scrapbooks or rudimentary layouts (see

figures 27-31, pp.132-134), I passed from a very open-ended narrative to a story that showed some inner logic. I intentionally avoided writing at the very beginning of the creative process because I wanted to give freedom to the images. I wanted them to manifest their voices. Once new characters and situations emerged from the juxtapositions, they started to have their own personalities and to point in a particular direction. Only when the layout process was finished, did I begin to search for significance and sequential order in the story. This required patience but at a certain moment images started to tell a story that was very meaningful to me.

Even though my method might seem original from the perspective of the comics industry, there are antecedents to this way of producing visual narratives — for instance, Max Ernst's collage image novels (Ernst, 2008).

The relevance of my approach to the creation of a graphic novel in terms of knowledge is mainly procedural. Arguably, this method is motivational just for me and not for others but I think the basic mechanics of the procedure could be useful for other practitioners and, particularly, if they have difficulties in writing stories or generating self-motivated projects.
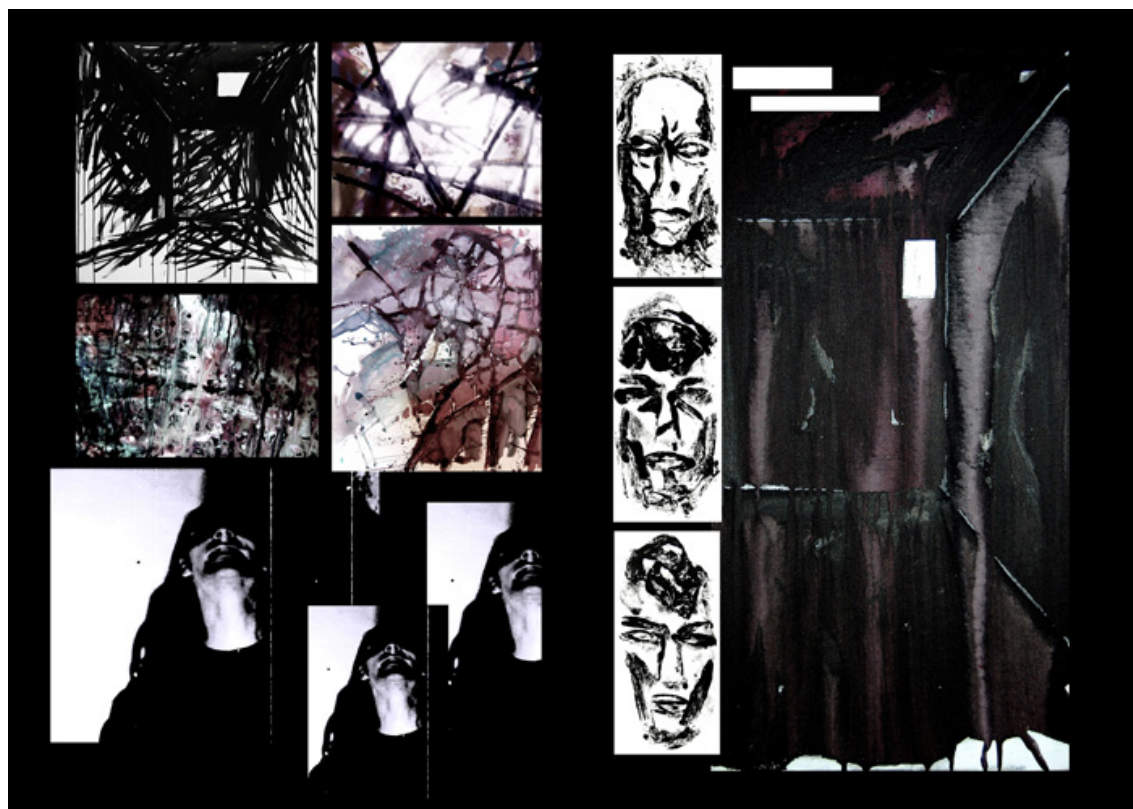
Figure 27. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Graphic novel (2015-16). A4 digital pages made from older artwork (paintings, digital art and video stills).
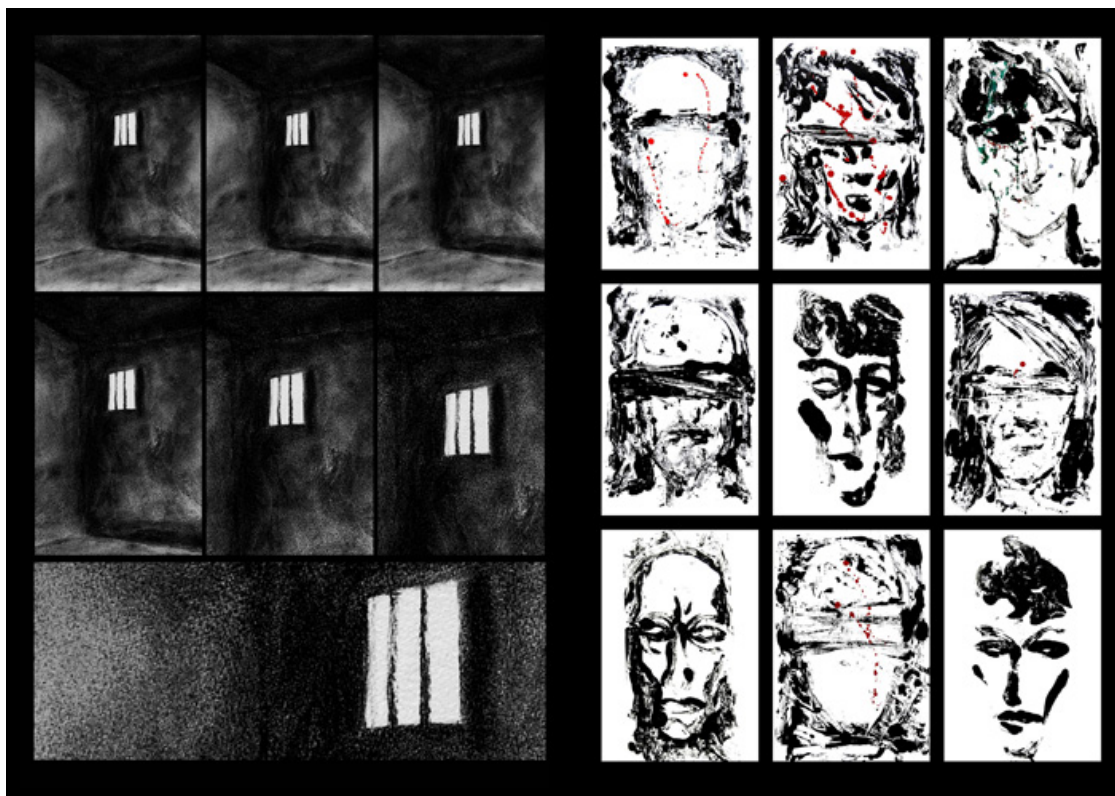
Figure 28. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Graphic novel (2015-16). A4 digital pages made from old artworks (Cell: 1995; Prisoners: 2008).

Figure 29. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Graphic novel (2015-16). A4 digital pages made from experimental video stills recorded in 2009.
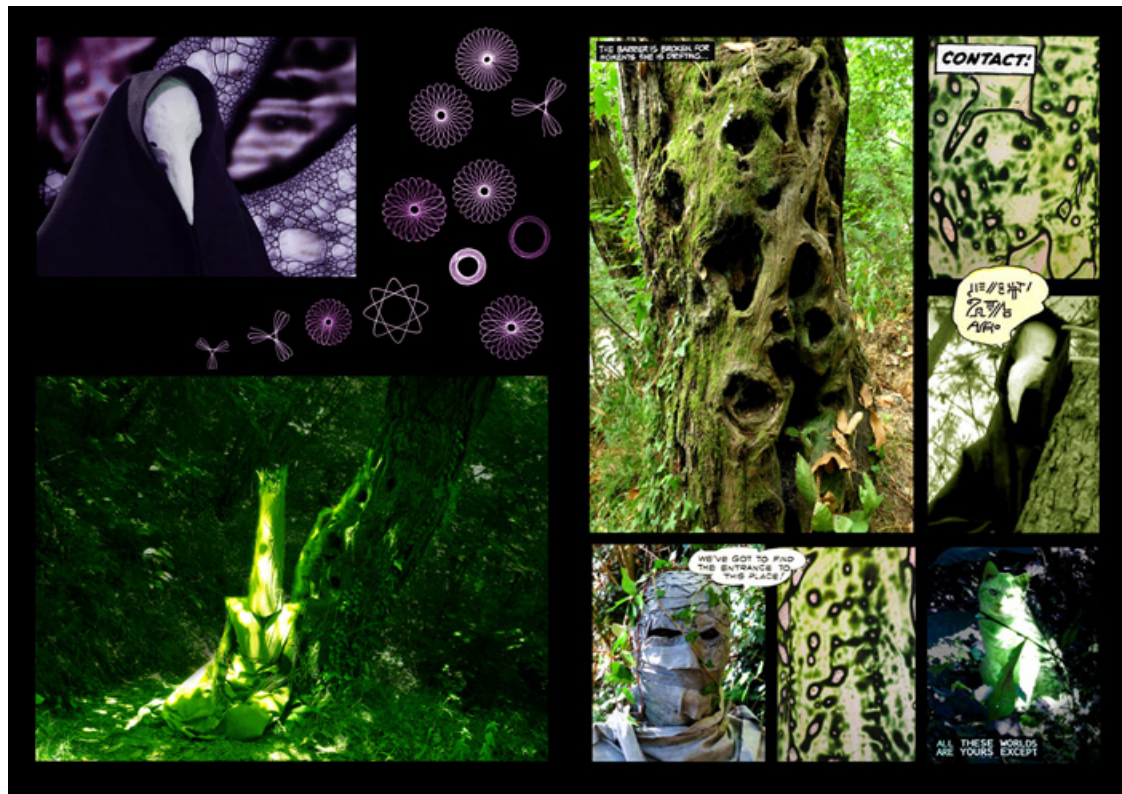
Figure 30. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Graphic novel (2017). A4 digital pages made with digital photographs, video stills, ludic artwork and cut-up texts made in 2016.
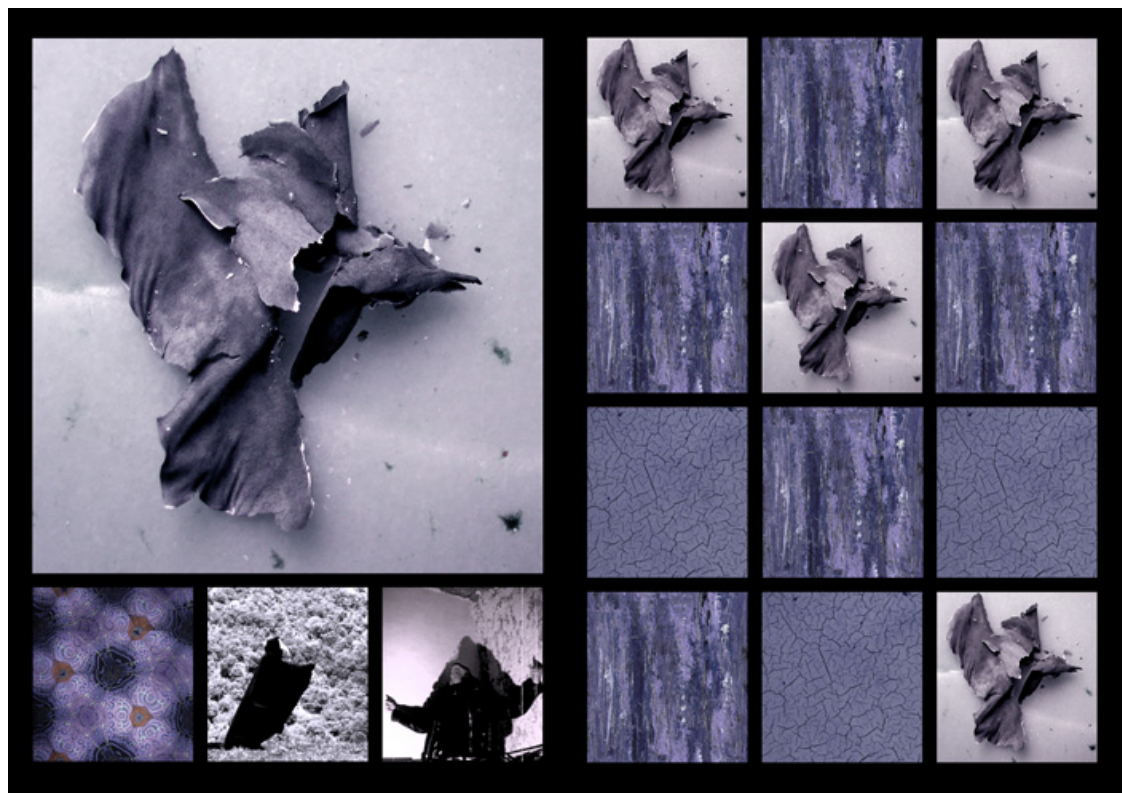
Figure 31. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Graphic novel (2015-16). A4 digital pages made with digital photographs (2006), video stills (2009), and old paintings (2004).

3.3 Motifs of Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game

In the following subsections I analyse the motifs and symbols of some single-image illustrations and the graphic novel made using the play-based creative framework.

3.3.1. Single-image illustrations: Motifs of my illustration practice

These works are meaningful to the research because, like all the rest of the material produced, they originated without the use of a brief or a text. Hence the 'story', instead of coming from the brief, was generated from the illustrations themselves — either from the symbolic meaning of the single elements or from the relationships that emerged from the juxtaposition of the images.

3.3.1.1. Single-image illustrations: 'Cancer Lunation 1- 4'

In this subsection I present four illustrations that were part of a series called 'Lunation cycles' (see figure 34, p.137). With reference to the play-based approach, these images were created using a combination of Da Vinci's "method of awakening the mind to a variety of inventions" (2005, p.62) and free play drawing. This method implied using the previous drawings as a starting point and serving as a prompt to lead me to the next image — with the exception of the first drawing that was done using free play drawing alone. As a consequence, the level of complexity the image gained with each subsequent drawing is quite apparent from the second drawing on. In terms of media, I used black fine line markers on A3 100g-white card drawing paper. In terms of motifs, the illustrations tried to capture the 'energy' of the moon cycle as related to the emotions, dreams, and feelings. Therefore, the lunation cycle of each astrological sign was the subject matter and the way one experiences it provided the 'text' to be illustrated. In some cases, the Moon is crying or spilling water (Cancer is one of the three signs of water); this is related to the melancholic aspects of the sign. The tears that fall from the eyes of the Moon are creating shapes that look like ethereal bones and dreamlike figures. Some of them are hermaphrodite bodies. The sign '69' (top left) is the symbol for Cancer. In astrology, the two luminaries, the sun and the moon, represent the

father (consciousness) and the mother (unconsciousness). Thus, the breasts that appear on the first drawing are related to the mother principle and the phalluses are related to the father principle. Together, they impregnate the world with 'creative imagination' (feminine parts of the body) and 'will' (phalluses) to produce a *Tertium non datur* (in this case a Moonchild). I connect Cancer's lunation with Tarot's major arcane 'The Moon'. The aspect of the Moon image is quite similar to the one of Marseille's deck. This Tarot card symbolises dreams, images and illusions and, thus, can be related to poetry and imagination.

The previous hermeneutic analysis is analogous to the way I think while drawing these types of illustrations. As a matter of fact, it is a summary of the voice recordings I made to reflect-in-practice while I illustrated these pieces. This came as a revelation because until the moment of transcribing the text I was unaware of the levels of complexity of my own thinking processes during the creation of these kinds of illustrations and, consequently, suggest that these sort of exegesis only captures some aspects of the intricacy of the creative process. Nevertheless, I think the exegetic effort was very valuable as it made me realise the underlying importance of the multiple narratives that emerge not only in the final pieces but also at the moment of making such artefacts.

Figure 32. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: 'Cancer Lunation' 1-4 (2016). Fine line markers on A3 card paper.

3.3.1.2. Single-image illustration: 'Farewell Dreams'

The play-based approach I used to make the illustration of figure 33 (p.142) was 'Dream Transfers', which consists of transferring a series of images traced on vellum to a paper to produce a composition that tells a story. About the technique, I used mixed media. I painted the background with gouache

and airbrush on A3 350g-watercolour paper; then I transferred the images with pencils; and, finally, I painted them with watercolours and brushes. The image is composed of five elements: a landscape, a skull, a hybrid shape-shifting sorcerer, a hand (with chess pieces in the fingertips), and an atom bomb explosion. The desert landscape has no signs of organic life. Instead of a real environment, it is a symbolic space that indicates the absence of life. By contrast the bright palette suggests daylight and is opposed to the general atmosphere of the composition — the morbid imagery would normally imply darker tints —, which adds an element of confusion. With respect to composition, the elements' arrangement conveys spatial predominance to the skull and hand and very little to the atom explosion. Nonetheless, the latter occupies the vertical symmetrical axis of the pictorial space, which gives it special symbolic relevance because, on the one hand, it separates hand and skull (action and thinking) and; on the other, it operates as a unifying element of the whole piece — as the detonation is a key symbol for decoding the meaning of the image. The skull on the centre right seems to be laughing — this effect is produced by the curve of the teeth. Emerging from the skull's forehead is the shaman's figure (a Paleolithic painting from the cave of *Les Trois-Frères*, France), which is either dancing or in a process of transformation (or both things at once). Due to its position (in the forefront), the shaman's figure connotes imagination but this image exists on the external side of the wall of the skull; therefore, he was "born" and is now autonomous, but, as a price for that freedom, a process of destruction has also begun. Another possible reading is: "the dream of fantasy produces monsters." Of course, this is in clear opposition with Goya's caprice Nº43 "The dream of reason produces monsters" because I think (like Jung, the Dadaists and the Surrealists) that, if there is an unbalance between logic and fantasy, irrational impulses will find their way through violence and war. The hand with chess pieces in its fingertips, firstly implies a gesture of farewell — the character seems to be saying goodbye to the viewer—, supposedly as a consequence of the atom bomb; but, secondly, it might also suggest a puppetmaster (a person who might have sent armies to war). Here, due to the presence of the atom bomb, I return chess to its origins and reconnect it to its belligerent roots — as the game represents the war between two armies. The

finger-puppets are soldiers and casualties, which are an extension of the body of the skeleton that is saying goodbye. One possible interpretation is that victims and perpetrator are united as they all belong to the same body (the human race), whereas another reading would focus on the fact that the head is separated from the body. Additionally, chess is a game that connotes dualities: white and black, day and night, conscious and unconscious, symbolic and non-symbolic, rational and irrational, life and death, mind and body/world. Following this logic, the image could represent the dangers of Cartesian dualism in which the head (mind) is not related to the body (matter or *res extensa*) producing the mind's insensitivity to somatic perception. This separation of subject and object thus situates the place of experience inside the head as pure mind (*res cogitans*) instead in the world out there — where experience concretely takes place — provoking a terrible fracture (Brooke, 2010, p.490). Roger Brooke states that the Cartesian separation of knower and known draws psychological life inwards and produces the loss of the essential quality of metaphor and its capacity to intensify reality (1991, p.59). Therefore, it can be argued that this division has the disastrous consequence of reducing human's capacity for poetic imagination. For James Hillman, earlier in our tradition, the third, middle position — which in the image is occupied by the atom bomb explosion — was the place of the soul (a world of imagination, fantasy, passion, reflection) that is neither physical and material, nor spiritual and abstract but still bound to them both (Hillman and Moore, 1989, p.121). According to this narrative, the shaman dancing outside the head can represent either a ghost from a long gone age or precisely the opposite: the possibility of recovering an archaic understanding of reality in which mind and matter are again reunited. A further level of interpretation would suggest that the desert represents "protracted periods of alienation, spiritual thirst and creative tedium, disorientation and depletion, and also mortification, purification, redemption and initiation" (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.116), whereas the atom bomb refers to psychic death or regression. For von Franz, an atomic explosion can be read as complete dissociation or madness (1988, p.222). The mushroom shape of the bomb (mushroom cloud) can be "explosive devastation and nuclear change" but mushrooms also symbolise "unexpected manifestations of what is already proliferating in

invisible, vegetative dimensions" (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.178). Chess pieces could be associated with a game based on the interaction of opposites (Prigent, 2007, p.67). A part of the alchemical opus is described as 'child's play' indicating that the psychic process demands a playful attitude in which the imagination is an essential tool (Ronnberg and Martin 2010, p.436). Bones (skull and hand) act as symbols of the immortal part of the person (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.334). In arctic shamanic initiations, after the apprentice dies symbolically, bones represent the possible reconstitution of a new shamanic embodiment that connects personal and transpersonal realities (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.334). Eliade explains that, during that trance, the initiate has the capacity to see himself as a skeleton (2009, p.67). Additionally, bones are symbols of life that have the character of seeds (Cirlot, 2001, p.31). This adds to the idea of psychic death as a descent to the unconscious because the *nigredo* stage symbolises putrefaction (Jung, 1970b, par.714). However, death and putrefaction do not represent just depression but the fertility of the earth (Cirlot, 2001, p.267), which stands for nourishment of new (psychic) life forms (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, p.764). This possibility of rebirth is manifested as a shape-shifting shaman dancing in the forehead. Shape-shifting symbolises "psyche in flux", which does not "alter essentials but portrays the pluralistic, polymorphic, 'alternative reality' of what exists", integrating dark and light, and avoiding stasis (Ronnberg and Martin, 2010, pp.770-772).

Thus, multiple narratives emerge from this image: the opposition of life and death, the duality of mind and body or the beginning of a new life period after confrontation with unconscious fears. Nevertheless, as symbols are ambiguous, these interpretations are not necessarily self-exclusive.

This *a posteriori* analysis shows a similar process to the one I follow while I create the images but in reverse: one mark leads to another and one image leads to the next. Eventually, the composition contains a number of symbols that tell a story. And even if at the beginning of the game, the images are selected in a rather random way. When I finish the piece, the images are usually loaded with meaning and, thus, they become symbolic for me. This is consistent with Jung's ideas when he says that symbols are psychological

expressions that transcend one's present knowledge (1971, par.817). Thus, it could be said that symbols and symbol combinations lead one into unknown territories. This not-knowing aspect of symbols is precisely what stimulates me to carry on exploring with illustration practice as it makes me regard the creative process and the artefacts as something mysterious that transcends my present knowledge, which, in turn, opens the possibility of discovering unknown parts of myself, and this is precisely what moves me while I am making these kinds of drawings and also encourages me to repeat this ludic experience and, thus is an idiosyncratic sort of intrinsic motivation.

As Male indicates, in order to be considered an illustration, an image needs a context (2017, p.19). I agree. Nevertheless, if one uses drawings to explore narratives, "context" can be generated afterwards and the images (drawings, paintings, collages) created without written text and eventually transformed into stories and illustrations. This is precisely my interest in this exercise because, as discussed in 1.1.7, one characteristic of the authorial approach is the ability to tell or write personal stories. This can take different forms, for instance a number of illustrations with common motifs could compose a series and thus could be shown at a gallery, in my blogs or in Instagram. Nevertheless, my main interest is to find a personal way of writing stories. Even though the skill of writing seems to transcend illustration practice, in a number of authorial illustration programmes students are learning creative writing (Arisman, 2013; Braund, 2017) because it seems to be necessary competence in a time in which illustrators need to develop their own projects (Heller and Arisman, 2004, p.98; Braund, 2012, p.8). In my own case, I argue that it is central in my self-motivated practice as it allows me to generate my own projects without depending on external sources of motivation. Therefore, it could be said that currently my studio-practice involves writing as much as it involves drawing, painting or making collage. However, images have a central role in my work as a writer and, thus, illustration in general and Hyperdream in particular provide excellent tools to explore narratives through the use of images that are loaded with meaning. This coincides with the Jungian concept of 'symbols of transformation' that involves the passing over from one organised pattern into another and it is precisely the emergence of these

images or symbols what allows for the transformation of psychic energy (Stein, 1998, pp.56, 70).

Figure 33. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: 'Farewell Dreams' (2016). Mixed media. A3 card paper.

3.3.2. Graphic novel: Concepts and motifs of *Birds and Bones*

In this subsection I explain some of the concepts and motifs of the story I have created for my graphic novel *Birds and Bones* using 'collage thinking'.

Conceptually, my fantasy thinking is related to the idea of the collage/cut-up technique because, like dreams, this method increases the possibilities of free associations. Therefore, once combined, the diversity of images produces a story that is a mixture of different 'collective mythologies' (for instance, the raven could be related to Inuit myths or crossing the portal could be associated with the myth of Orpheus) but that also shows aspects of my 'personal mythology': as the images I used to compose the layout were still loaded with affect, my story has some autobiographical elements. This is consistent with one of the trends of the authorial approach (discussed in 1.1.7). Nevertheless, these autobiographical elements are presented in an indirect way because, even though some of them have certain similarity with my life (for instance, nomadism or lifestyle fantasy), they connect with my biography in a rather conceptual way — not literal.

Discussing Ernst's collage image novels, Spies argues,

> Collage *adopts* the concept of dream distortion as a poetic technique; the results of collage are not simply material manifestations of censored unconscious processes, which can be rendered intelligible by depth psychology. The collage method fuses experiences — both conscious and unconscious — into a new unity, a whole whose indissolubility is intended. (Spies, 2011b, p.44 — emphasis in original)

What I am attempting in this graphic novel is to produce a narrative that operates as the "new unity" mentioned by Spies, which allows to be followed consciously (using directed thinking) but also unconsciously (using fantasy thinking). For the former I use a true-to-life approach (e.g. characters' motivations are realistic); for the latter, I use non-sequitur narratives, symbolic images, and mythological motifs.

This is the plot that emerged using the collage technique described in 3.1.2:

Gabriel is the singer of a Goth rock band who is addicted to heroine. He consumes with the hope that the drug will help him to get rid of the terrible hallucinations he suffers from. Due to an overdose he has a near-death experience. His parents find him on time and save his life. Some months later, when Gabriel is allowed to leave the detox clinic, his parents tell him that he has inherited a small amount of money and a house from a couple of uncles (Tina and Pere) who had mysteriously disappeared. His uncles loved Gabriel as if he were their own child and he used to spend summer holidays with them at that house until he was seventeen — when he got hooked on heroin. Gabriel arrives in Icca, the small village where the house is, with the hope of writing new lyrics and being away from the temptations of the big city. There he meets Joana, who was a good friend from childhood. Together they discover that the house he inherited hides many secrets. Apart from being artists, Tina and Pere were also lifestyle fantasists[11] who left enough clues (in their journals and sketchbooks) to open a magical portal that leads to a fantasy realm. While Gabriel is discovering the secret world of his uncles, he realises that his new home seems to increase his nightmares and a black-cloaked ghost with the head of a dead raven starts to visit him every night.

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[11] Stableford defines 'lifestyle fantasists' as people who "act out psychological fantasies" (2005, pp.247-248) or individuals who have adopted lifestyles that are noticeably affected by the belief in magic, mysticism, divination or other trappings of fantasy fiction (Stableford, 1997, p.581)

As for the elements that define the genre, the theme of a portal to another world is an element that is a recurrent trope in fantasy and is central to this story. About portals, John Clute explains, "very few fantasy texts lack them" (1997b, p.776). For Stableford, 'portal fantasy' is "a story in which transitions occur between the primary world and a secondary one" (2005, p.323).

Rosemary Jackson's concept of a "parasitical or symbiotic relation to the real" (2001, p.20) applies to the story (as the fantasy world depends on the real world). In the case of *Birds and Bones*, the non-real (fantasy) usually appears in the form of *dreams* or *visions*. When Gabriel has encounters with the reality constructed by his uncles (in the beginning this happens when he gets in touch with their objects: strange souvenirs, books, artistic artefacts — such as diaries, exquisite corpses, paintings); and, as the story advances, in the exploration of the fantastic universe his uncles constructed to escape from this world. Thus, the main character moves in a sort of lucid dreaming state, which generates doubts about how 'real' his experiences actually are.

Alan Moore explains,

> I would probably situate fantasy in a privileged position that is exactly on the porous borderline between that which is and that which is not [...]. In terms of the observable fact that everything in human creation has made the passage across this borderline, into being from non-being, it occurs to me that the reason fantasy is situated exactly upon this porous ontological borderline is precisely because fantasy is, in itself, that quality of porosity. (2017)

In the case of *Birds and Bones*, this 'porous ontological borderline' that Moore (2017) mentions is a transformative phenomenon that manifests in locations (the house, the portal, the parallel world), situations (doubting reality, dreaming, daydreaming, practising magic, remembering), and emotional metamorphoses (i.e. discovering his uncles' diaries which change his history and challenge his identity). *Birds and Bones* depicts a rite of passage: Gabriel leaves behind his youngster's immature and selfish attitudes and, after enduring a number of ordeals, becomes an adult.

Collage has also a very important role in the narrative in terms of aesthetics. I use different styles to depict the diverse realms or parallel worlds. The 'objective' reality is represented in a photographic, dark and rather expressionistic style; the reality of the fantasy universe is represented as

coloured pure line on black background (as shown in the single-image illustrations on black card); and then there are the realities 'seen' by Gabriel (the protagonist) and his uncles depictions of the fantasy world (photographs, texts, drawings and paintings). All these visual elements are combined with textual elements that also depict the different voices and worldviews of the characters. Aesthetically, the result is a sort of visual and textual patchwork that is consonant with collage as a creative approach. Thus, certain aspects of the 'cutting and pasting' creative process might manifest in the final result. Additionally, to reinforce the story I played and experimented with formats that transcend the printed medium of the graphic novel. To communicate the idea of a 'collage-story' the project is composed of other elements that are part of the narrative. These extra pieces of information are not necessary to decode the main story but they could help reinforce the characters' backgrounds and/or to enlighten some aspects of the world in which they live. For the scenes of the birdman that describe the 'true-to-life' world I employed photographic sessions with real people enacting the characters (figures 36 and 39, pp.147-148); and for the alternative reality, to depict the strangeness of the fantasy world, I used illustrations (figure 34, p.147). Gemma Rabionet Boadella made the puppets (figure 37, p.148) and costume designs (figures 36 and 39, pp.147-148). I passed her my drawings of the characters (figure 35, p.147) and then she transformed them into puppets and costumes (which were later worn by actors and by myself). I also used experimental videos as a source of inspiration, to make the story move forward, and to complement the central narrative (figure 39, p.149). This multidisciplinary approach served me to move the story forward at a creative level because it enabled me to see the story from various angles, but it also allowed me to know different aspects of the characters. For instance, enacting the black-cloaked ghost gave me a mimetic knowledge of this character (this acting activity helped me to capture the basic movements of the character, which enabled me to draw from a more informed understanding — enacting characters is a rather common practice in animation to produce gesture drawings but not in illustration) or being able to photograph the characters, which, in turn, provided references to draw the characters.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most relevant aspect of this working method is in the way of building a story. With this approach, I was able to create complex narratives starting from bits and pieces of previous stories by decontextualizing images and recombining them in ways that are meaningful to me. It is worth noting that this is not a simple process: what one does by juxtaposing images that do not match with each other is to force connections that are not apparent but, according to my experience, if these images are loaded with affect, that is, if they are meaningful, eventually a story emerges. I see a conceptual relationship between this approach to collage and Max Ernst's ideas of the frottage process, which he used with the goal of "intensifying the irritability of the mental faculties" (cited in Breton, 2002, p.79). Similarly, Marie-Louise von Franz argues that one can produce dream experiences in daytime by fantasising on a dot or a chaotic pattern (von Franz, 1980, p.41) because, for Jung, one dreams beneath the threshold of consciousness in wakeful life (1966c, par.125). In my case, I use collage thinking as a means to provoke a connection between images that come from very different contexts, and thus are very difficult to link, which challenges and stimulates me by generating a tension that, in the case of the graphic novel, was eventually negotiated in the form of a story. As discussed in 1.3.2.2, play enables the emergence of dream thinking and thus an imaginative mood, which, in turn, facilitates access to fantasies and complexes that manifest more vividly in narrative form (because the interaction among the different characters or components of the story forces 'dialogues' between the different parts).

Figure 34. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Fantasy world (2017). Coloured pencils on A4 black card.
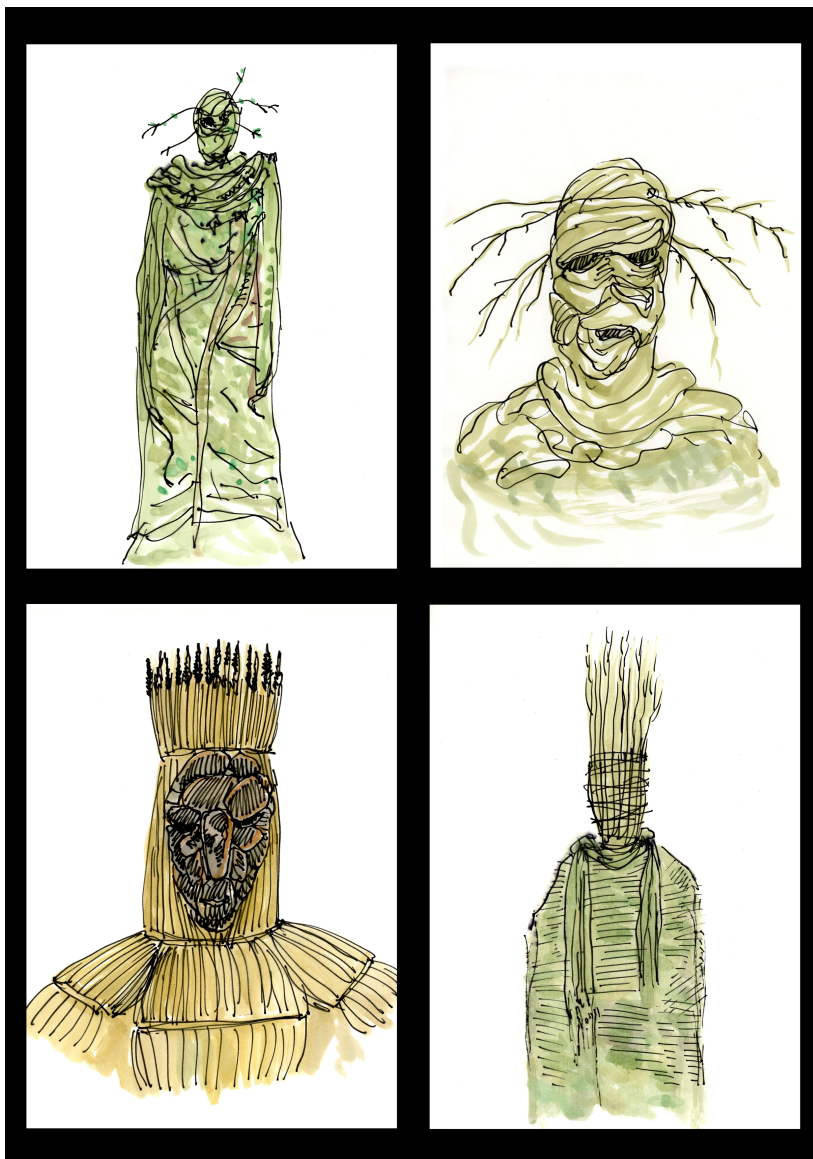
Figure 35. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Characters' designs (2016). Black marker and watercolours on A4 print paper.

Figure 36. Gemma Rabionet Boadella: Costume design (2016). Actors wearing costumes designed for the project. Digital photographs.

Figure 37. Gemma Rabionet Boadella: Puppets (2016). Cloth, thread, wood, acrylic painting. Digital photographs.

Figure 38. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Suitcase (2017). Digital photographs of graphic novel pages, scrapbook, Exquisite Corpses, and various objects related to the project.

Figure 39. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Experimental video (2016). Screen captures of a video produced to support the graphic novel narrative.

3.4. Reflections on studio-practice as a research method

Besides the aforementioned artefacts created with Hyperdream as part of my PhD project, the two major outcomes of my studio practice were: 1) printing a hard-bound volume that contains the initial ideas for a graphic novel including a synopsis of the project and many images generated with the play-based creative framework (see figure 40, p.151) and, 2) a solo exhibition held at the Avenue Gallery of the University of Northampton between February 15-18, 2016 (see appendix #1.1 and figures 41-43, pp.152-153).

As regards the material printed in the hard-bound volume, the illustrations contained in this book were made using Hyperdream. In order to compose these pages, I used many of the 'games' developed and trialled during my research (free play drawing, collage, cut-up, asemic writing, exquisite corpse, collective drawing, scrapbooks, and playing with objects). Additionally, the illustrations (including photographs, comic pages, exquisite corpses) will serve to move the story forward, not to merely translate into images what the text is already saying but as a narrative element without which the story could not be understood. My stand is that illustration language provides narrative elements that a text cannot and vice-versa but, even though this project incorporates characteristics that align with regular comics (such as the use of panels, gutters, or balloons) and it contains a story and images, I opted for the type of graphic novel defined by Sidonie Sobat as half-graphic and half-novel (cited in Amidon, 2015 — discussed in 1.1.8) because I am interested in the tension between text and image described by Hubert as regards Surrealists' illustrated books (1988, pp.25-26 — discussed by in 3.1.2.2). Composing the material graphically and printing it was an important step of my studio practice, as this proved useful to give formal existence to the project and also to provide me with an idea of the direction in which it could evolve in future. However, the material contained in this printed book is not yet finished. As a matter of fact, I only consider it 'sketch' of what the project might look like in its final version. Hence, besides the previous analysis I just made, this artefact is a bit problematic as regards further scrutiny because as the project is unfinished I could not proceed to its full examination (for instance, in terms of narrative, character analysis, rhythm, etc.). Furthermore, one of the main characteristics of comics is the combination of images and words, although not all comics contain words (Kuttner et al., 2018, p.398) but in the case of my graphic novel balloons do not include texts yet because, as I mentioned, the story is still a work in progress, which also impedes me from evaluating the artefact using frameworks such as Neil Cohn's cognitive approach to comics (2013) or Scott McCloud's categorisation of sequential narratives' transitions (1993, pp.70-72; 2006, p.15). At the moment, without text and with many parts of

the graphic novel still missing, in general the project as a whole seems to fit within a non-sequitur type of narrative. Nonetheless, the objective of my research was to test Hyperdream as an idea generator, and it was efficient to help me build a story that I will be able to develop further in the future. Moreover, the understandings gathered with the PhD project and with the graphic novel in particular combined with the propositional knowledge generated with the exegesis enabled me to build knowledge that could be labelled as experiential and procedural, which, in turn, will allow me to communicate my findings not just in theoretical ways but also in practical terms in future illustration workshops or lectures. Finally, once it is published, the graphic novel will serve as a dissemination tool that will enable to share part of the knowledge gathered in this research with non-academic audiences. As discussed in 3.2.1, for Leavy, "public scholarship" means to reach audiences outside academic circles. As an example of this distinctive characteristic of ABR, she mentions the case of Nick Sousanis' graphic novel *Unflattening* (2015), which is very pertinent to this subsection, as it was Sousanis' ABR dissertation project (Leavy, 2018, p.709).
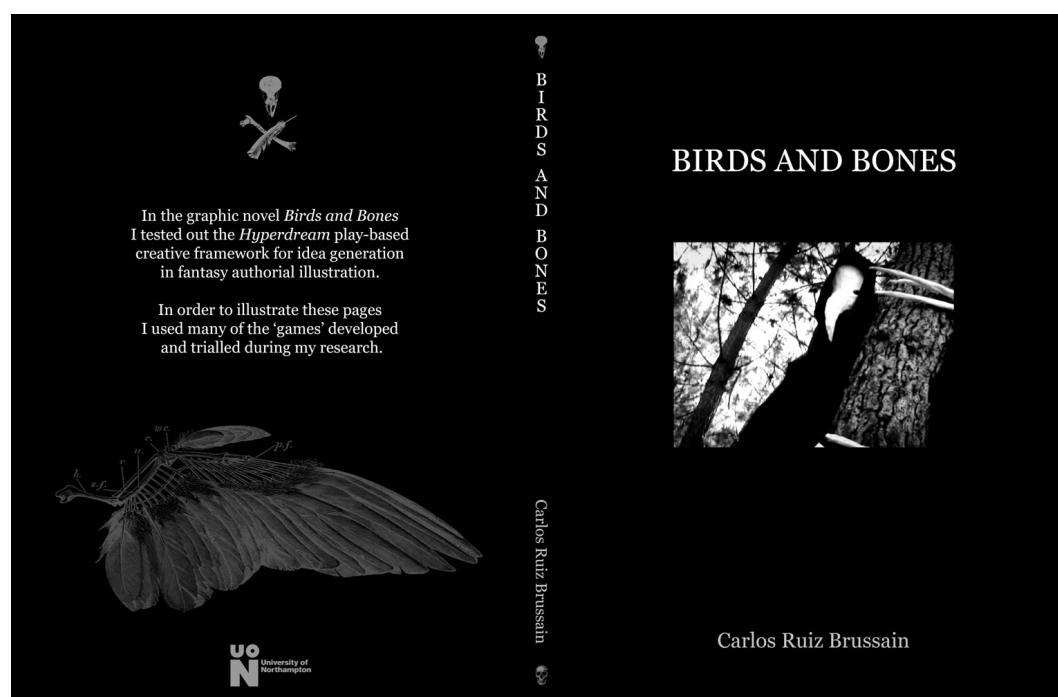
Figure 40. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Cover of the graphic novel synopsis/bible (2017). Printed hard bound volume.

As for the solo exhibition, it was a powerful tool of early dissemination, as it proved useful to observe the reaction of an audience to my artworks and

the play-based creative approach that I used to produce them. Furthermore, before they left many visitors left comments on their impressions of the show (see Appendix #1.2). As Robin Nelson argues, this served me to establish the impact of the praxis (2013, p.99) because, besides the comments left on feedback sheets, I also managed to talk with many of the visitors, which allowed me to know their opinions directly. Some of them were positive as they were very enthusiastic about the idea of relating play to illustration and also play to drawing and painting (I know this because I received the visit of an important number of fine arts' students).

The exhibition also served me to see how visitors engaged in collaborative drawing play activities. For that purpose, in one of the tables I left some unfinished exquisite corpses on A4 size and some drawings on A2 size containing a few unfinished images (see figure 43, next page). Some people interacted with the material left on the table and were eager to play (see figures 44 and 45, p.154). According to Leavy, this is one of the distinctive strengths of ABR as it invites participation of non-academic stakeholders (2015, p.26) and play-based approaches and/or interactive artefacts/installations facilitated accessibility to diverse audiences (Leavy, 2015, p.274-277).

Figure 41. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Exhibition display (2016). 'Dream Cards' (left) and diverse toys (right).

Figure 42. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Exhibition display (2016). Above: Cut-ups, Dream Cards' illustrations; below: scrapbooks and collages.
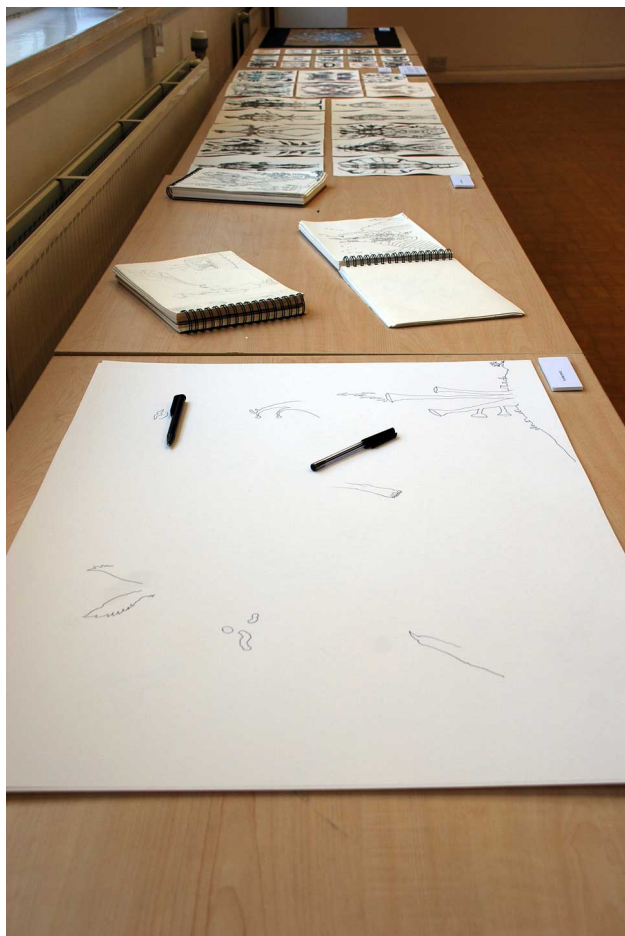
Figure 43. Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Exhibition display (2016). Space for collaborative drawings.

Figure 44. Drawing made by myself and some members of the audience (2016). Biro on paper.

Figure 45. Drawing made by myself and some members of the audience (2016). Biro on paper.

In terms of the psychological and experiential knowledge I was interested in, as discussed in 3.3.1.1, 3.3.1.2 and 3.3.2, an important element of my idiosyncratic play-based artistic process depends on archetypes that manifest in my work as symbolic images. According to Jungian psychology, "archetypes are irrepresentable in themselves but their effects are discernible in archetypal images and motifs" (Sharp, 1991, p.27). This means that archetypes never manifest directly, when they emerge they do so as reflections (in the shape of images or symbols, dreams, fantasies, artworks, patterns of behaviour). Hence, apparently, an aspect of my investigation was concerned with abstractions, but, considering archetypes usually manifest as symbols, as they did in my studio practice, it is worth mentioning that these are graspable through the senses because a symbol is composed both of a sensory image (visual, audible, etc.) and a conceptual aspect (van den Berk, 2012, p.48). This is consistent with Higgs' comments, as he states, "Art making, as a research method, allows the researcher to experience directly through the senses (empirically) the dialectical interactions between the self and the medium of expression" (2008, p.549). In my case this psychological knowledge was provided by the archetypal elements of the games and the artistic materials used in the studio. And the same can be said about play activities built on symbolic components because they provided a sensory aspect: in every game there is always a conceptual level, which involves fantasy and imagination and there is another level which is embodied, hence play, the same as symbols, requires a physical component in order to enable the development of the game (Fink, 1968, pp.27-28). Similarly, Ronald Pelias (2004) indicates, the perceptible aspect of the world is what stimulates the senses and, hence, where the phenomenon of symbolisation, emotional resonance, and cognitive expansion begins (p.9). In both cases, the sensory aspect of symbols was graspable through studio activities such as drawings, exquisite corpses, collages, etc. and by means of materials that allowed me to draw the pictures: scissors, concertina sketchbook, computer, and so on; but also decks of cards, sand timers, etc.

Therefore, the role of practice in this investigation was indispensable as the studio activities and the artefacts produced allowed me to move my argument

forward because it provided the methods to trial the potential of the particular components of Hyperdream and to detect the specific kinds of images that motivate me to develop certain types of works. Using the aforementioned illustration games, studio practice enabled me to visually explore inner images using art materials and play dynamics.

Summary

Studio practice provided the means for me to generate practical, procedural, implicit and experiential knowledge (non-propositional knowledge). Thus the practical component of my research allowed me to discover information that many times was tacit or embodied. Consequently, I needed to repeat the experiments dozens of times in order to detect the underlying patterns, which, in turn, allowed me to articulate them explicitly in procedural, experiential, and linguistic terms.

During this investigation I tested out a considerable number of play-based activities: some of them existed already and some I adapted or invented myself. The goal of testing these activities was to gather information about my own reactions towards play and to observe the possible relationship between play and illustration practice from an active standpoint.

Testing previously existing play-based activities allowed me to learn how to design and improve my own creative games. In addition, I used a small part of that material to create certain parts of the narrative of the graphic novel.

Another positive aspect of play-based activities is the possibility of collaborative practice. One of the most interesting aspects of this type of practice is the possibility of fusing disciplines, art styles and techniques. But perhaps more important is the chance of establishing solid bonds with other artists and/or researchers, which, in turn, can expand one's worldviews. Moreover, it also works as a form of dissemination, as I will discuss in the conclusion chapter (for instance as related to my collaboration with Gemma Rabionet and Dr Peter Duchemin) because collaborators also promote the work using their own social networks.

I introduced the practical proposal 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' as part of my practice-led research. Within the practical proposal I

worked in single-image illustrations and in a graphic novel and I applied the play-based exercises to both of them. The graphic novel served me in particular to test a method based on collage to produce juxtapositions that were later transformed into a unified story.

The illustrations produced with Hyperdream originated without the use of a brief or a text. The text, instead of coming from the brief, was generated from the illustrations themselves.

Studio practice was essential as a research method as it allowed me to experience empirically the interaction between my own psychic material and the materials involved in art making. This dialogue between self and artistic media/games, allowed me to have access to archetypal images that manifested as symbols of my own personal mythology, which, in turn, using hermeneutics and amplification allowed me to explain important elements of my play-based illustration activities and to detect central aspects of my particular motivational processes.

Some of the works made in my studio using Hyperdream were used to disseminate part of the knowledge generated through practice (such as the concertina sketchbook video, the solo exhibition and a couple of solo exhibitions).

In the next chapter I will analyse the data collected through the internal data sources (studio practice and research journals) and the external data sources (interviews to professional practitioners and workshops surveys and observations).

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND COMPARATIVE STUDY

In this chapter I analyse and compare the data collected.

This chapter is divided into three sections: analysis of my studio-practice (4.1), evaluation of the interviews and conversations with professional practitioners (4.2.1) and assessment of the record results of the workshops and questionnaires (4.2.2), and comparison between my studio-practice — internal data source — and the information gathered in interviews and workshops — external data sources (4.3).

4.1 Internal information: Studio-practice

In the following subsections I evaluate and analyse the evidence collected from my studio practice.

4.1.1 Descriptive analysis of studio practice

In this first section I measure the number of experiments produced with the Hyperdream play-based creative framework. This is useful to detect what exercises I favour over time and it enables me to extract patterns of the motivational dynamics behind the play-based activities. To make the numbers comprehensible, I describe them using a qualitative approach.

The number of play-based drawings and illustrations amounts to a total of 2,984 experiments produced between July 1, 2014 and April 1, 2017 and they are coded in the following way:

Exquisite corpses (drawings with others)	267
Exquisite corpses (solitaires)	134
Exquisite corpses (texts)	359
Collective drawings	32
Frottage	15
Stamping	69
Da Vinci's method	37
Stain experiments	785
Drawing experiments	379
Scanner experiments	69
Free play drawings	327
Dream transfers	5
Dream cards drawings	70
Dream generator drawings	37
Concertina sketchbook	1
Collage (traditional)	5
Collage (digital)	11
Scrapbook	163
Cut-ups	79
Asemic writing	27
Sound inspired illustrations	18
Single image illustrations	63
Graphic novel pages	32
Total	**2984**

Table 3. Artefacts made between July 1, 2014 and April 1, 2017.

This is an extensive output and a very high number in comparison to previous work done without the use of a play-based approach. However, of the almost 3,000 artworks, most are stains, sketches or preliminary ideas. Additionally, this considerable amount of work might have a technical explanation: due to the absence of sketching, many exercises (such as free play drawing) produce 'ready-made' final pieces and, as one of the goals of my approach is to draw and/or illustrate and only then determine the narrative, the preliminary thinking and sketching stages — which are usually very time consuming —, are eradicated. Nevertheless, the work that can be considered as the final pieces is still significant: more than 200 illustrations.

Drawing exercises could be classified as one cluster that includes 1,370 drawings (almost half of the total output). This is natural considering my practice as an illustrator is mainly based on drawing and this is an activity that I enjoy deeply, whereas stains and cut and paste exercises are useful to generate new ideas that I eventually translate into illustrations.

According to the data, the activities I came to favour most over time are: stain experiments, exquisite corpses, drawing experiments, and free play drawings. But, to arrive at valid conclusions about preferences, the output should be compared with the time spent on each activity and the frequency with which it was played.

The high number of stain experiments might be explained by the fact that these exercises are less time consuming than others (between two and ten minutes). I experimented with stains throughout the selected period and as I enjoy the unpredictability of this activity, find it highly motivating. This is what often drove me to extend the time I spent playing it, which eventually translated into highly productive creative sessions.

There are 760 Exquisite Corpse exercises. This is a significant number due to the volume of drawing and the frequency is also consistent: the game was played extensively throughout the selected period, and on certain days more than 20 pieces were produced. This might relate to several factors: 1) it is enjoyable; 2) it is very simple; 3) it does not consume much time; 4) it enables one to play according to one's skills, available energy and levels of attention; 5) as the creased paper liberates one from the fear to spoil the piece, one feels free to make mistakes; 6) it is not repetitive because it allows endless possible outcomes based on random associations; 7) the expectation and astonishment of the uncovering moment is always highly rewarding (this phenomenon is based on unpredictability, which, in turn, is based on the random associations of the game — the "chance encounter" in Surrealist language or "alea" in Caillois' arrangement discussed in 1.2.1) — and; 8) once the piece is revealed, one experiences creative apperception. In addition, more than 600 exquisite corpses were made collaboratively (mostly with Gemma Rabionet), which is another motivational factor to be considered because the level of enjoyment derived from the shared experience is highly rewarding. Nonetheless, considering the number of solitaire exquisite corpses, collaborative working seems to be important but not the central motivational factor because the number of collaborative pieces is 658, which represents only 22 per cent of the total output of artworks. Thus, enjoyment

and unpredictability seem to be more constant motivational patterns than collective practice.

Drawing experiments include a diversity of exercises: playing with materials, starting to draw with no preconceived ideas, drawing blindly, drawing without seeing the paper, and other diverse drawing activities (these experiments do not include drawing studies — all my formal practice was excluded from this study). Thus, even though I enjoy drawing experimentation intensely, the large number of works might be explained by the heterogeneity of the exercises contained in this category, which applies both to play dynamics and the time spent on each drawing activity (between five minutes and more than one hour). Concerning frequency, this experimental approach is practised in an almost daily fashion. Drawing experimentation shares one common factor with all the other activities: the unpredictability of not knowing what the results might be.

I have produced 327 free play drawings. This is relevant because it took me between thirty minutes and two hours to produce one piece. Thus, in terms of total time spent, it is quite similar to the total time dedicated to exquisite corpses. With respect to frequency, during the selected period the exercise was practised rather regularly. The activity involves the element of repetition of certain familiar elements but also the emergence of new motifs; hence, motivation could be mainly attributed to unpredictability.

I principally attribute the reduced output of certain exercises (concertina sketchbook, dream transfers, traditional collage, digital collage) to the considerable time these activities consume. For instance, as rendering is very detailed, the concertina sketchbook and dream transfers exercises count as finished illustrations; in terms of time, the concertina sketchbook illustration is equivalent to 30 free play drawings and each dream transfer consumed around eight hours of work. Another significant factor could be that these exercises require particular material conditions and this preparation restricts spontaneous play (as compared to other activities — such as exquisite corpse). Nonetheless, the concertina format could be coded as 'free play drawing' and collage exercises as 'cut and paste'. Within the latter category there are 290 (including traditional and digital collage exercises, scrapbook,

cut-ups and graphic novel pages). The motivational factors of this group it is also based on unpredictability based on random associations.

This information is useful to extract preliminary ideas about the play-based creative framework. All the ludic exercises share common patterns: mainly enjoyment derived from unpredictability.

What might explain the extensive output is that Hyperdream as an idea generation method is aimed at inhibiting judgemental thinking, which allows for the production of many artworks (because many times the initial stages of thinking ideas and sketching them are the ones that are more blocking or cramping). There might be a number of reasons for this: for instance, the excessive use of directed thinking; identification of the ego (or persona) with one's artistic production and, therefore, social recognition concerns emerge; and also extreme care for technical aspects. Thus, I associate these results with Jung's ideas of fantasy: "What we call fantasy is simply spontaneous psychic activity, and it wells up wherever the inhibitive action of the conscious mind abates or, as in sleep, ceases altogether" (1966c, par.125). In the case of this study, it seems I managed to inhibit or reduce directed thinking by the use of irrational playful activities, thus, the spontaneity of fantasy thinking allowed me to make a significant number of works.

4.1.2. Qualitative analysis of studio-practice

In the following subsection I evaluate the data collected with my studio practice using Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow to analyse the motivational aspects involved in my work, Jungian ideas to examine concepts such as fantasy or symbolic thinking, and some key concepts of play theory to discuss the play mechanics involved in the ludic activities.

During the data gathering process (July 2014 - April 2017) I filled out flow surveys (see figure 46, next page) after testing play-based single-image[12] illustration activities (previously invented games and the ones I designed).

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[12] I refer to 'single-image' activities to differentiate them from the graphic novel process. Within this category I include all the single-image illustrations but also the first pages of the graphic novel because I create them as parts — not as whole — and, thus, in the initial stage they still do not have the weight of the graphic novel as a project.

Figure 46. Flow chart sheet filled-out after a play-based activity.

The first section of the survey includes the list of questions that define the flow experience. As I explain in 1.3.1 and 2.2.1.1, if all the answers of a play-based activity are not 'Yes', then the experience could not be labelled as 'flow'.

The information written under 'Comments' is useful to improve the games and to extract common patterns from the descriptive aspects of my subjective experiences using psychological phenomenology. The objective of this question is to reflect on the perceptions gathered while and after playing using the theoretical elements introduced in chapter 1 to detect possible patterns that might emerge from the activity. Therefore, apart from the notes of my research journals, this is the most important qualitative data source of the investigation.

The data gathered in the flow questionnaires indicates that single-image play-based activities provided me with flow experiences unexceptionally.

Reviewing the surveys, I observe that I experienced this phenomenon

even during days in which I was not feeling particularly energetic. Many times I commenced work with a bit of stress, tension or anxiety but once I started to play, problems were forgotten and I enjoyed the experience. Several flow questionnaires begin with phrases such as "Today I was feeling under the weather but, once I started playing, I lost myself in the game and I really enjoyed the experience." This was also evident in the changes of the drawings, which became more detailed (in terms of new ideas and/or rendering quality) as the activity progressed.

Even though all the experiences described after testing single-image activities are categorised as flow, there are significant variations regarding the sector of the challenges-skills graphic where I placed the experience. This means that even if all the experiences were labelled as flow there were differences as regards the levels of flow perceived. A pattern that emerges indicates that in days in which I practised drawing exercises (I refer to studies that are not included in Hyperdream) the quality of the flow experience intensified. Thus, formal practice (such as drawing studies) increased the possibilities of enjoyment and experiences were perceived as optimal.

Nonetheless, during the testing period there were experiences that did not qualify as flow. These experiences were not recorded in flow questionnaires because they belonged to the 'organic' creative process of conceiving the graphic novel (with 'organic' I refer to a process that is far more complex than a single-image activity that might take only ten minutes and in which directed thinking can be easily bypassed — such as exquisite corpses). Hence these experiences were recorded in the pages of the research diaries using a conceptual flow approach by reflecting day by day on the creative process holistically. This also applies to the activities of the graphic novel that involve active imagination — I use this Jungian method to connect with the characters' voices — but in this case to reflect on practice I use the recorder. This approach was helpful to analyse why during certain periods of the graphic novel creative process I was not able to experience flow and even experienced creative blocks and high levels of anxiety. The reasons for these states of mind could be attributed to the fact

that the creation of a graphic novel (images and script) involves a long process that goes beyond the drawing board and, thus, there is no defined starting and finishing moment — as in single-image activities — and goals cease to be perceived clearly. When one is confronted with a type of challenge that operates within a longer time frame and includes experiences that do not necessarily take place in the studio it is difficult to fill out forms. For instance, one creates and/or reflects while doing other activities.

Additionally, there might be several reasons for these levels of anxiety: a) single-image illustrations are easier to structure as negentropic activities than bigger projects such as graphic novels; b) having to consider the reader in this stage of the creative process implies the need of other thinking processes related with directed thinking or design thinking (beyond its expressive and artistic aspects, a graphic novel is a designed experience that includes the use of a decipherable language and graphic design); c) fantasy-thinking processes can involve longer time than directed thinking processes.

a) Even though the play-based creative framework provided me with flow experiences in structured single activities that included clear goals, a time frame, and immediate feedback (such as exquisite corpses or even composing the pages of the graphic novel using collage and cut-up approaches), when I had to design the graphic novel the process became more chaotic and entropic.

Csikszentmihalyi explains,

> Thought processes are less ordered than one would like to believe. In fact, it could be argued that chaos, not order, is the natural state of mind. When no external stimulation engages attention [...] thoughts begin to drift randomly. (1993, p.32)

In the case of my graphic novel, I think psychic entropy[13] manifested due to the laxity of rules: at this stage I had not yet defined what type of graphic novel I wanted[14] and these limits would have been decisive to reduce the feelings of uncertainty I experienced. Csikszentmihalyi states, "When there

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[13] The concept of psychic entropy is explained in 1.3 and 1.3.1.

[14] Generally they are similar to comic books, but there are diverse formats (as discussed in 1.1.8).

are no external demands, entropy kicks in, and unless we understand what is happening, it takes over our body and our mind" (1996, p. 109). This is significant because I decided to start using a play-based approach in self-motivated practice precisely to induce negentropy. Huizinga argues play is order (1949, p.10) because play serves to structure experience. Therefore, it reduces the entropic factors that working in self-initiated projects might imply. I think play dynamics might serve to solve these types of problems. Even though play activities are not equal to a brief, there are certain rules to be followed and the "lusory" aspects of play are the ones that guarantee a fulfilling experience. In the case of the graphic novel, the initial collage layout that provides me with several pages is an ordered process and I experience it as flow, but the second stage is closer to "paidia". Thus, with undefined rules I lost the feelings of enjoyment that I experienced in shorter games. Even though I mainly attribute this entropic phenomenon to the forced shift between fantasy and directed thinking (as I discuss in the following points), the format alternatives available today (such as iBook, which can contain other media: animation, videos, links to webpages) contributed to increase the feelings of anxiety (as I commented in 3.2.2 I do not intend to create a traditional graphic novel but to play with other formats). Initially, I thought the graphic novel would be a printed book, but then I started to consider the possibilities of using a digital format that included a trans-media script. At this point the need of a script that instead of allowing new associations, reduced them, became apparent.

b) When I started to consider the reader I was forced to use other types of thinking that blocked me creatively because at that particular period the story was still emerging. Generally, one does not produce a graphic novel for oneself; hence, one tries to facilitate the process for the reader to make it intelligible one uses languages that can be decoded and interpreted. Therefore, when one embarks on a graphic novel project there are many aspects to keep in mind and several of these involve adaptation to external necessities. Thinking outwardly corresponds with directed thinking as described by Jung (1967a, par.11).

This consideration towards the reader generates a number of

consequences that had an effect on my creative process. Thus, it also affected the study. Nevertheless, this was very useful to reach new levels of reflection as regards to the anxiety that working for another person might produce in illustration. This experience taught me that in my self-motivated projects, if directed thinking is introduced too early (while one still needs to fantasy think) this might lead to artistic block. One of the characteristics of fantasy thinking is its irrationality (van den Berk, 2012, p.48); hence, the need to articulate while one is immersed in this chaotic process can be perceived as extremely stressful.

When I asked Braund about the difficulties that an illustrator might find in the authorial path, he answered:

> Writer's cramp! ... well, creative block. Authoring of any kind is not a mechanical process, so it has its ups and downs (and its rewards too). Self-doubt is a difficulty too. It is interesting that a mainstream commercial requirement with a prescriptive brief is so far away from this less clearly predictable approach to practice, apparently wanting the work to be defined even before it has been through a creative process. (2017)

Braund's opinions match my experience. In my case, not using a brief or script generated important levels of anxiety but, in terms of creative freedom, the rewards of working on an authorial project using this approach led me to new images and narratives.

c) I had to wait excessively long for the characters to point out the conflict of the story and, hence, to be able to write the plot. At a certain moment I realised that if I had a script I would not have been experiencing anxiety as a consequence of the feelings of tension and discomfort I experienced during the process of conceiving the graphic novel, which I consider to be a form of entropy. Here it is relevant to reconsider the difference between Csikszentmihalyi and Jung's concept of entropy introduced in 1.3, which is similar to the anxieties I experienced during the process of conceiving the graphic novel. At a given time I realised that I was unable to urge psychic processes and became aware that fantasy thinking implies a different understanding of time (the tempo of fantasy thinking is not the same than that of directed-thinking). This might explain why I could guide creative practice with active imagination but could not force fantasy thinking to

adapt to productive requirements (such as a deadline). (This deadline was the first week of April 2017 according to the time frame that I set for this study in 2014). This impossibility of developing the project was perceived as creative block. I intuitively knew that I could solve the problem using formulaic solutions based on directed thinking, but utilising that approach would have betrayed the mythical element of the narrative (based on my own conflicts and personal mythology). Therefore, waiting for the characters to indicate the direction of the story was justified in the expectation that the narrative would gain in verisimilitude and intensity. This type of dialogue with inner characters that emerge through the practice of active imagination is well described by Jung:

> Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought. For I observed clearly that it was he who spoke, not I. (Jung, 1989, p.183)

Other commentators report similar descriptions of dialogues with imaginal figures (Hillman, 1983, pp.92-93; Watkins, 2000; Harrell, 2015).

Beyond the effectiveness of using active imagination as a creative method, a reflection that emerges concerning the characters voices might be related to Jung when he indicates how overwhelming the confrontation with the unconscious can be:

> An incessant stream of fantasies had been released, and I did my best not to lose my head but to find some way to understand these strange things. I stood helpless before an alien world; everything in it seemed difficult and incomprehensible. I was living in a constant state of tension; often I felt as if gigantic blocks of stone were tumbling down upon me. One thunderstorm followed another. (Jung, 1989, pp.176-177)

Jung's words describe quite well my own experience during the second stage of the creative process of the graphic novel. Working with inner images is an overpowering encounter with the unconscious and this confrontation with my own psychic material involved moments of great pain. Now I understand why Jung insists on his warnings as regards the use of active imagination (Jung and Chodorow, 1997, pp.42-43).

Nonetheless, I think the risk was worth taking because the authenticity of my own psychic ordeal translated into a heartfelt narrative. More importantly, the story did not come from outside (from a client's brief or a writer's script), it emerged from my inner consciousness. As Arisman indicates, subject matter is key for illustrators who want to express their unique visions, he says, "[...] energy comes from being connected to their subject matter" (Heller and Arisman, 2006, p.xx). Thus, as the *prima materia* were my own conflicts, I have been working with my own subject matter. As for one important aspect of the authorial approach, the story is obliquely autobiographical. After these inner visions, I felt I had something to tell and I was deeply motivated to keep on exploring the fantasy world and developing the stories of the characters I had imagined. When I arrived at this point of the creative process, I realised I had contacted the core of my singular intrinsic motivational process: what drives me to play is the contact with archetypes that manifest as internal images or symbols that contain stories, which I am able to grasp through illustration practice. Eventually these symbols translate into self-knowledge.

As Jung says, "Every psychological expression is a symbol if we assume that it states or signifies something more and other than itself which eludes our present knowledge." (1971, par.817) One concept that emerges from this phenomenological analysis is the unknown and irrational aspect of the symbol. Jung explains:

> Psychic development cannot be accomplished by intention and will alone; it needs the attraction of the symbol, whose value quantum exceeds that of the cause. But the formation of a symbol cannot take place until the mind has dwelt long enough on the elementary facts, that is to say until the inner or outer necessities of the life-process have brought about a transformation of energy. (Jung, 1972, par.47)

Jung's quote is relevant as it indicates that the symbol that emerges is imbued with psychic energy. Thus, what motivates me to keep on playing is the possibility of learning about the symbolic elements that escape my present knowledge. Therefore, enjoyment, unpredictability and self-knowledge are three essential layers of my self-motivated narrative practice that many times present as the same thing (see figure 47, next page).

Creative apperception seems to be the global feeling that all the exercises share in common. Csikszentmihalyi argues, "Creativity involves the production of novelty. The process of discovery involved in creating something new appears to be one of the most enjoyable activities any human can be involved in" (1996, p.113) This feeling of releasing unused creative potential is related to eudemonia and is the key intrinsic motivational aspect Hyperdream activities aim to produce by means of play-based illustration practice.
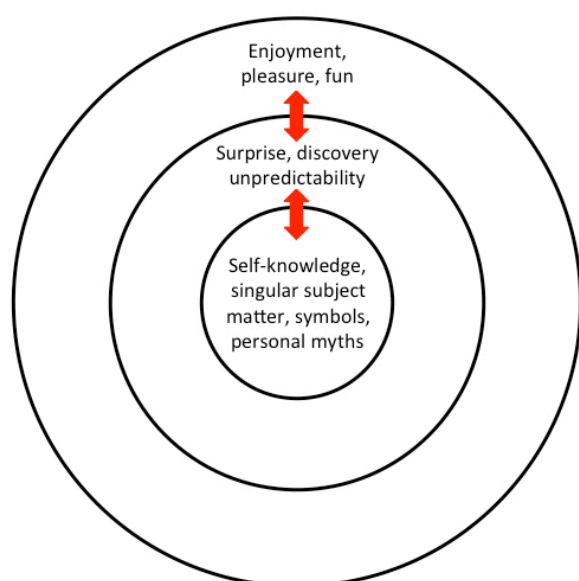
Figure 47. Three essential layers of the play-based activities.

4.1.3. Evaluation of studio practice as a mode of enquiry

There were various types of knowledge gathered through studio-practice in this investigation: tacit or practical knowledge could be associated with expertise and procedural knowledge is skill-related (Niedderer, 2009, pp.61-62, 64) and I also built experiential knowledge about the motivational processes that drive me while I illustrate (both through the practical implications of studio practice and the psychological experiences derived from it — as I discussed in chapter 3). Kristina Niedderer (2009) explains that tacit knowledge "evades the conventional textual communication and argumentation, and thus wider dissemination" (p.61) but she argues that the artefacts can help in the process of knowledge communication (p.66). For Niedderer, "artefacts provide a starting point for an inquiry by generating the research questions" and "provide data as a basis of analysis" (p.65). This

coincides with my own experience as a practice-led researcher. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter and in 2.2.1.1, this investigation originated in the studio, and as discussed in 3.1, creative outputs (in combination with the context of contemporary illustration and the theoretical framework — chapter 1) provided key information that served as a basis of analysis (not just in terms of results, but also in procedural terms, motifs and psychological experiences associated with the making process). Additionally, artefacts have a number of uses in practice-led research: they provide evidence of the knowledge generated, they are helpful to make ideas explicit, and they are useful to communicate the research and to make the theory available to wider audiences (Brown and Sorensen, 2009, p.163). As I discussed in 3.2.1 and 3.4, in the case of my study, some artefacts, videos and the exhibition were useful to communicate part of the implicit and tacit knowledge generated through this investigation. Nevertheless, practical, experiential, personal or tacit knowledge tends to evade conventional textual communication (Niedderer, 2009, pp.60-61). For that reason, a number of commentators indicate that artefacts alone cannot communicate the knowledge discovered through the research process and argue in favour of combining it with textual language (Biggs, 2002, pp.23-24; Nimkulrat, 2013, p.13). My own experience is consistent with these opinions as some key aspects of my argument (such as the importance of intrinsic motivation) are not evident in the creative outputs, thus, the exegesis provided a textual complement that works in combination with the artefacts and can be effective to communicate the knowledge gathered through my investigation.

As for other difficulties that emerged during my research, the tension between the conceptual aspects of my investigation and my own studio-practice were many times at odds. Only after a long period (almost one year and a half after the beginning of my investigation) did I manage to devise the method of filling flow charts after testing Hyperdream to ask myself about motivation and engagement and describe my own qualitative experiences (this method is described in 2.2.1.1). Thus, before devising this approach, I felt that the research was not progressing in terms of finding the right methods to evaluate my practice. But, as Estelle Barrett recommends, "practice is primary and it is

always useful for researchers to return to spontaneous making of work if they are blocked" (2007, p.196). I needed to follow this advice in numerous occasions in order to overcome the distance between practice and theory or simply to articulate knowledge that was either tacit or embodied. Hence, many times I had to return to practice to remember procedural aspects that I was omitting. Barrett also argues that a crucial question to be answered by a practitioner researcher is: "What did the studio process reveal that could not have been revealed by any other mode of enquiry?" (2007, p. 186). My answer would be: without the material aspects of my studio practice, I would not have been able to obtain the data I was looking for because my research was oriented to determine the relationship between illustration and play in practical terms. In other words, as I discussed in 3.4, without the physical and sensorial characteristics of praxis, I would have been unable to find out why certain illustration games are so important for me both in terms of procedure and motivation and neither to have access to the particular type of play-based activities that drive me to explore symbolic imagery, which is an essential motivational factor for me (as discussed in 3.3.2).

Additionally, one further difficulty I found in this research is that the artefacts do not show the subjective experiences involved in the act of playing the game. Thus, it could be argued that the knowledge is not evident on the surface of the artwork. Accordingly, John Sharp states,

> The act of viewing an Exquisite Corpse artefact is disorienting and unanchored, leaving the viewer disconnected from the image; the viewer knows that the real experience of the image is forever gone and understood only by those who actively participated in the game by drawing on the surface of the folded sheet. (Sharp, 2015, p.47)

This is worth mentioning, considering the type of knowledge I was searching for (the relationship between illustration and play and the increase of my motivation levels as a consequence of utilising illustration ludic activities) might not be visible in the artefacts that I produced using Hyperdream and, thus, it makes it difficult (or even impossible) to show material evidence of the experiences involved in the process of making the artworks. As discussed in 3.1, this coincides with Biggs and Büchler's opinions on the impossibility to share first-hand descriptions of experiences as a reliable approach to

research (2011, p.94). Hence, arguably, the works I made using Hyperdream could have been produced using other creative procedures or techniques, instead of games (as I discussed in 3.1.1). This might be the case not only of Exquisite Corpse exercises but also of most play-based activities. Hence, it could be said that neither the connection between play and illustration nor my levels of motivation (the argument of this study) are visible in the artefacts. Stephen Scrivener's argues that in some types of visual arts research "the art object does not embody a form of knowledge" (2002). He explains that even the visual art object can communicate knowledge, that knowledge is usually superficial and cannot show the deep insights that are involved in the production of the artwork (Scrivener, 2002). Similarly, Gaylene Perry comments that the studio enquiry "may lead to knowledge that is not necessarily explicitly discernible on the surface of the creative work" (2007, p.35), and Stephanie Black states:

> illustration can do as well as tell in paper-based combinations of words and pictures, but it is important to recognize that this is not the same as saying that the practical work produced during the research necessarily embodies the argument. (2014b, p.281)

Keeping in mind that the data I was interested in mainly depends on psychological phenomena involved in the ludic experiences rather than in the artefacts produced by playing games, respecting this study, I adhere to the argument about the knowledge not being manifest in the by-products of play-based illustration. Hence, as I mentioned, this exegesis was useful to discuss the aspects that are not apparent in the material evidence produced during this research and to provide context. Therefore, my experience coincides with Biggs' opinions that in order to be interpreted as an artefact produced in art and design research a context needs to be specified (2002, p.19). Thus, it was precisely the combination of artefact and critical exegesis what helped me to advance knowledge and understanding (Biggs, 2002, p.24). Similarly, Maarit Mäkelä (2007) explains that artefacts have a central role in the research process (p.157) but usually present themselves as mute objects. To give voice to the artefacts so they can tell their stories, the researcher needs to interpret them in a certain context (p.163). In the case of my investigation, this context was provided in 1.1.1-1.1.9. Using hermeneutics, amplification

and autoethnography I tried to give voices both to the artefacts and processes that took place in the studio-practice (as discussed in 3.3).

4.2. External information sources

As discussed in 2.1.2, apart from my own studio practice, I used two additional sources of external information: interviews with professional practitioners and workshops with students.

4.2.1. Interviews: evaluation and comparisons

The interviewees were asked about their perceptions concerning their practice as related to play. Their answers were grouped into the following categories: play and creative practice; play and work; play and self-motivated projects; play and experimentation; play and motivation.

When I asked Alan Moore about the relationship between play and creative practice, he answered:

> Essentially I see pretty much everything as play [...] The way that I have approached every activity throughout my life is to first spend a period observing the subject under discussion, whether that be art, performance, writing in general or magic, and then rolling up my sleeves and playing with that material. It's difficult to exemplify how play manifests in the creative process when, as far as I'm concerned, the whole creative process is nothing but play. [...] (2017)

Moore sees play as an analogy or metaphor of creative practice. He indicates that first one has to learn the rules of the game and then play within those limits.

I asked Moore if intertextuality can be regarded as a kind of play and he answered:

> You mention intertextuality which provides a good example of the way that the play urge can take on the most elaborate forms in order to scratch our developing itches: in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, it became clear to me about halfway through writing the first issue that what Kevin and I were constructing was a kind of ultimate intertextual game that could potentially link all fictional narratives from books, films, legends, pulp periodicals and comic books – the more incongruous the better – into a ridiculously rich and intricate tapestry [...] This is the kind of play that, intellectually, makes my

synapses fizz, a sensation that, in turn, I hope to pass on to the reader." (Moore, 2017)

The "intertextual game" Moore describes was previously trialled in some of his previous comics, including *Watchmen* (Moore and Gibbons, 1986-1987), which presented a team of characters inspired by Charlton Comics superheroes, included a story-within-the-story, a pirate tale in the style of William Gaine's E.C. comics, which seems inspired by S. T. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834). (This is just one example of intertextuality among many others in Moore and Gibbons' Watchmen). Another example of Moore's use of intertextuality is *Lost Girls* (Moore and Gebbie, 2016 [2006-2009]) in which Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass,* James Barrie's Wendy from *Peter Pan*, and L. Frank Baum's Dorothy from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* share the same imaginary universe. Annalisa di Liddo argues intertextuality is one of the key components of Moore's work (2009, pp.27, 162-163). Geoff Klock indicates that in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* (see figure 48, below) Moore creates a sort of *Justice League of America* formed out of British literary characters of the 19th century suggesting the debt of superheroes' narrative to literary history as a whole (Klock, 2002, pp.101-102).

Additionally, Moore's comment on the challenges that he sets is interesting: "incongruous" is a synonym of difficulties, but also of opportunities for action. Hence the unknown outcomes could also be a source of motivation and rewards.
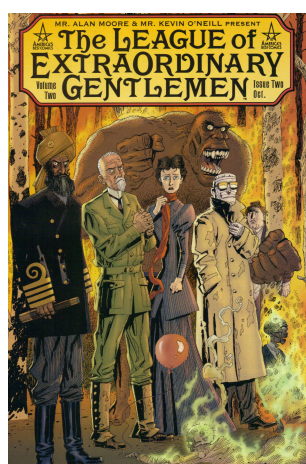
Figure 48. Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill's *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. Vol.2 #2 (2002). America's Best Comics. Left to right: Captain Nemo, Alan Quatermain, Mina Harker, Edward Hyde, and Hawley Griffin.

For Isidro Ferrer play is unproductive because it is a type of goal that does not reach an end in itself (2017). He states that in a productive society everything has to be useful for something; hence, when play is incorporated into society, it is always as a means to an end, for example, as a tool for learning or for developing skills that might be useful in the future (Ferrer, 2017). But for Ferrer play is more than that because it is highly creative and it allows transgressing given limits (2017). More importantly, Ferrer's awareness of the relevance of play manifests in his creative process and artworks. He mentions the project *Un Jardín* (Ferrer and Ferrada, 2016 — see figure 49, below), which started as a stamping game in his sketchbooks — instead of starting with a text written by an author — and eventually found its way into publishing (Ferrer, 2017).

Ferrer comments that he regularly uses sketchbooks to experiment with different techniques, to develop ideas, and to take notes (2017). Ricardo Forriols argues that for Ferrer sketchbook practice is a style exercise that enables him to make possible what he imagines (Forriols, 2013, p.108).

For Ferrer, motivation and play are related. For him the common element is enjoyment. He explains that, either in design or illustration, he has to enjoy his work, to abandon his comfort zone to let things happen and be open to the possibility of discovery because he finds an intrinsic motivational factor when he approaches professional practice as discovery-play (Ferrer, 2017).

Figure 49. Isidro Ferrer and Maria José Ferrada's *Un Jardín* (2016).

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When I asked Steve Braund about play as related to authorial illustration, he stated:

> I think all creative work requires the element of play. No play element, no discovery of something previously unseen, no discovery, no creation. Industry is of course somewhat at odds with this because it needs a result and so there is awkwardness in this relationship. If we don't play when we create we shouldn't expect our audiences to feel and enjoy a sense of play in our work. (2017)

This is comparable with Moore's arguments about passing the enjoyment of playful creative practice to the reader. Additionally, Braund mentions the difficult relationship between industry and play. The opposition between commercial/functional and ludic might explain this tension: industry is related to adaptation to the world and play is unproductive and related to regression to fantasy.

When asked if illustration work could be understood as play, Braund answered, "I think play is an important component, but not the whole story" (2017). Apart from the importance of formal training to develop technical skills, Braund could be referring to other aspects of authorial practice that might include: self-promotion or entrepreneurial strategies (as discussed in 1.1.7).

Genís Carreras sees a strong connection between his creative work and play and described this relationship as: "I work because working is my favourite game. [...] For me it is a creative game. [...] Thus, I consider work a type of game" (2017). He explained that he tries to see work as "taking up challenges, overcoming problems and achieving objectives" and attempts to structure work as if it were a game (Carreras, 2017). He stated that he tries to enjoy his work in a playful way because, if he does not, he thinks the audience will not enjoy either (Carreras, 2017). Carreras' vision of work and play is similar to Csikszentmihalyi ideas on the subject that blur the frontier between work and play (1997, p.59-61). Similarly, Véronique Vienne points out that Push Pin's founders Milton Glaser and Seymour Chwast had a playful approach to work. She explains that instead of searching for material rewards or to comply with clients, Glaser and Chwast saw creativity as a reward in itself and enjoyed solving problems for someone else (Vienne, 1997). This aligns with the idea of professional practice as an autotelic experience, which

is also the way in which Carreras approaches his work and what allows him to remain playful.

Even though Josep Alcaraz sees strong connections between creativity and play, he recognised he almost never uses playful approaches in his creative process (2017). Alcaraz explained he has been able to work in a playful way in very few occasions during his years as a professional practitioner and he attributes this difficulty to the rigidity of deadlines (2017). Nevertheless, he admitted that the differences in the results of the few works in which he managed to play or experiment versus those produced following standard steps are enormous in terms of creative richness and expression (Alcaraz, 2017).

Fanny Espinet sees play as learning without fear and relates it to experimentation and freedom (2017). She argued that play is a way of allowing herself to make mistakes because these are accepted when one plays (Espinet, 2017). For her work cannot be approached as play when the client defines everything beforehand, and artistic freedom and a space for playful experimentation are the opposite of mechanical or formulaic approaches to creative practice (2017). Espinet's ideas of play as a space to learn by making mistakes are similar to those indicated by Evans (2013) and her understanding of play could be related to experimental learning. Comparably, Saturnino de la Torre (1993) considers errors as something constructive and strongly related to creativity. He states that, in science, art or literature, mistakes are many times products of chance that lead to discovery (Torre, 1993, p.27). Accordingly, Espinet's understanding of play as experimental learning is similar to one of Kane's concepts about playful work. He explains, "Play lets you experiment, explore and take risks with ideas without fearing consequences that might happen in 'real life' (Kane, 2004, p.85). This is consistent with Espinet's arguments concerning the importance of having a safe place for experimentation where mistakes are permitted.

David Faüchs sees connections between play and work and he thinks work can be approached as play but he acknowledges that this is never easy (2017). He explained that not having a limited time frame or a responsibility with a client makes him abandon self-motivated projects most of the times;

whereas the opposite conditions [clear goals] are key for the conclusion of works (Faüchs, 2017). His comment about an excess of freedom as conducive to the abandonment of self-motivated projects is significant as it reinforces the idea of the difficulties of concluding these types of projects if they are not structured by certain rules and limits. Faüchs arguments could be related to Rees' comments on the difficulties of maintaining one's motivation when working in personal projects (Rees, 2014, p.113).

Gemma Rabionet thinks a connection between work and play is possible in her self-motivated projects, but very difficult or almost impossible in commissioned work (2015). She argues that when working on assignments one becomes a "tool" that serves to reach the goals set by someone else and, generally, there is no space for play (Rabionet, 2015). She stated that restricting factors such as limited time frame and restricted (economic) resources demand more creativity to solve problems but "burns one out" (Rabionet, 2015). Rabionet mentioned that her personal projects tend to be more expressive than her commercial practice (2015). Rabionet's comments are relevant as she indicates the difference between commercial and self-motivated practice, the former related to problem solving and the latter to play and expression. What Rabionet explains is in agreement with the discussion of 1.1.4 about the differences between commercial and self-motivated practice and is also similar to a text written by Poynor: "Any definition of what differentiates art from design [and commercial illustration] returns sooner or later to the controlling presence of the client" (1998b, p.17). However, as he indicates afterwards, "This distinction between 'free' art and constrained design is a professional reflex so deeply ingrained that designers continue to hold to it in even the most unrestricted of circumstances" (Poynor, 1998b, p.17). Poynor supports his argument by mentioning a number of cases that challenge the distinction between art and design/illustration. For instance, he mentions the case of Russell Mills who refuses to distinguish between private and commissioned work (Poynor, 1998a, p.155-156). Arguably, these texts are more than thirty years old and were written in a very specific context. At the time design was challenging the borders of function and experimenting with self-expression and authorial approaches. Nevertheless, even though

there are some examples of professionals, such as Mills, that manage to be playful within commercial practice, what Rabionet points out is a common problem both for designers and illustrators because, for the majority, the dividing line between commissioned design/illustration and self-expression is a major problem and most of the times commercial professional practice does not offer space for creative freedom and/or play.

Pablo Navarro stated that he always tries to find an element of play in his work but acknowledges that sometimes this is very difficult to do, however, he insisted it is worth trying because this eventually shows in the final piece (Navarro, 2015). Navarro sees his commercial practice as problem solving and his self-initiated projects as expressive (2015). This is meaningful as he indicates that commercial practice does not always allow a space for self-expression (Navarro, 2015). Additionally, this is interesting in comparison to Ferrer's comments. He sees his practice both as problem-solving and expression (Ferrer, 2017). It is worth mentioning that Ferrer is also a graphic designer and as discussed in 1.1.4, he sees problem-solving as a means to self-expression. Perhaps depending on the place where one positions one's practice, one might have a different perception of problem-solving and expression (for instance, not seeing them as different or even contradictory terms) and, moreover, one might be able to see solving someone else's problems as opportunities for action. Nevertheless, professionals who perceive their practice as self-expression might have more difficulties to find flow in professional/commercial problem-solving activities. By extension, seeing play opportunities in professional practice would also be more complicated.

Both Jordi Márquez and Pere Cornellà use 'gamification' in the courses that they deliver. 'Gamification' means the use of game-based mechanics, dynamics and components (including objectives, rules, design, narrative, aesthetics, etc.) to engage people; increase motivation; enhance attention; induce creative thinking; and facilitate learning among other things. When asked about the use of play in their classes, both Márquez and Cornellà explain that even though it implies a lot of extra work in the beginning, the results are completely worthy. They both reported better students'

performance as a consequence of the use of game-based classes (Márquez, 2017; Cornellà, 2017). Alcaraz also uses play in his classes and acknowledges that play is a very useful tool for teaching, making the students feel comfortable and more motivated to learn (Alcaraz, 2017). This educational perspective is useful to help support my argument about the increase of motivation as related to play dynamics.

In the case of Navarro, Espinet, Faüchs, and Rabionet, I am able to test the play-based creative framework with them and receive their feedback. All the participants recognised the benefits of the creative framework in terms of enjoyment. Espinet, Faüchs, and Rabionet see it useful as an idea generator. Navarro, even acknowledging the possible uses of the framework for illustration practice, did not see applications for animation practice except for character design (Navarro, 2015).

4.2.2. Workshops: evaluation and comparisons

Although Hyperdream is entirely idiographic, which means that it was designed exclusively thinking of myself as a singular illustrator (and, as such, considering my particular background, culture and motivations), I wanted to test general aspects of the play-based creative framework with other people (particularly to observe their reactions towards ludic approaches to illustration) and to enable me to draw certain conclusions that might also lead to possible generalisations of the knowledge generated during this study.

The structure of the workshops that I delivered was basically as follows: I briefly introduced myself and I asked participants to do the same. Then I asked them to define what play was for them. Only in the case of the workshops delivered to illustration students/professional practitioners, I asked participants to say if they saw any connection between illustration and play. I presented the main idea of my play-based approach to illustration but in a very general way, as I did not want to condition their own experiences nor their answers to the questionnaire. Afterwards, one by one, I introduced the play-based illustration activities focusing on the mechanics of each game but avoiding interpretations of the kind of material obtained with such procedures, again, to avoid conditioning their responses. Some of the games were

collaborative whilst in other games participants had to work individually. After participants tested a number of games, I asked them to answer the questionnaire. After receiving their feedback, I opened a space to share opinions, which in many cases generated interesting discussions.

The activities of the workshops were pretested with two groups of illustration students of the University of Northampton of Year 1 and 2 during March 2014 with sessions of three to four hours each, with students of CIFOG and EU ERAM. By gathering an important number of opinions from participants, these preliminary workshops served me to adjust and improve the mechanics of a number of play-based activities (including wording of games' instructions, balance between individual and collaborative practice, timing of each exercise, etc.). Additionally, these initial tests served me to design the distribution of the tasks and the global timing. The questionnaire survey was pretested in a more extensively way with a group of drawing-for-3D students (of an average age of 19) after delivering play-based workshops during six sessions at CIFOG between November and December 2014. As Presser et al. (2004) recommend I pretested the questionnaire to detect possible problems and to evaluate the wording.

4.2.2.1. Workshops

The workshops analysed in this study were delivered between April 2015 and April 2017. Workshops lasted around three hours and were useful to test the common components of my play-based approach that can be shared with other people.

I started workshops by asking the participants what was their definition of play. Participants provided different opinions: some said that one plays in order to be free and the more one plays the freer one is; some said that play is identical to experimental learning, they also said that when they played they learnt without realising that they were learning, something which extended to materials and techniques and could be used to arrive at creative results, and some even stated that play and creativity were the same thing; others thought that play is vital to human existence and play is a necessity because human play is essential to adaptation, whereas others argued that play is breaking

with the linearity of reason, which, in turn opens the gateway to new knowledge. These responses are in agreement with some of the concepts discussed in chapter 1 and some of the perspectives provided by the interviewees because, according to them, play is: learning, freedom, inner necessity, analogue of creativity, experimentation, subversion, and self-discovery. As for the definition of play as freedom, it coincides with that of some commentators discussed in 1.2.1: play cannot be obligatory (Huizinga, 1949, p.8; Caillois, 2001b, p.10). Eugen Fink argues that the purpose of play is internal and "unrelated to anything external to itself" (1968, p.21), having the goal in itself means that play is an autotelic activity. As for the relationship between playfulness and experimentation, it is very important for Ferrer (2017), but also characterises the work of illustrators such as Ian Wright (Zeegen, 2010, p.9) and mistakes often lead him to arrive at solutions by accident (Victionary, 2007, p.210). The connection between play and new knowledge and/or self-discovery, it is also established by Jung and Breton (Jung, 1967a, par.39; Breton, 1954, cited in Brotchie and Gooding, 1995, p.137). These opinions indicate that participants intuitively, experientially and/or culturally know the main definitions of play.

When asked how they see the relationship between illustration and play, most participants responded that this is quite natural because play is very similar to any creative activity. Hence, participants thought the relationship between illustration and play is evident. The information they provided is similar to the opinions of some contemporary illustration commentators discussed in 1.2.1 and most interviewees.

Some of them mentioned that they received very enthusiastically the idea of connecting illustration and play because they had been playing videogames all their lives.

After the initial questions, I proceeded to present the play-based approach. The games I introduced in the workshops were: exquisite corpse (image and text), collaborative drawing and writing, dream cards (illustrations and narratives), drawing using an idea generator, drawings inspired by stains, sound inspired drawings. These were most of the exercises that I had been trying myself but I consciously avoided: active imagination (the exercise is

very intense and, thus, inadequate for the contexts where I delivered the workshops), exercises that are dependant on specific materials (such as the concertina sketchbook, dream transfers, black card drawings) or activities that require more time or are too complex (graphic novel, free play drawings). Thus all the essential aspects of my play-based approach to illustration practice were introduced in the workshops but as general play-based dynamics that participants could experience structured as illustration games, (including testing some exercises with and without time restriction).

During the practical part of the workshops I observed deep levels of concentration while participants were drawing or writing. In general, they worked in complete silence. Some of them smiled while they were working. In most cases, when the results of the exercises were revealed or read aloud, I observed positive emotions (such as joy, laughter, enthusiasm).

4.2.2.2. Questionnaire

Once participants finished testing the play-based activities I asked them to answer the survey.

When I asked participants if they have ever tried any similar approach to creativity, less than half of the total sample (46 per cent) claimed to have used similar creative approaches. Among those who answered that they had tried similar methods, 17 per cent of them had seen some of these techniques in previous workshops that I have delivered.

When asked to compare the use of the play-based creative framework with methods that the participants regularly use to come up with new ideas and images, many of them commented that they use 'common approaches' to deal with the brief: information research, image browsing on the Internet, mood boards or mind maps. Many participants reported on using more rational, logical or analytical methods (defining the problem or researching for previous ways of solving similar problems). They saw this ludic approach as 'different', 'useful', 'effective', 'interesting', 'better', but also 'irrational', 'random', 'spontaneous'. However they specified: "in the good sense of these words." Thus, in general, participants were very enthusiastic about this approach.

When asked if this approach helped them to arrive at new ideas and images, from the total sample of 132 participants, 127 (97 per cent) answered that this method helped them to arrive at new ideas.

An important detail is that the only negative answers came from participants who are transdisciplinary students more interested in graphic and/or multimedia design, photography, or film (not illustration students). This is relevant, because it suggests that the play-based exercises might be appropriate for illustrators and the elements of the creative framework connect with their way of thinking and, hence, illustrators perceive these games as opportunities for action or, in other words, they perceived the challenges offered by these play-based activities as fairly balanced with their skills and knowledge. However, for the same reason, it is quite surprising that the number of negative responses among those not specialised in illustration was not higher.

When asked how participants felt using this approach, some of them reported up to seven emotions. I put into the category 'Other' only those emotions reported by one or two persons.

In answering this question, many of the participants used several feelings to describe the experience, in some cases in ambiguous ways ('strange and natural'; 'strange, sceptic and motivated'; 'uncomfortable and natural').

This seems illogical but, as participants described, different exercises elicited different feelings and, therefore, these changed as the workshops evolved.

Among the participants who experienced negative emotions, many reported that at the beginning of the workshop they felt strange or uncomfortable but that those feelings vanished as the workshops progressed and/or they understood better what they had to do and/or simply accepted the uncommonness of the exercises. When they grasped the dynamics of the play-based activities, most report high levels of motivation. Additionally, these initial uncomfortable feelings could have been occasioned by not being able to respond as they might have wanted — as some participants made clear that they started enjoying once they knew what the activity was all about and when they felt 'warmed-up'.

The percentage of positive emotions (85 per cent) outnumbered that of negative emotions (12 per cent). I included with negative feelings strangeness and unnaturalness, which is not necessarily discomfort, but as in some cases they carry a negative connotation I preferred to include them in this category.

When I asked them how they experienced the passing of time, in most cases participants reported time passed faster or much faster as they were enjoying themselves. Comments such as 'Time flew' or 'Time seemed to fly' were abundant. The speeding up of time might be indicative of a state of absorption that the participants experienced and indicative of flow experiences.

Nonetheless, some participants reported ambiguous experiences such as time going slow at the beginning of the workshop and then passing faster by the end. This perception might have been caused by the phenomenon of becoming acquainted with the activities introduced in the workshops. Perhaps once participants started to grasp the mechanics of the exercises they felt more comfortable and the perception of time is altered.

When asked if they would have been able to create what they have created without the limited time frame, most of the participants responded negatively as they acknowledge a limited time frame was very important.

Some participants reported that the time frame helped to express ideas without hesitation, and that having a moment of doubt would have been an obstacle in creative the process. This comment is significant because an increasing fluidity is one of the goals of my approach.

But not everyone perceived the limited time frame so positively. A number of participants (less than 15 per cent) reported feeling uncomfortable with the time restriction and experienced it negatively.

A reduced number of participants reported that the limited time frame (and, thus, not having enough time to render the drawings as they would have wanted); collaborating with others; or working with music that was not chosen by them, manifested mild levels of discomfort. However, in most of these cases, participants reported they experienced these feelings only at the beginning of the workshops; but, as they became acquainted with the play-based dynamics, with their classmates or with the environment in general, these sensations faded away as the carried on working. In exceptional cases,

participants commented that these feelings lasted during the whole workshop (3 participants from 132).

When asked if they would have been able to create what they had created without the use of the techniques and tools of this approach, most participants responded negatively, accepting that the exercises provided them with external provocations that, in turn, they connected to inner images.

Of course, as some participants reflected, the material would have been different. Some reported that without the provocation of the activities (limited time, random subjects, respecting the rules of the particular activity) they would have repeated their usual creative processes and motifs. However, many acknowledged that the external conditions were central for the creation of those ideas, sketches or texts. For some participants the techniques were key to produce the kind of material they made during the workshop. And even those participants who answered within the 'Maybe' spectrum explained that although they would have been able to produce similar material without the use of the play-based exercises, the results would not have been as interesting and unique; and some stated that even the kind of material they might have been able to make on their own would have been more detailed and meaningful for them, with the use of the ludic creative framework they produced material that is vague but opened to further work. This last comment is meaningful as some participants reported negative feelings about sketchy or unfinished material. However, some recognised the positive aspect of being able to express the ideas with the possibility of finishing them in the future.

When asked if employing the techniques and limited time frame of the exercises led them to produce more or less work than usual, most participants reported affirmatively (79 per cent). Apparently, the limited time frame was important, but what was crucial, as some of them acknowledged, was having clear goals and challenges that, in turn, provided them with opportunities to release their creative potential.

In reply to questions about their perceptions of the work they produced in response to the use of the creative framework, almost 50 per cent of the participants perceived their work as more imaginative (36 per cent) or better

(13 per cent) and some regarded the work as 'different' (27 per cent). Generally, 'different' was reported as a positive aspect and they associated it with leaving their comfort zone. Nevertheless, a number of participants did not specify if 'different' was positive or negative; and a very reduced number used 'different' in a negative sense. For many participants, the results of sketching very quickly were not usually perceived as better; some saw the work they produced as 'similar' to the one they usually do (11 per cent) or were uncertain about it (2 per cent). And some regarded it as 'worse' (5 per cent) or 'less imaginative' (1 per cent). However, the number of participants who perceived their work as better was much higher than those who perceived it to be worse.

When asked how they would label the work they have created, participants provided a number of adjectives. In some cases, they used up to ten words to label the work they produced. One participant used the following terms to label his work: surrealist, intense, tremendous, absurd, entertaining, non-reflexive, nonsensical and lunatic. Although he made clear that, for him, almost contradictorily, the results were "cool and nice". Summarising, the most used words to define the work were 'surrealist', 'funny' and 'unusual' followed by 'unusual' and 'fantastic'.

I also asked participants if they could think about possible uses for the material they have produced to support their professional interests, but in this case I divided the information provided in the answers in three blocks. Firstly, as 'Yes', 'Maybe' and 'No' and; secondly, I grouped it according to the dominant particular uses that students identified for the creative material that they produced .

A significant number of participants (91 per cent) reported they saw a practical use for the material they produced using the creative framework. They commented that the workshops helped them to articulate a number of ideas and were useful to motivate them to continue creative projects that they had abandoned. I interpret that the sorts of ludic creative exercises facilitated in the workshops reminded them of similar states of mind that they have lived in previous artistic endeavours and hence they wanted to repeat the experience returning to their own projects. Accordingly, other participants reported that

they found the subject very interesting and that the exercises inspired them to develop them further and to create new experimental things.

However, there were significant variations between groups as related to how they would see the work they produced as useful.

Whereas most participants seemed to consider the material they produced as ideas to be developed further, but narrative, self-initiated projects, and professional work were other uses they could think of, participants of Group 2 did not see a clear use for the material made using the play-based creative framework. Thus, the pattern that emerged is that participants (with the exception of Group 2) saw the framework activities as useful for idea generation.

As I mentioned in 2.2.3, this research has no explicit educational objectives. Therefore, I am not focusing on learning processes. Nevertheless, considering the pedagogical implications of the workshops (most of the participants were students, the workshops were delivered in learning institutional contexts, and some of the play dynamics demonstrated to be useful for teaching image making and visual storytelling), I think it is necessary to reflect on a couple of points. The participants' positive reception could be attributed to a natural predisposition to visual learning. This could be inferred by a characteristic shared by almost all participants: they have to be interested in images to operate in illustration, film, graphic and multimedia design, photography, 2D and 3D animation — even those students of the multidisciplinary programme interested in script or sound design need to work with images (film, photographs, animation). Additionally, using the same logic, these participants might have a tendency to learn practically. Hence, it could be argued that all participants share a visual/practical learning style. However, although I accept this would be a plausible explanation for the positive reception of the workshops, as the sample was quite heterogeneous, I will not presume that the general results were positive as a consequence of the particular learning or thinking style of the participants. There are two reasons for my stand. Firstly, although it can be inferred that students who study visual arts are probably visual and/or practical learners, concerning the workshops' participants, I cannot be certain of this assumption, simply because I do not

have at my disposal information that proves they could be categorised as such (e.g. psychological or cognitive tests). Secondly, even if most participants coincided with that learning style classification, I cannot be sure that their positive responses to the play-based approach were a consequence of them being visual/practical learners/thinkers. Additionally, learning styles have been challenged by a number of education experts, as there is no credible evidence to support them in pedagogical decision-making (Coffield et al., 2004a, 2004b; Scott, 2010; Coffield, 2012). Therefore, I am more inclined to attribute the positive responses to the ludic approach to what Paul Rand calls "the play instinct" something he defines as "the instinct for order," which is structured through the rules that make the game possible and create the state of tension that governs play (Rand, as cited in Heller, 1998, p.9). Rand argues problems with undefined limits lead to indifferent students and meaningless solutions, whereas problems with defined limits are conducive to "the instinct of play" and increase students' attention, leading very often to meaningful and novel solutions (Rand, 1985, p.189). I think the reason why students experienced the workshops positively was because the experiences where designed using Csikszentmihalyi's theory. A number of challenges where thought in a way that goals were attainable (not unattainable, which would have left participants a feeling of frustration) and in balance with perceived skills. Thus, one possible explanation for positive responses of the participants to the play-based creative framework tested in the workshops is that the games that compose this ludic approach are designed to produce flow experiences: goals are clear, feedback is immediate, skills match challenges, control is possible, they require deep levels of concentration, which, in turn, allow for the disappearance of self-consciousness, forgetting problems, and an alteration of time perception, and, finally, the activity becomes autotelic. Nevertheless, I think the key is in the balance between skills and challenges or, using Caillois' arrangement, the balance between 'ludus' and 'paidia' (2001b, p.13), beyond the structure of clear goals, rules and restrictions (such as limited time or subject matter), activities are designed to provide flexibility (or enough space to be themselves). John Dewey argues, "harmony of mental playfulness and seriousness describes the artistic ideal" (1933, p.220). I attribute the general enthusiasm manifested

by participants to the equilibrium between rules and freedom because the play-based activities that I designed present challenges that can be subjectively regulated to match personal skills. Therefore, participants experienced illustration structured as a playful activity and responded accordingly engaging in activities that allowed them to demonstrate their abilities at the same time they enjoyed with the activity at hand. By the end of the workshops participants were able to contemplate their production, thus confirming that the experiences were not just exhilarating but they left behind images and stories that they could develop further. Jane McGonigal argues evident results are satisfying because they reflect a positive sense of one's own capabilities. When one sees what one has achieved one builds a sense of self-esteem (2011, p.57). According to a significant number of opinions recorded in the questionnaires and in my field notes, many participants reported a feeling of proudness as a consequence of the material they had produced. Some of those who shared their experiences were appreciably moved by the fact of having produced something that was perceived as "new, different, strange, surreal." Thus, it seems that the exercises served to increase enjoyment but also their motivation to produce a number of works that they generally acknowledged as different from their usual production and hence increased creative apperception. I attribute this phenomenon to a meticulous work of design aimed at finding the right balance between rules and freedom that took me years to develop and which is the result of many trials and errors in my own practice and numerous tests in previous workshops (as I explain at the beginning of this subsection).

4.3 Comparisons of points of views

Consistent with the design discussed in 2.1.2, in the following subsections I present a comparison between the internal data sources (my studio practice and research journals) and the external sources of information (interviews and workshops).

4.3.1. My ideas and interviews

When I decided to carry out this research I thought that my idea of connecting illustration and play was rather original, as I had not found any literature establishing the link between these two fields. As I mentioned in 2.2.2, the reason why I decided to interview a number of professional practitioners was precisely to gather information that I had not yet found in the literature. I would not have guessed that most of the professional practitioners I chose to interview would see an obvious link between illustration and play. The comparison between my own perceptions and those of commentators enriched my understanding of this relationship and my knowledge on the subject has been considerably altered since the beginning of the investigation. Mainly because I became more informed as the study progressed. I agree with interviewees who see play as an analogue to creative practice and I share that it is important to try to play because this ludic attitude eventually shows on the surface of the work. However, according to my professional experience, I am with practitioners who think that it is very difficult (almost impossible) to apply play to commercial practice (due to the excess of limits), whereas I think it is very plausible to use it as a valid creative method in self-motivated and/or authorial practice and within a pedagogical context. Mainly because self-motivated and autotelic projects are initially unproductive. Nevertheless, creative processes such as the one followed by Ferrer to produce *Un Jardin* (Ferrer and Ferrada, 2016) demonstrate that playful self-initiated authorial projects can transform into commercial products.

However the most important difference from my approach that I detected is that, even all interviewees see a rather obvious relationship between creative practice and play, none of them mentioned using a play-based creative framework that includes games to produce work. Therefore, I think the worth of my ludic approach is precisely that it goes beyond the conceptual understanding of play as an analogue to professional creative practice and proposes a number of activities structured as games to produce illustrations and stories, which I have tested extensively. As I have discussed in 4.1.2 and 4.1.3, this has both procedural and theoretical implications in terms of knowledge, as I am able to communicate both the steps that are needed to

produce certain results and the theoretical and psychological repercussions of using a play-based approach.

4.3.2. Studio-practice and workshops

Comparing participants' descriptions with my own reflections on practice throughout the investigation was useful to reconsider essential aspects that I might have overlooked due to my familiarity using the play-based creative framework.

Most participants indicated high levels of intrinsic motivation and creative apperception due to the negentropic aspects of the play-based creative approach. These descriptions are in agreement with my own comments while testing Hyperdream.

The substantial participants' production could be compared with mine. As I described in 4.1.1, this is very similar to my own experience. Inhibiting directed thinking seems to be the reason for this phenomenon, which, in turn, allows for the emergence of material that bypasses the excessive concern for technical aspects that could be associated with egoic identification with certain particular type of production (such as very detailed rendering or the repetition of certain familiar motifs). It seems that in the attempt to play respecting the rules, which involve limited time, liberates from the self-judgemental aspects that usually block one from producing material that would usually be discarded due to its unusual, accidental, sloppy, or simply strange characteristics.

Many participants acknowledged the eudemonic aspects of play as they manifested feelings of enjoyment and enthusiasm. These reports fit with flow descriptions. In some cases, participants reported astonishment due to the contact with unknown aspects of themselves. I attribute this phenomenon to the contact with psychic material that was perceived as strange but recognised as inspirational.

Nevertheless, beyond the general feeling of enjoyment and motivation participants reported of the workshop experience, probably the most relevant information extracted from them concerns the issue of how to relate the exercises produced or the approaches of the creative framework to actual

problem solving in professional commercial illustration practice. Many participants were aware of the existing difference between clients' needs and self-expression and some manifested seeing difficulties at relating the methods contained in the play-based creative framework to solve 'real' problems (and, in very few cases, also to connect them to their own interests). Even though the number of participants who reported this concern was quite reduced considering the total sample, it is a very relevant question. I am sensitive to this concern as I myself doubted about how to apply the play-based approach to regular problem solving projects at the beginning of this study. However, the goal of the creative framework is not to provide an answer to that question, if that were the case, it would not be a complement to existing methods (as it is) but a substitute. And, according to my experience, existing problem solving methods (creative techniques) work quite well for client-oriented practice. Nevertheless, this approach could be integrated to the divergent stages of regular problem solving approaches.

As this study evolved I realised that the play-based approach is particularly useful for the initial stage of self-motivated and authorial practice and specifically to generate visual ideas and narratives that could be developed further using traditional illustration methods. For that reason, perhaps the most important aspect of the information gathered through workshops and participants' opinions has to do with the usability of the practical knowledge generated, which is a key characteristic of ABR (Leavy, 2018, pp.579-580). Workshops proved that certain general elements of the procedural and theoretical knowledge generated in my own studio practice (specifically, play mechanics and the associated motivational aspects) can be shared with other practitioners and, for instance, implemented in illustration education either through workshops and/or in the ideation phase of creative problem-solving exercises or assignments (particularly those related to fantasy and/or self-initiated projects).

Summary

After testing the play-based creative framework to produce illustration artwork, I gathered evidence to reflect about my practice using qualitative approaches.

This evidence has been useful to establish a number of conclusions and, more importantly, to detect certain patterns that allow me to: 1) understand better my own creative processes; 2) articulate my thinking processes; 3) analyse my own artistic work; 4) develop strategies that enable me to effectively integrate play in my creative process and; 5) through the use of reflective practice, improve the design of the creative framework.

What might explain the considerable amount of work produced with the creative framework is a momentary suspension of directed thinking, which allows connecting with fantasy. Eventually, this translates into a desire to repeat the play experience, which, in turn, allows generating more work.

About the intrinsic motivational aspects of my practice I detect three constant patterns that drive me to repeat the experiences: enjoyment, unpredictability and self-knowledge.

In order to integrate play in illustration creative practice, one needs to search for subject matters that motivate one deeply and to structure the activities as negentropic. A number of considerations have to be kept in mind in order to avoid entropy: rules have to be established beforehand; game rules have to be accepted; there has to be a balance between order and freedom ("ludus" and "paidia").

The aims and goals of my play-based approach to illustration practice can be summarised as: to structure experience by generating negentropic ludic conditions; to induce eudemonia by providing opportunities for action (that enable to test perceived skills with challenges defined at the level of one's potential); to use designed experiences that produce flow to compensate for the reduction of extrinsic motivational factors; to increase intrinsic motivation by the use of activities that provoke enjoyment, unpredictability and self-knowledge; to intensify creative apperception (through fantasy and associative thinking); to enhance imagination utilising a play-based approach for self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration practice; to reduce the levels of hesitation that inhibit initiating projects.

All the interviewees saw a strong relationship between their practice and play. Most practitioners agreed that play is a lot easier to incorporate in self-motivated projects. However, there are important variations among

participants' answers about the way in which play can be incorporated to professional (commercial) practice. In some cases practitioners see creative practice as a game and manage to be playful in commercial assignments, whereas others think it is very difficult to integrate work and play. The main difference between my approach and those of interviewees is that I structure certain creative activities as games. This means that my play-based approach implies going beyond the mere conceptual aspects of creative practice regarded as play and presents illustration activities as games considering important aspects such as flow or negentropy to induce intrinsic motivation.

In the workshops that I delivered, with near unanimity, respondents thought the connection between play and illustration is evident and reported experiences that can be associated with flow: time passing fast, merging with the activities at hand, reaching high levels of concentration. Most of the participants reported perceiving benefits in the use of the play-based creative framework as an idea generator and some saw possible applications in self-motivated projects and some of them even in professional practice. Considering I tested the play-based creative framework with students from different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds, the data collected coincides with Csikszentmihalyi's report that the flow experience is shared across ages, genders, and cultures (Csikszentmihalyi's, 1993, p.177; 1996, pp.109-110).

A major percentage of the participants of the workshops were very positive about reinforcing the relationship between illustration and play. This is important as it demonstrates that the play-based activities that compose my creative framework provide enjoyment not just for me but also for others. As the test was also performed with students of a multidisciplinary programme, it expands the possibilities of generalisation of its use in other fields such as graphic communication classes.

Interviews and workshops were very useful as they served as a type of early dissemination trial that allowed me to share information but also to receive feedback from participants.

The comparison between the types of knowledge generated through my studio practice and the reflections gathered in my research journals with the opinions of professional practitioners and the participants of workshops

helped me to articulate the propositional and explicit knowledge of my study.

Presenting the conclusions of my investigation, in the final chapter, I will identify the contributions of my study to new knowledge; I will discuss the research outcomes and the relevance of my research as related to the field of illustration; I will point out some possibilities of generalisation of knowledge; and I will indicate some paths for further research.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Hyperdream in relation to research objectives

This thesis analysed the development of an entirely idiographic play-based creative framework for idea generation in self-motivated fantasy authorial illustration practice aimed at producing autotelic experiences that I named Hyperdream. The aim of this practice-led investigation was to explore the possible different directions in which Hyperdream could be developed further and to assess how utilising it could change my illustration practice over time and, most importantly, to observe variations in my levels of intrinsic motivation derived from its use. My hypothesis was that if Hyperdream was effective as an autotelic illustration approach, my levels of motivation would remain high and I would keep on employing it to produce new illustrations. Thus, to determine the viability of play-based approaches to illustration I tested them out extensively in my own studio practice and with participants in the workshops that I delivered, this was the practice-led aspect of the research. Additionally, one of the goals of this study was to investigate the connection between play and the wider field of illustration as outlined in the literature review but, considering the scarcity of specific material on the subject, I needed to conduct interviews with professional practitioners. As a consequence, this research provided me with new concepts that might add to the discussion of the importance of play as related to contemporary illustration both in theory and in praxis. To determine if the findings are consistent with the initial goals and to identify the contributions to knowledge of this study it is necessary to refer to the list of objectives presented in the introductory chapter.

The first objective of this investigation was:

> To research the relationship between play and illustration by collecting and analysing data on the current context of contemporary illustration; on play as related to culture; and on previous play-inspired artistic movements or individuals in order to situate my practice-led research and to argue the importance of play and games in motivating authorial illustration practice with reference to the practical proposal 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game'.

In chapter 1 I provided information about the current context of the field of illustration and I established a relationship between illustration and play by

discussing the increasing attention illustration commentators are starting to pay to the concept of play. This contextual review was beneficial to understand the field's paradigm shift, which is enabling new approaches to contemporary illustration practice and the emergence of the concept of play, and might be significant for self-initiated and/or authorial projects.

The second objective of this study was:

> To test out the potential of the particular motivational components of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework for idea generation in fantasy authorial illustration in my own practice by creating a body of practical work based on the research and, through developing the concept of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework, introduce a practical proposal 'Hyperdream: An Oneiric Illustration Game' as part of my practice-led research.

In chapter 3 I discussed how I tested out the particular motivational components of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework, which reinforced the relationship between illustration and play in my studio practice. These components were developed and supported through the theoretical and practical research conducted in this investigation. The research methodology proved to be adequate to gather the type of data I was interested in. Studio practice provided the means for me to test out the potential of the particular motivational components of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework for idea generation in fantasy authorial illustration in my own practice by creating a body of practical work based on the research. The artefacts made using this ludic approach to illustration served me to provide information as a basis for analysis and to present evidence of the practical exploration that took place in the studio, to reflect-in and on practice, and to discuss the aspects of procedural knowledge associated with praxis. As for experiential knowledge, psychological phenomenology allowed me to describe, analyse and understand my own subjective experiences while I tested out Hyperdream and autoethnography enabled me to express and detect emotional aspects associated with my professional practice and, thus, to link my personal experience or *mystory* as an illustrator with the wider field of illustration. The theoretical framework was effective to describe and reflect on my findings. Csikszentmihalyi's model of flow helped me to articulate my own

ideas in relation to concepts such as intrinsic motivation, to determine if the play experiences were autotelic, and to detect problems associated with psychic entropy in some of the games I designed. The importance Jung grants to the relationship between creativity and the unconscious and how he sees fantasy and play as a profound inner necessity that allows maintaining the equilibrium between conscious and unconscious were very helpful to understand the flow of psychic energy that surrounds the symbol in the deepest levels of my fantasy illustration practice. The iteration between studio practice and the reflection on the concepts provided by the theoretical framework was essential to understand and explain many play-based creative processes considering the psychological implications of this ludic approach to illustration practice, which before conducting this study were either embodied and/or tacit. Both the production of artefacts and the exegesis enabled me to articulate part of this embodied, tacit, implicit, experiential and procedural knowledge using written language and, thus, to translate it into propositional and explicit knowledge. In addition, some of the material created in the studio allowed me to share part of the knowledge generated through this investigation by holding a solo exhibition, participating in some collective exhibitions, and making videos that I shared in different digital platforms, such as Vimeo or Blogger[15] (I discuss this in more detail in "Dissemination of new knowledge").

The third objective of this research was:

> To test out the general motivational components of the play-based creative framework with students with whom the play-based techniques for idea generation will be tested in workshops and then reflected on in questionnaires.

I introduced workshops as part of the testing process with a sample of 132 participants. One of the initial hypotheses of this investigation was whether the play-based creative framework could work for other practitioners as well as myself and, hence, I aimed to discover how widely applicable it might be. The information gathered through workshops and questionnaires demonstrated that most participants reported conceiving numerous ideas and experiencing high levels of enthusiasm through the play-based activities.

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15 Visit: https://vimeo.com/carlosruizbrussain: https://vimeo.com/208995627 https://vimeo.com/240690653
http://carlosruizbrussain.blogspot.com/ http://hyperdreamcfw.blogspot.com/

Some participants saw possible applications in self-motivated projects and some of them even in professional commercial practice. Nevertheless, as discussed in 4.2.2.2 and 4.3.2, not everyone experienced the use of the ludic approach as an enjoyable experience. Some participants even reported negative emotions derived from its use.

Collecting feedback from participants was useful to detect conceptual and practical areas that could be refined and to articulate better the narrative of my investigation. Additionally, participants posed interesting questions about the practicality of the ludic activities as related to commercial professional practice that helped me to improve the theoretical aspects of my approach and to define the specific use of the play-based creative framework exclusively to self-initiated projects. Furthermore, participants' opinions and descriptions were valuable to reinforce the context and relevance of my practice and supported the aim that this theory/model might contribute to a new understanding of illustration: autotelic authorial illustration.

Workshops and surveys were appropriate data collection methods that allowed me to gather specific information. The fact that some of the workshops were delivered to groups that tested the ludic approach to illustration practice on repeated occasions allowed for some consolidation of the initial findings.

The fourth objective of this study was:

> To collect and analyse information on the viewpoints of professional illustrators through interviews regarding the idea of connecting play with illustration in order to assess the context and relevance of my practice.

I conducted interviews to collect information on the viewpoints of professional practitioners about ludic approaches to creative practice (discussed in 4.2.1 and 4.3.1). This data source was of great importance considering the research about the relationship between illustration and play is almost non-existent (as explained in the introductory chapter). Consequently, the evidence collected in the interviews, expanded the information gathered in the literature review. The fact that all the interviewees were able to see their artistic practice as play helped verify the connection between play and illustration. However, coinciding with my own experience as a professional

illustrator, most practitioners agreed that play is a lot easier to incorporate into self-motivated projects than in commissioned ones. Thus, it is worth mentioning that almost all practitioners admitted that ludic approaches to illustration were difficult (if not impossible) to incorporate in commercial work due to the tightness of commissions (clearly defined objectives, limited timeframes, and reduced budgets). As a data collection method, interviews helped me to contrast my own points of view with those of other professionals and, thus, to reduce bias.

The outcome of this investigation (studio praxis, interviews and workshops' surveys) indicates that play can be used as a viable creative approach in illustration practice. In my own case, during the period in which I tested the play-based creative framework my levels of motivation remained high and I produced a considerable number of works that include new motifs and narratives. Hence, the main hypotheses of this thesis, that a relationship between illustration and play exists and that the practical use of ludic methods to generate ideas and illustrations is effective, was demonstrated in this study in theory and in practice by considering the cultural, psychological and pragmatic implications of such a creative strategy.

Contributions to new knowledge

There are two contributions to new knowledge that have arisen from this investigation into the link between illustration and play:

1) Providing and testing a model for studying the relationship between illustration and play in theory and praxis in a scholarly way.

This connection has not been addressed before in scholarly illustration research. As I discussed in the introductory chapter and in 1.2.2, the relationship between play and art has a strong and rather long tradition but only in the last few years has it begun to be linked to illustration practice (as I discussed in 1.2.3). I attribute this gap in knowledge to the fact that for more than 150 years, for the most part, illustration had mainly a commercial function and this might explain why the field was generally regarded as a client-oriented applied-art form. Therefore, at a theoretical level, the main contribution of this investigation is the analysis of play in relation to illustration

by providing contextual, theoretical and historical references that situate this phenomenon. The current crisis of the field provoked by the explosion of new technologies, is enabling the emergence of new paradigms, which might explain the appearance of play in contemporary illustration. The data gathered in the course of this investigation suggests that until this technological and cultural shift, play — with its subversive, materially unproductive and non-functional characteristics — had been neglected in illustration's commercial model. Illustrators recognise the aesthetic legacy of play-inspired artistic movements or individuals (such as Surrealists) but not their ludic ways of producing artwork. However, now that illustrators dedicate more time to self-initiated and authorial practice, play as a creative method is finding a positive reception among commentators and practitioners. Interviews indicated that other professionals already perceive creative practice as play and some of them even use ludic approaches to produce illustrations, and workshops were useful to observe participants' predisposition to establish a relationship between illustration and play. Nevertheless, studio-practice was essential to investigate, test out and reflect upon this connection on a practical level as it enabled me to develop and understand the potential of the particular motivational components of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework for idea generation in my own practice by creating a body of practical work based on the research: a number of single-image illustrations and the plot and preliminary visual ideas to develop further a graphic novel. The pragmatic aspect of this investigation is precisely what allowed me to have access to psychological data that eventually reinforced the main hypothesis of this study: play is a source of intrinsic motivation that can compensate for the decrease of external motivational factors in illustration and provide subject matter that reinforce the illustrator's individual voice in authorial practice. Furthermore, this ludic approach served me to make a significant number of artefacts in the studio and hence to build knowledge on how to create stories in innovative ways, which can be applied to visual narrative projects, such as comics, graphic novels, etc., but also to single-image illustrations and therefore may be a useful approach for illustrators who want to initiate projects working without a brief or write their own stories based on subject matter that motivates them deeply. Hence, this practical and procedural

contribution to new knowledge may be very important as it can be used by other practitioners and students who want to test out play-based approaches to illustration practice. This is consistent with one of the distinctive characteristics of ABR, which is the usefulness of knowledge (Leavy, 2018, pp.579-580).

2) Establishing the importance of intrinsic motivation in self-initiated illustration practice.

This study used a psychological theoretical framework to explain psychic phenomena related to the types of motivation involved in illustration practice. Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow (including the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, psychic negentropy and entropy) was particularly helpful in understanding motivational aspects related to my creative processes in self-initiated authorial illustration. As explained in 1.3.1 and in 4.1.2, Csikszentmihalyi argues that the natural state of the mind is chaotic, not ordered (1993, p.32). Thus, as I argued in 1.3.1 and in 4.2.2.1, experiences need to be designed to produce flow in self-initiated illustration practice. As discussed in the introductory chapter, in 1.1.6 and 1.1.7, this suggests that — as compared to structured work in the commercial model — self-initiated and authorial projects require more effort on the side of the illustrator because keeping higher levels of intrinsic motivation to find one's own voice and designing durable illustration projects that resist withdrawal is clearly more challenging than working on commissioned projects. This also implies that practitioners ought to structure experiences according to their own needs and particular interests to find subject matter that allow exploration of those projects to continue. As discussed in 3.1 and 4.3.1, the passage from commercial to self-initiated practice involves a shift in motivation (from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation) but, more importantly, it requires a different understanding of illustration, one in which the discipline is regarded as autotelic. The experiential knowledge that emerged from my own subjective experiences playing/working in the studio and that I articulated and made explicit in this exegesis might be useful to fellow illustrators who are considering the possibility of starting ludic self-initiated and/or authorial projects as it might facilitate the understanding of psychic phenomena such as

flow, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which, in turn, can have effects on the quality of the experiences associated with these particular types of illustration practice. Moreover, the implications of flow, negentropy and the motivational aspects discussed in this study may have relevant practical aspects for illustrators, as this understanding can help them either to continue or abandon self-initiated projects (which, as discussed in 1.1.6, is quite common in these types of project).

Dissemination of knowledge

Below I mention a number of activities that enabled me to disseminate my research as the study progressed:

1. A solo exhibition *Hyperdream: A Play-based Creative Framework for Illustration Practice* between February 15-18, 2016 at the Avenue Gallery of the University of Northampton in which I showed some of the artefacts made during the first two years of my investigation (see Appendix #1.1). This exhibition was useful for observing the reaction of viewers to my ludic creative process and to collect comments on their impressions. Most visitors left positive feedback on the artworks and were quite enthusiastic about my play-based approach to illustration practice (see Appendix #1.2).

2. Conference papers: "Hypersurreal: A conceptual-creative frame for Illustration Practice" (University of Northampton, September 19, 2014), "Hyperdream: A Creative Framework for Illustration Practice" (University of Northampton, September 16, 2015), "Hyperdream: A Play-based Creative Framework for Fantasy Authorial Illustration Practice" (University of Northampton, September 16, 2016) and "Increasing motivation, innovation and engagement with play-based approaches to fantasy authorial illustration" (University of Northampton, June 23, 2017); "Within the Hyperdream Magic Circle: Manifesting the Unconscious through play and illustration games" (Ruiz Brussain, 2019) in which I explained the key characteristics of the play-based creative framework, presented at the conference "Trans-States: The Art of Crossing Over" (University of Northampton, September 9, 2016

— eventually published by FULGUR. See McLaughlin, 2019); "Nailing The Snake: Dealing with the elusiveness of liminal experiences in self-transformative creative practice and research", in which I explained methodological aspects of my practice-led doctoral research, was presented at the symposium and launch of the academic journal "Monad" (University of Northampton, November 8, 2017); "Embracing the Dark Twin" in which I discussed certain aspects of my play-based creative framework that allow me to manifest my shadow using artistic practice, and, together with Gemma Rabionet, "Finding Rebis: Using Collaborative Practice to Gestate a 'Third Mind'" in which we talked about play-based approaches to artistic collaborative practice, both presented at the conference "Trans-States: The Art of Revelation" (University of Northampton, September 13-14, 2019); "Ludic enquiry: Play-based methods applied to practice-based/led artistic research" where I explained key aspects of my practice-led research and I suggested the use of play as a type of method that can be useful in artistic practice-based/led research, delivered at Indisciplines: Conference on Research in Arts Practice (University of Barcelona, November 28, 2019).

3. Poster presentation: "Increasing motivation, innovation and engagement with play-based approaches to fantasy authorial illustration" (University of Northampton, June 23, 2017).

4. Exhibiting some of the artwork produced using the play-based creative framework at the group shows "Trans-States: The Art of Crossing Over" (Gant, 2016), "Monad" (Wallace, 2017) and, in collaboration with Gemma Rabionet, "Trans-States: The Art of Revelation" (Palmer, 2019).

5. Delivering two presentations at the University of Girona in which I explained possible educational uses of the Hyperdream play-based creative framework to fellow lecturers from the Teaching Innovation Network: "Play and Learning" (March 18, 2015 and January 11, 2016) and the talk "Hyperdream: Finding The Daemonic in the Playful" in the context of the mini symposium "Artists and aetheric art" (Gard, May 16, 2018).

6. Delivering 15 workshops in Britain and in Spain (between October 2014 and April 2017).

7. Starting two collaborative projects that use both the theoretical and practical knowledge gathered with this study: one called R.B. Dharma, with Gemma Rabionet; and the other with Gemma Rabionet and Dr Peter Duchemin (a6rax1s).[16] At the moment, together with Dr Peter Duchemin and Gemma Rabionet Boadella we are planning two group exhibitions, one in Hong Kong and one in Catalonia in which we plan to discuss subjects such as transformative practice using collaborative play-based activities. Additionally, also collaboratively, we are writing a paper that discusses the implications of this particular type of practice.

Possible generalisation of knowledge

Although the development and exploration of Hyperdream was entirely an idiographic exercise, as workshops demonstrated, some aspects of the play-based activities can be shared and, thus, categorised as nomothetic.

As discussed in "Contributions to new knowledge", both the propositional and practical/procedural knowledge gathered through this investigation can be useful for other illustration practitioners (either beginners or professional illustrators) who are interested in self-initiated and/or authorial approaches and also for those interested in discovering their own subject matter. Moreover, the concepts of flow, intrinsic motivation and negentropy may be useful for illustrators who want to embark on long and complex self-initiated and/or authorial projects.

In addition, although the type of motivation involved in social media is mainly extrinsic, whereas my ludic approach was designed to enhance intrinsic motivation (as discussed in 1.1.5), the essential aspects of my play-based approach (game mechanics, intrinsic rewards, etc.) can be combined with existing digital platforms such as Instagram, Patreon, Kickstarter. For instance, similar ludic approaches could be adopted and customised by illustrators and artists according to their own interests in order to produce

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[16] Visit: https://www.instagram.com/a6rax1s/?hl=es and https://www.facebook.com/watch/abrax1s/

material that could be eventually posted in social networks (either to share their works, promote themselves or receive funding). A good example of this integration between this ludic approach to illustration practice and the use of social media such as Instagram or Blogger is the collaborative project RB Dharma that I started with Gemma Rabionet Boadella. After making a significant number of artefacts, we started posting them in Blogger and Instagram.[17] Thus, at the moment of sharing our work the project was developed enough and hence we are not concerned with the alienating aspects of social media, such as having more or less followers or likes (also discussed in 1.1.5).

As for other possible uses of the knowledge generated through this investigation, the information collected through my research indicates that the levels of motivation of the subjects who tried Hyperdream were augmented with the use of the play-based activities and, thus, their levels of engagement and creative apperception increased as well. Even though my study was focused on authorial illustration, the knowledge that emerged from it might in future be useful for testing play-based models as an approach to idea generation both in illustration practice and in illustration pedagogy. Furthermore, by trying this method with students who are more interested in other disciplines (graphic design, photography, media, etc.) than in illustration, I observed that general aspects of the play-based creative framework could be used for idea generation workshops in other fields. Although the students' main interest was not illustration, the data collected from a sample of 95 participants demonstrated their enthusiasm for the creative benefits of this method. Therefore, both the practical/procedural and propositional knowledge generated through this investigation may have pedagogical uses as these play-based idea generation dynamics could be applied to other creative and educational contexts.

Further research

This study has not addressed the subject of the differences of the typology of the players (e.g. Bartle's taxonomy of player types), which argues that every

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[17] Visit: https://arebedharma.blogspot.com/ and https://www.instagram.com/r.b.dharma/?hl=es

person would behave differently when playing and hence can be classified as a particular type. Thus, considering illustrators have different personalities, each illustrator must be a distinct type of player. I present an approach that uses play as a drive for fantasy authorial illustration based on my own interests and psychological typology (introverted intuitive — using a Jungian approach), but there might be numerous ways in which other illustrators would find flow in their creative practice by setting challenges that are at the level of their skillsets. This difference should manifest not only in the type of player s/he is (for example, being introverted or extroverted or having a different cultural background or being a digital native), but would also identify the type of particular games (and themes) the illustrator would favour and, therefore, feel motivated by. Further study on the relationship between illustrators and play as related to typologies, outside the scope of this project, could provide relevant information about this subject.

In 1.3.2, 1.3.2.1, and 3.1 I explained the differences between directed and fantasy thinking but, out of consideration of length, this study does not concentrate upon the particular subject of the thinking modes involved in illustration practice. As I discussed in 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.3.2, fantasy thinking might be very relevant to illustrators who want to explore self-initiated and/or authorial practice. Considering design studies includes extensive literature on design thinking — mainly based on Guilford's (1967) convergent and divergent production abilities (discussed in 1.1.4) —, it would be beneficial for illustration researchers to rigorously explore the implications of the thinking processes used in commercial, authorial and self-motivated illustration practice.

Further investigation into these lines of enquiry is recommended as it might contribute to the developing of new paths of illustration research, which, in turn, might expand the reflection and discussion within the field. The aim of this thesis was to explore new avenues of scrutiny of personal and ludic creative approaches to practice in order to expand the current discourse of illustration. Beyond my personal satisfaction with the results of this study, considering the immense ramifications the connection between illustration and

play sets in motion, I think more theoretical and practical examination of this subject would benefit the whole field.

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Abstract: The Art of Design (2017b) *Tinker Hatfield: Footwear Design Episode 2.* [TV] Los Gatos: Netflix, 10th February

Drew: The Man Behind the Poster (2013) Directed by Erik Sharkey. [DVD] [s.l.] Torino Pictures, Hefty, Sharkey Productions, Kino Lorber

APPENDIX #1 - EXHIBITION

1 - Exhibition Catalogue
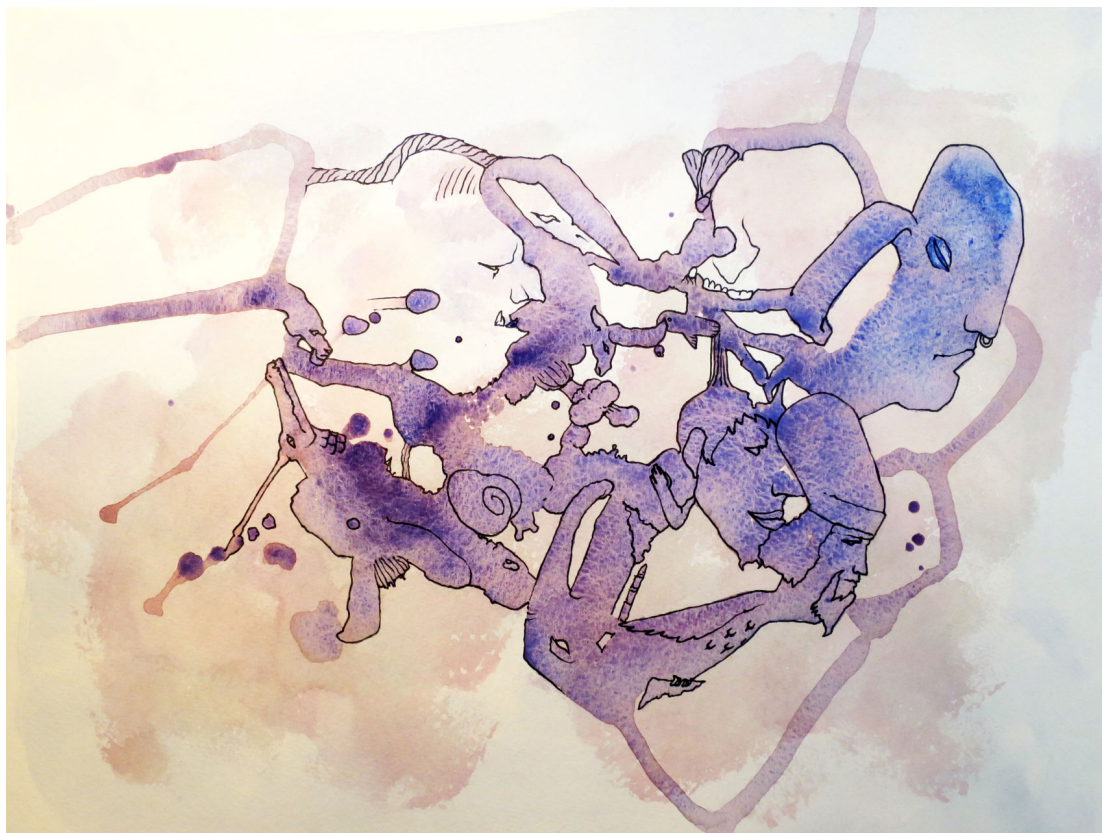
Hyperdream: a Play-based Creative Framework for Illustration Practice

An exhibition by Carlos Ruiz Brussain

Avenue Gallery

The University of Northampton

St. George's Avenue

Northampton NN2 6JD

15-18 February 2016

Monday-Thursday, 10am-4pm

Tel: 01604 893050   Email: gallery@northampton.ac.uk

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHAMPTON
School of The Arts

Carlos Ruiz Brussain

Hyperdream: A Play-based Creative Framework for Illustration Practice

Avenue Gallery

15-18 February 2016

Statement

This exhibition shows part of the creative process followed in the first two years of my PhD. It showcases a selection of sketches, collages, illustrations, and the initial pages of a graphic novel.

My practice-led research analyses the development of a new creative framework for authorial illustration and sequential visual narrative inspired by the world of dreams, reverie states, and fantasies. It explores how divergent thinking and ideation might be increased by the use of active imagination and play dynamics for their value as motivators for creativity. This creative framework encompasses a number of different play-based approaches, techniques, and tools designed to produce flow and novel results.

Bio

Carlos Ruiz Brussain is an artist and a lecturer. His practice is in the fields of drawing, illustration, concept art and painting. He lectures in illustration, creative methodologies and creative techniques at Escola Universitaria ERAM -University of Girona (Spain). He holds a Master's degree in Design from the University of Lincoln (UK) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Art Therapy from the University of Girona. He is a member of the Drawing Research Network; the Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism; the Teaching Innovation Network: Play and Learning (University of Girona); and the research group Play and New Technologies Applied to Teaching Innovation (University of Girona).

Flow and the play-based approach

According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi certain activities —such as sports, art, and games— are ideal to provoke an optimal experience of absorption with the activity at hand. He referred to that state of completely focused motivation as *flow*: "an exhilarating feeling of creative accomplishment and heightened functioning".

The main intention of my research is to design a creative framework that uses the motivational power of play and games in order to help reach a state of creative flow that could be applied to illustration practice.

Creative process

I use a range of techniques and tools based on play that helps me to express archetypal images that emerge from my unconscious mind.

These ludic techniques are designed to provoke motivation through randomness and unexpectedness and to block secondary process thinking during the ideation phase of the act of creation —which allows the emergence of raw material.

Blind contour drawings

Is a technique introduced by Kimon Nicolaides in the book *The Natural Way to Draw.* It consists in drawing the contour of a subject without looking at the paper.

This technique is relevant in my working process because it develops the habit of drawing straightforward —without sketching or thinking too much—; as a consequence, it has been key for developing the free play technique.

Dream transfers

This technique consists in juxtaposing traced images on a painted background.

In order to stimulate new narratives, I work with certain recurrent visual motifs (obsessions) to which I add at least one strange element. These alien images, once incorporated to the illustration, open the possibility of expanding my iconographic universe.

Free play drawing

This technique consists in constructing an iconographic schema that works as a starting point for drawing improvisation. I usually begin with certain familiar motifs and then jump to variations.

For Stephen Nachmanovitch the heart of improvisation is the free play of consciousness —which could be expressed through playing, making music, drawing, painting, writing, etc.—; and allows raw material to emerge from the unconscious.

Exquisite corpse

Is a Surrealist game that involves several people composing a sentence or drawing on a folded paper but where none of the participants is allowed to see the work done previously with the results —which are always unexpected.
I use this technique as a warm-up for free play drawing.

Installation Views

Installation Views

Stamping: blot technique

This technique consists in folding a paper in half; painting only over one of the halves; folding the paper again; and pressing the two halves of the paper against each other to obtain a stamp on both sides.

I use this technique to provoke the apparition of suggestive images that stimulate my imagination in order to create novel characters or creatures.

Cut-up

This is a literary technique that consists in rearranging existing text by cutting it up and ordering it in a random way to produce new texts and thus different meanings. It was initially developed by Tristan Tzara in the 1920's and rediscovered many years later by Brion Gysin who shared it with writer William Burroughs —who quickly adopted it and used it for writing, recording and making experimental videos.

I mainly utilise this technique to produce texts, soundscapes and videos that serve me as inspiration and that I eventually translate into single image illustrations or sequential visual narratives.

Synaesthesia

This word means "the production of a sense impression relating to one sense or part of the body by stimulation of another sense or part of the body."

The way I use this technique is through the senses of hearing and sight: basically by listening to music and using it as an inspiration for visualisation and drawing.

The series of illustrations that I am presenting was inspired by the music of Miles Davis (*Bitches Brew*, *Pangaea*, *Agharta*); John Zorn (*Psychomagia*, *IAO*); Steven Kauder (*Shamanic Drumming*); Maria Sabina (*Mushroom Ceremonies of the Mazatec Indians of Mexico*); Sacred System: Bill Laswell, Jah Wobble, Clive Bell (*Nagual Site*); Jah Wobble & Bill Laswell (*Radioaxiom: A Dub Transmission*); Carlos R. Nakai (*Canyon Trilogy*); Steve Roach, Michael Stearns, Ron Sunsinger (*Kiva*); Michael Stearns (*Encounter: A Journey in the Key of Space*); Portico Quartet (*Isla*).

Collage illustration

Collage is the underlying concept behind most of the playful activities that compose the creative framework I have been developing. The juxtaposition of pasted images helps me to see new visual syntaxes and possible narratives. I use collage not just as a goal in itself but also as an inspiration to produce drawn and painted illustrations and, most importantly, as a particular way of thinking that forces me to alter my ordinary mental processes.

Graphic novel collage

I have been developing this graphic novel using images from a non-sequitur experimental video I produced in 2009 and then started adding works I created before and after that date. Through that process of bridging pieces of other narratives the meanings of the original story are changing and expanding radically.

Da Vinci's method of awakening the mind

In his *Treatise on Painting* Leonardo Da Vinci introduced "The method of awakening the mind to a variety of inventions". He pointed out that "by looking attentively at old and smeared walls, or stones and veined marble of various colours, you may fancy that you see in them several compositions, landscapes, battles, figures in quick motion, strange countenances, and dresses, with an infinity of other objects. By these confused lines the inventive genius is excited to new exertions."

In order to produce different kind of stains I use diverse techniques: stamping; dripping; splattering; or I utilise unusual artistic tools (such as spinning tops, toy cars, marbles, bottle taps, etc.).

This technique serves me as a provocation to see new images in the stains, forcing me to leave my iconographic comfort zone. I use it with the goal of expanding my visual imagination.

2 - Exhibition Feedback

(Personal information deleted for privacy reasons)

EXHIBITION FEEDBACK

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to let us know your thoughts on the exhibition, and how you came to hear about it.

If you would like to receive our monthly e-newsletter including invitations to future exhibitions and details of artists' talks and other related events, please leave your name and email address below.

Thank you for your time and interest!

Date	Comments	Name and email address
16/02/2016	I found very interesting how games influence and motivate creativity, I think your work unifies theory with practice which is a challenge considering illustration is an unexplored field, waiting for being studied.	Maria Jose
16/02/2016	Brilliant work; some incredible pieces, especially the stamping work.	James
16/02/2016	I really love your stamp work! And your colour on black paper really world build.	Charlotte
16/02/16	Really interesting Processes, I like the drawings on black paper.	Katherine
16/02/16	Really enjoyed the exhibition and particularly enjoyed the coloured pencil drawings on the black paper.	Rhiannon

Date	Comments	Name and email address
16/2	Incredibly inspiring - Surreal and wonderfully imaginative. I hope to take some of the techniques you suggest into my own work.	Alex .
16/2	Insping work and relates to research have in drawing & play. I'll follow up with links to commerical + academic publications	Vichi
16/2 .	Really Inspiring, Creative + Mind boggling .	
17/2	Artistically fulfilling love the Style and theory! Really Invigorating.	Kisty
17/2	Greatly informative and interesting exhibition Method of awakening the mind reminds me of Da Vinci's Charackters .	Natasha

EXHIBITION FEEDBACK

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Thank you for your time and interest!

Date	Comments	Name and email address
17/2	absolutely amazing! inspiring aswell.	Courtney Student.
17/2	Interesting way of portraying thoughts, fears & the unconscious mind — nightmares - intrusive thoughts	Marlene
17/2	Its beatifull work and very inspiring heard from us Tutor (Vicky-Dean	Khara
18/2	Hugely inspiring, thought Provoking — mixed media wall next to the window in the corner was deep & created a atmospher	Jade final yr BA fashion marketing student

Date	Comments	Name and email address
18/02/16	The exhibition was fun and creative, It allowed me to see the possibilities in letting go the control and still allowing ones self to play... Really enjoyed the works.	MELISSA
18/02/16	Thankyou for a great experience. It was really fascinating to see your experiments and processes in ideation. Really beautiful work, especially the ink-blots	
18/02/16	Enjoyed looking at the variety of techniques and ways of working. It's very interesting to see the way in which work progresses.	Jenny
18/02/16	The exhibition explores a number of ways to open the mind. It is fun, playful and dark.	Kamala
18/02/16	Very interesting methods of creativity / the mind. Very inspirational towards my FMP of exploring creativity — may try out some of these methods!	Rochelle
18/2/16	Carlos and Gemma, it was great to see some of your work. I especially enjoyed meeting you both and sharing a drink together.	All the best; Keith + family: Wendy, Charlie and Thomas.

3 - Video of the exhibition

Available at: https://vimeo.com/208995627

APPENDIX #2 - SAMPLES OF INTERVIEWS

<u>**Interview with Alan Moore**</u>

Format: e-mail

Date: 28/02/2017

CRB: How do you see the field of comics today? Do you see many changes in the medium compared with the time when you started to work as a professional writer/comic book artist?

AM: [...] I'm sure there are just as many lively and progressive talents out there as there ever were, and I certainly don't wish to dismiss creators whose work I simply haven't seen due to a sea-change in my interests. What I can say with some confidence is in the field overall there has been nowhere near the amount of progress that I would have expected/hoped for. Indeed, I think there's a case to be made for stating that once comic books were given their rebranding as graphic novels in the mid-80s, once it became socially acceptable for adults to read comic narratives that in the main had progressed only in a cosmetic sense from their arrested-adolescent predecessors, then it seemed that the comic industry (at least for the most part) felt that its work was done: now that a lucrative market had been secured, there was no need for further innovation when the popular characters originated by genuinely talented creators years or decades before could simply be reworked endlessly for a passive, habituated and, it must be said, inevitably dwindling audience. When I distanced myself from the mainstream comic publishers many years ago, I remarked that as far as I could see, the only future of the comics industry was as a kind of pumpkin patch to generate movie franchises, where the comic medium itself – the only thing that I was ever interested in – would be neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair. In all the time since I first made that statement, I've seen nothing to convince me of its inaccuracy. The mainstream companies, even with the cinematic adaptations of their characters dominating the box offices, do not seem to have the talent or ideas necessary to translate this success into increased comic sales, and I fear that when the spandex bubble inevitably bursts it may take a significant amount of the actual medium with it. So, while there are some engaged and capable

creators who are boldly experimenting with the form, I'd have to say that the basic narrative movement of the medium overall has probably regressed since an earlier period where there was at least the urge amongst creators to see comics recognised as a valid and valuable art form in themselves, rather than as an increasingly obsolete mode of publishing that is mostly respected only for giving us Batman and thus helpfully extending our beloved childhoods into this increasingly dark and ambiguous adult world that we appear to be doing our very best to pretend isn't happening.

CRB: Regarding comics or graphic novels, do you think the narrative format has changed a lot since the days you created those comics? Now that we are immersed in an even more complex and chaotic reality, how does that affect current comics' narrative paradigm? Do you think the storytelling should be very different today?

AM: With regard to the above, I'm not really sure that comics have a coherent narrative paradigm anymore. If they have, I'd only remark that it doesn't appear to be functioning particularly well.

CRB: How has the digital revolution (ICT) — that started in the mid nineties — affected your comics' work? Do you observe any differences between the way you produced and sold your work before and after the digital revolution?

AM: I can't say that the digital revolution has affected anything about the way I create my work or the way that I place it with publishers. With artists – except for brilliant traditionalists like Melinda Gebbie or Kevin O'Neill – it's a very different story, of course, and I know that many mainstream comic artists haven't produced a physical page of artwork for decades. I'm sure that modern writers like Kieron Gillen or Si Spurrier probably use digital resources in their work, but even there I wouldn't have thought the impact would be anywhere near as pronounced as it appears to have been for artists, colourists and letterers. Writing, at its heart, is an unsurpassable technology in its own right – the technology that makes all other technologies possible – and as such it is probably very much like a shark, in that it hasn't really had to evolve since it was pretty much perfectly adapted to begin with.

CRB: How is fluid (or steam) information affecting the field of comic or graphic novels? For instance, regarding our attention span or as related to other devices such as computers, mobile phones, digital tablets, etc. and regarding other media such as TV series or videogames.

AM: I think all fields of the arts – if not most other areas of life – have been equally affected by the dual phenomena of, firstly, a massive and continuing increase in the sheer volume of our information and, secondly, an identical increase in its fluidity. How this impacts upon the world is that it increases the world's index of complexity, which affects everything. In the case of the comic industry, this mounting complexity will obviously rapidly alter the technology by which comics are produced; it will change the economic and political landscape in which the works are issued; it will transform the modes in which the works are disseminated among their audience; it will of course change every member of that audience and every creator of that material, and, inevitably, it will change the way in which the works themselves are understood by changing the entire context in which they exist. With relation to the earlier question regarding the narrative paradigm – and, as I say, this is as true of any narrative medium as it is of the comic medium – it may well be that many contemporary books, comics, films or TV series fail to satisfy because they cannot adequately reflect or encompass this ongoing rise in fractal complexity. Perhaps exemplary narratives such as David Simon and Ed Byrne's *The Wire* achieve their unexpected success because in the very structure of each episode, each narrative arc, the mounting complexity of contemporary existence is fully engaged with and successfully expressed; indeed, might be said to become one of the narrative's main overarching themes. In the literary world I'd make a similar claim for the work of David Foster Wallace, and of course in the realm of music it's hard to go wrong with Mozart or Bach. I believe that we respond as a species to what might be called an enlightening complexity in the arts. We also respond to its lack.

CRB: Scott McCloud's *Reinventing Comics* (2000) foresaw the future of comics as, for instance, related to digital multimedia formats but more than

fifteen years later it seems things have followed quite a different path. How do you see the future of comics/graphic novels as a medium?

AM: As stated at the outset of this section, I don't really have any thoughts about the future of the comics-strip medium and can safely leave such thoughts to those more engaged with that medium than I am. With regard to the predictions of an online future for the medium, I'll admit that I thought that the otherwise tremendously insightful Scott McCloud had taken a step too far in his reasoning on that issue. Subsequently, in my involvement with the ongoing *Electricomics* project, I believe I may have come to better understand why online and digital comics have not yet become the phenomenon that they were initially hailed as being: in order to create a genuinely worthwhile digital comic that has some point to its existence, a great deal of serious creative thinking about the parameters of what is effectively an entirely new medium will be required. The greater bulk of comic creators, it might be thought, have yet to convincingly demonstrate that they are capable of serious creative thinking even in a medium that they have been used to for well over a century. And even if current creators are prepared to put in all the work and craft and ingenuity that this new form demands, they will probably find that the different and more complex means of production and distribution make for a field whose viability is at best uncertain. I have a feeling – and it is no more than that, given my relative unfamiliarity with the subject – that the full blossoming of digital comics (for want of a better term currently to hand) will not occur until the generation of young and largely non-professional digital creators that we are currently seeing some brilliant flashes of in our work on *Electricomics* have had a chance to mature and come into their own; a generation of creators who have grown up with this intriguing form and whose work, play and experiment in the new field is as natural to them as scribbling comic strips in ballpoint pen on a cheap pad of jotting paper was to me when I first came to the medium as a child. Give it maybe ten years and we could see something quite startling and spectacular, but I see any such explosion of ideas and innovation as more probably coming from completely new and currently unrecognised talents rather than from whatever represents the mainstream comic industry by then. Like I say, one of the big conceptual problems

regarding digital comics, if the new medium is fully engaged with in order to create effects that traditional comics aren't capable of – and if you're not attempting that then what exactly is the point? – then the creator is likely to reach a point where she or he realises that they are effectively no longer dealing with comics, and that an entirely new art form has as it were speciated from the original form. In brief, when we've progressed far enough to stop thinking of them as comics, I think digital or online comics could really take off.

CRB: Some people thought that merchandising would be the solution for the crisis of the comic and illustration industry but stories and artistic work are indubitably more important. What is your point of view regarding this subject?

AM: I think my point of view on this subject is fairly well known. Merchandising or any attempts to turn a piece of work into a marketable franchise are at their very, very best irrelevant and at their worst are a corrosive devaluation of whatever genuine cultural merit a work may have at one time possessed. The *only* things that are important are the creative values of the work itself. The genuinely committed and impassioned comic creators, as epitomised by Jack Kirby, understood this and thus were capable of creating concepts and characters that, lacking modern mainstream creators with that energy or flair or invention, a sizeable part of our modern comic book, movie and television industries can do nothing but retool, re-imagine and, generally, regurgitate. This is presumably why the frenetic marketing is necessary in the first place. There is probably a direct inverse relationship between the amount of healthy new ideas in a medium and the amount of meaningless ephemera which that medium is likely to generate. If you have one, presumably, you don't really need the other.

CRB: Have you ever felt demotivated due to the conditions the comic industry imposes? If your answer is yes, what provoked those situations?

Have you ever felt a state of alienation due to the pressures of the "creative" industry?

AM: The answer to both of your first two questions, fairly transparently, is yes. Throughout my comic career, I have become increasingly de-motivated and

alienated, and, as stated at the outset, am currently removing myself from the medium altogether. This is entirely a result of my relationship with the industry, and my relationship with my own creative processes has never faltered in the slightest. I can't say that the uncertainties of my profession have ever bothered me that much. Negotiating uncertainty is a constant and necessary part of all modern existence, and in my own case I've never found the vagaries of my work to be a particular problem. I think my attitude has always been to make the very best of whatever hand circumstance deals.

CRB: In *The Mindscape of Alan Moore*, you mention you made a "fool's leap" when you started your comic career. Have you ever felt a state of anomie due to the uncertainties of your creative profession?

How do you manage to maintain a balance between creative freedom and commerce working for the comic industry?

AM: At the outset of my career, I decided to adopt two rules of thumb with regard to my work practice. Firstly, as a purely practical consideration, I would endeavour to accept any work that was offered to me from an apparently legitimate source. Secondly, as a purely creative consideration, I would endeavour not to work on anything that was not personally interesting to me. This, I think, boils down the creative freedom/commerce problem into one apparently contradictory agenda. My solution to the apparent contradiction was to find some element, even in the most uninviting project, that I could be genuinely excited about. An example would be a few pages of a football strip that I did decades ago for Marvel UK, while having absolutely zero interest in or knowledge of football itself: in that instance it was fairly easy to play the whole thing for laughs, with every element absurdly exaggerated so that my lack of involvement with the game wouldn't matter. The resultant strip was probably fairy mediocre, but was at least competently written so that I could feel as if I'd made as good a fist of the job as I could at that point manage. Clearly, sometimes this strategy worked better than others, and as I became more established in the field I found it a more workable option to simply write well enough to be in high demand, which in effect means that you are much more likely to be able to choose those projects that you are truly enthusiastic

about. Fairly swiftly, I was also in a position where I seldom had the need to take on any work that I wasn't at least co-creating myself. These days, I can afford to make decisions placing art before commerce pretty much every time. Which is handy, since I'm reasonably good at art and absolutely disinterested in commerce.

CRB: Do you consider your current practice as self-expression, problem solving or both?

AM: I think everybody's creative work is pretty sure to entail both of those things. It will be an expression of the self or of some matter that is of interest to the self, and it will inevitably involve a lot of problem solving. For an artist happy in his or her work, both of these things can be very pleasurable although, as I say, not particularly uncommon and certainly not unique to me. It may not be pertinent to the terms of this inquiry, but in point of fact I currently consider all my artistic practice to be an extension of my magical practice.

CRB: Do you still do commissioned work? Or is all of your work self-initiated nowadays?

AM: No, I haven't done commissioned work – in terms of working on a franchise someone else owns or has created – for some considerable time now; years if not decades. This is not to say that if someone like Iain Sinclair asks me to contribute something to an anthology, or if the Royal Academy magazine asks me for a piece discussing William Blake I won't immediately do it, but simply that I'm doing it because it's something I genuinely want to do, rather than something I see as a commission. The *Crossed+100* series was born of some idle speculative musings after reading some of Garth Ennis's *Crossed* work, and the publisher suggested that if I were to write six issues of such a series then Garth would very probably contribute a comparable arc to an anthology title spun off from *Providence*, which is still in production.

CRB: Regarding your creative process, what differences do you see between commissioned and self-initiated projects? How do/did you approach commissioned work? For instance, some artists state that operating within the limits imposed by commissioned work is good for their creativity (because there is a tendency to try to bend those limits), what is your opinion on this?

AM: When I used to do commissioned work – say D.C. Comics' *Swamp Thing* title – then identifying the formula or structure of the existing title to work either with it or against it simply seemed the most sensible way to approach such a project. With the aforementioned *Swamp Thing* work, I used my insights into the dynamics of the series to produce a strip capable of radically different effects without contradicting any previously established continuity. (I believe the relevant academic term for the way in which I accomplished this to be *misprision*, but of course I may have that wrong, not actually being an academic.) In my final two-part Superman story before the character was remodelled and revised by an incoming artist I did almost the exact opposite and created a story which seemed to be exactly congruent with all the tropes and themes of the character which had previously been a part of that character's identity. There is obviously a great deal of fun to be had in either of the above approaches, but personally I am never happier that when working upon a project like *Jerusalem*, where every atom of the world in the text is one that I have personally created for a reason, and is spinning in the service of my overall design.

CRB: How do you approach self-initiated projects?

AM: I have long since overcome any fear of a blank page, so I tend to just dive in with a vague although perhaps complex urge, and let the emerging narrative itself dictate the best way of narrating it. As long as plenty of room is left for serendipity and spontaneous shifts in one's understanding of the project, I find that this approach works for just about anything.

CRB: Do you think the lack of initial rewards, clear goals, and defined deadlines is an issue for self-initiated projects?

AM: I think that such things are an often insurmountable issue for anyone at the beginning of their career, but for a very long time now these things have ceased to be an issue for me.

CRB: Regarding your creative process, in previous interviews you said you have a sort of fractal way of working — instead of being linear — (De Abaitua, 1998) and in *Writing for Comics* you referred to a point of cross fertilisation between one's artistic influence and one's experience where ideas seem to germinate. Do you provoke those paths of association in any particular way? Do you direct this seemingly organic creative process in any way? If you do, how do you induce it? Have you discovered any other patterns in your creative process? Do you have any creative ritual that helps you to reach the creative zone faster and/or more effectively?

AM: I suppose that in my everyday experience of the creative process, I have internalised a lot of these techniques to the point where I don't have to think about them consciously, or at least not for most of the time. As an example, at the moment I am going through a phase where, in idle moments, I'm considering that if I *were* to do another novel at any point it would have to be coming from an entirely different place to either *Voice of the Fire* or *Jerusalem*, and by "different place" I don't just mean "somewhere other than Northampton", although that would almost certainly be part of what I mean. What I mean, in the most important sense, is that it would have to come from a different literary direction; one with different considerations to those that preoccupy *Jerusalem*. Now, bearing in mind that this will most likely turn out to be a project that never materialises anywhere outside my mind – a temporary intellectual diversion that I need to take in order to get to somewhere else – then I would have to say that at the moment I'm paying a great deal of attention to the writings of David Foster Wallace. I have a great deal of sympathy with his position, that of aspiring to create an avant garde novel that is neither alienating nor opaque, and I greatly admire the post-Pynchon intelligence and energy that he was able to bring to his chosen project. Now, obviously, to try to write a book like David Foster Wallace would be pointless and embarrassing. What I am trying to do instead is to isolate

some Wallace's techniques, such as his fondness for using complex institutions as the stage for his longer works, or his dazzling strategy of completely omitting the anticipated climax of a narrative and leaving it for the reader to work out for herself from inference. In trying to understand the workings and the purpose of these novel effects, my own thinking about matters such as structure and setting is being modified or altered. Hopefully, in the unlikely event that anything at all materialises from these musings, it would be something that could accomplish some of the same things that Wallace accomplishes albeit in a completely different way, or conversely something that uses Wallace's techniques but to entirely different ends. I mention all this as an example of how creativity is still, to a large extent, a matter of taking the energy/inspiration that one receives from a piece of art and then using that energy to power an endeavour entirely of your own devising. I don't think you need to provoke or induce these connective pathways so much as to recognise that they are "always already" there, and to concentrate instead upon one's own ability to recognise and detect them: intellect will reliably take you a long way in this pursuit, but for the really special ideas I feel that we must probably abandon ourselves to the unquantifiable field of intuition. As instances in my recent comic-book work, the lengthy H.P. Lovecraft excavation *Providence* is entirely a construction of the intellect, built upon lengthy research and some very careful and (hopefully) ingenious mapping. Whereas my work in the anthology title *Cinema Purgatorio*, along with the concept for the anthology itself, arose from conversations between myself and Kevin O'Neill in which we reminisced about the peculiar atmospherics found in the rundown backstreet cinemas of our youth. Intuitively, we felt that there was a potentially rich seam of material there, although I think we were a least eight or sixteen pages into the work before intellect caught up with intuition (to paraphrase Brian Eno) and we suddenly realised the precise nature of that material and the real possibilities of what we were doing.

Probably the most accurate way of stating it would be to say that every project will require both intellect and intuition, but id different ratios and different admixtures. As for methods or techniques or rituals for entering the creative

state, then this depends upon the task in hand. I haven't done this for around ten years now, but if I was required to produce a piece of work with magical intent – say for example when I finally get down to finalising the designs for *The Moon & Serpent Bumper Book of Magic*'s tarot deck – then I would employ magical ritual techniques in some sort of semi-formal operation. But for everyday creativity of a not-specifically-magical nature, the only ritual that I undertake is the ritual involved in ingesting alarming quantities of hashish.

CRB: Apart from magic, do you use any creative technique or tool in order to have more or original/different ideas? For instance, in previous interviews you mentioned that you use(d) Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's "Oblique Strategies" cards as an oracle. Do you still use that creative tool? Do you ever use any other creative tool? Tarot could count as one; if you utilise it with creative purposes, could you please explain how you use it?

AM: I still use my Oblique Strategies deck, albeit very intermittently – generally only if a project seems to call for, or if I'm desperately stuck and nothing else seems to be working. I haven't personally used tarot as a creative tool, other than in issue #12 of *Promethea* and during the concoction of *Snakes & Ladders*, both of which I saw as more magical usages than creative, although obviously it's very difficult for me to differentiate between those two terms. That you *could* construct a story from a tarot layout – in effect, that's what you're doing in any divinatory or analytical tarot reading anyway – is made evident by writers like Italo Calvino in his (I think) *Castle of Crossed Destinies*. Actually, thinking about it, the best way to construct a story using tarot would be to use each reading to generate a single character, using the cards signifying conscious or unconscious thoughts to help suggest a psychological profile, and using the cards discussing the influences moving out and moving in to place the character at a certain point in a personal timeline and thus in a narrative. I have no idea whether that would work, but it might generate something interesting. I'm also reminded of Phillip K. Dick's fictional Man in a High Castle, who is writing his fictional work about a strange parallel world where the Allies actually *won* WWII, constructing his whole work by consulting the *I-Ching* every time a narrative decision is called for. I don't

know whether that would work either, but if I had to make a bet I'd say that Dick didn't use that method to construct *Man in a High Castle*, probably using more conventional imaginative means and contenting himself with merely writing about someone who had done such a thing.

CRB: What is the place of your dreams in relation to your creative practice?

You have written about the dream world as related to the land of the dead and to the Moon; you also mentioned your interest in Windsor McKay's *Little Nemo in Slumberland*; the subject of flight dreams appears in *Miracleman* and *Lost Girls*; in *A Small Killing* childhood dreams are also present, and I a recent podcast you mentioned the importance of lucid dreaming as applied to magic; but I have never read your point of view about the importance of dreams in your creative process. Do you ever have ideas or find solutions to creative problems in dreams? Do you practice any kind of lucid dreaming activity? Have you ever carried dream diaries? Do you use visual imagery that comes from your oneiric world?

AM: Although I've always been fascinated by dreaming as a phenomenon, it has probably only had a limited application to my written work, largely because of the fact that many ideas and concepts that seem overwhelmingly powerful *while one is dreaming* turn out to be impractically bizarre or inane when subjected to the scrutiny of the waking mind. As an example I recall that back at the very start of my comic-strip career, when I still had commercial aspirations as a writer-artist and around the time that my personal involvement with lucid dreaming was at its peak, I decided to attempt to derive a brilliant idea for a comic strip character from a dream (this despite the fact that I had no reliable evidence of any previous comic strip artist, or indeed artist of any sort, deriving workable material from dreams). I would concentrate on this intention before going to sleep at night and, typically, received absolutely no results until I gave up on the project and stopped trying. On the night this happened, I dreamed that I entered a 1960s English newsagents – the only place where American comics were sold in those days of random distribution before the advent of comic shops – and noticed that there were a couple of American comics on the shop's spinner that I hadn't

seen before. When I woke up, I excitedly made notes on these fascinating titles and then went back to sleep. In the morning I found that one of them was a war-comics character, a gigantic seven-feet tall American marine in ragged combat fatigues who wore a blindfold to (according to the logic of the dream) signify that he was in fact blind. He appeared to be drawn and probably created by American comic book giant Jack Kirby, and the character's name on the dream-comic's masthead was *Atlas*. There was nothing inherently wrong with this concept, at least in terms of the American comic books of the time which often involved a premise no less pointless, but it didn't seem very inspiring to me. It was, however, stunningly commercial in comparison to the second dream-derived idea that I'd written down: this involved a comic book cover that appeared to be drawn by Kirby's no-less-able stable-mate Steve Ditko. It showed a character who appeared to be divided in half vertically, straight down the middle. His left side appeared to be one of Ditko's spiky, angular and contorted "crazy" costumed characters like, say, that artist's comic book creation *The Creeper*. His right side, meanwhile, appeared to be that of a stereotypically square-headed and grim-faced East German border guard of the period. The title of the masthead of this oneiric periodical, with its accompanying strap-line cover blurb, was *"THE HALF-HUGERMAN – he's half HUMAN, half GERMAN!"* So, not only an unusable non-sequitur, but also quite racist into the bargain. And while dreams are great material to use in a story – my own fondness for dream sequences is quite well documented, I think – these are generally fictional dreams that have been constructed to suit story purposes. I'd hazard a guess that most of the dream material that appears in fiction is in fact consciously constructed rather than arising from actual dreams. For instance, and I may be wrong on this but I don't think so, I'm reasonably sure that Neil Gaiman never used actual dream material during his lengthy run of the dream-predicated *Sandman* series for DC Comics. Really, given that such matters of human consciousness can never be studied scientifically by empirical experiment, I suppose all alleged dream-inspirations have to be at least questioned. H.P. Lovecraft's claim that he received the entire narrative for his fragmentary story published as 'The Very Old People' from a surprisingly lengthy, coherent and literarily-structured dream strikes me upon consideration as a probably Poe-

esque literary hoax. The surrealist painters may have retrieved imagery from dreams, but I personally think that a lot of, say, Dali's imagery was consciously and cleverly composed while he was there at the canvas or working in his notebooks. The thing about dreams is that they very seldom look, sound or seem like dreams. Big budget CGI films like *Inception* have to portray dreams that are special-effect rich in order to justify their budgets, whereas genuine dreams are most often mundane but with subtle variations from reality. Also, of course, to claim a derivation from dreams can obscure other possible sources. James Watson's famous claim that he derived the structure of the DNA double helix from a dream of a spiral staircase (his partner Francis Crick implied that he'd intuited it during an early LSD experience) might be thought in both instances to be actually saying "from anywhere but the previous researches of Rosalyn Franklin". There may be other minor examples that I'm forgetting, but I think that one of the only places where I've successfully used actual dream material in my work would be in *Jerusalem*, where the opening dream of angelic carpenters working in the dead of night to finish some divine project was an almost exact recounting of a dream I had when I was around six years old. The name of the Dead Dead Gang, some details of their appearance and the reference to finding a dream-book with that title are also from a dream, and there may be one or two other elements in the novel that have their origins in a fragmentary dream. By and large, though, dreams are too quirky and mercurial to successfully work into a coherent narrative. I'm currently keeping a very sparse dream journal and have been doing since Steve Moore died and I inherited thirty years of his dream journals. The only promising item that they've thrown up so far is an intriguing sounding name: Dennis Knuckleyard. I may find a place to use this in the future, or I may not. One of the only creators I know who has consistently made authentic dream material his main source of comic book inspiration would be Rick Veitch in his recently-revived comic book *Rarebit Fiends*. Next to people like Rick or, conceivably, writer-artist Jim Woodring, my own use of dream material is a rather impoverished affair.

CRB: Have you ever approached artistic work as play? If your answer is yes,

what is the place you assign to play in your creative practice? How does play manifest in your creative process? Do you see intertextuality as a kind of conceptual-experimental play?

For you, what is the difference between work and play? Do you think work in the comics' profession could ever be understood as play? (If your answer is yes) Is play more common in commissioned or self-initiated projects? Are there any artists you admire for their playfulness?

AM: Essentially I see pretty much everything as play, and, historically, whenever an activity ceases to be fun for me, when it becomes impossible for me to regard that activity as play anymore, then I remind everyone that it was actually my ball, and then I take it home.

The way that I have approached every activity throughout my life is to first spend a period observing the subject under discussion, whether that be art, performance, writing in general or magic, and then rolling up my sleeves and playing with that material. It's difficult to exemplify how play manifests in the creative process when, as far as I'm concerned, the whole creative process is nothing but play. Writing an extended story with character development and interaction is little more than a very sophisticated extension of a child organising a gunfight for their toy cowboy figures or a wedding for their Barbie dolls, doing all of the different voices and often providing the sound effects. This is surely the secret origin of all narrative; this or its equivalent. Of course, as we grow older, the gunfights and the weddings become more complex as we begin to demand different things from our play. You mention intertextuality which provides a good example of the way that the play urge can take on the most elaborate forms in order to scratch our developing itches: in *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, it became clear to me about halfway through writing the first issue that what Kevin and I were constructing was a kind of ultimate intertextual game that could potentially link all fictional narratives from books, films, legends, pulp periodicals and comic books – the more incongruous the better – into a ridiculously rich and intricate tapestry where Babar the Elephant inhabits the same Africa as Conrad's ivory trader, Mr. Kurtz, and where H.P. Lovecraft's monstrous submarine 'Deep Ons' are taught to sing by the crew of H.M.S. *Pinafore*. What such a concept allows the

writer is the ability to make critical literary points – like, say, positioning Ian Fleming's James Bond as a degeneration of Sapper's Bulldog Drummond, himself a coarser version of Haggard's Allan Quatermain in a lineage of the declining English adventure hero – while telling a hopefully stirring story into which a whole continuum of ingeniously-interconnected reference can be folded. This is the kind of play that, intellectually, makes my synapses fizz, a sensation that, in turn, I hope to pass on to the reader. Another example which underlines the importance of play in my most important work is the decision to refer to the epilogue of *Jerusalem*, the chapter "Chain of Office", as the 'Afterlude'. The book starts with a Prelude, a musical term that would normally be coupled with the term Crescendo. This clearly wasn't appropriate, in that the book's actual climax or crescendo comes in the final chapter proper, immediately preceding the epilogue in question. The reason for wanting the book to have a prelude rather than a prologue is that I wanted to emphasise the ludic aspect of the work, and thus decided that afterlude was the most appropriate term for the epilogue. I've had an interest in Structuralism since coming across Roland Barthes' *Mythologies* back in the 1970s, and have recently been thinking about Barthes' proposed six codes by which we can read a narrative: the code of action; the hermeneutic code; the associative code; the cultural code; the symbolic code (with its subset the psychological code); and the paratactic code which concerns the work's ability to talk about itself. I would propose a seventh, ludic code to represent the degree to which the work is a game played by the author with herself or with her readership. Indeed, without such a code I maintain that a complete Structuralist reading of many recent works of literature isn't truly possible.

As regards the relationship of work and play I have always done my best, as stated in the opening paragraph, to remove the line between the two. Work, if it is towards an end with which you have no sympathy or interest, is a joyless, grinding, life-eroding proposition. This doesn't have to be the case. As a child, I was always prepared to work tremendously hard at my play, because that made the play much more personally satisfying. The tactic also neatly transforms work into play, at least psychologically, making even massive works that will consume decades of your life an attractive proposition. I could

not work as hard or as enthusiastically as I do were I not ultimately seeing it as strenuous play. I would also say that what I admire in almost every artist that I am drawn to is the element of playfulness evident in their work, given a very broad definition of what is meant by the word playful. Escher is playful with space and mathematics. David Foster Wallace is playful with philosophy and the form of the novel. Lovecraft is playful with modernist literary techniques and the implications of science. Beardsley is playful with penises. What I am seeking in every piece of art is that kernel; that sublime moment of the creator's sheer joy in their work, revealed to the audience, almost as if by accident or oversight.

CRB: Apart from its importance as a self-consciousness tool, do you see magic as a playful activity? If so, how does it affect your creative process?

AM: Magic, to me almost indistinguishable from art, is also predicated upon play: some aspects of its practice are an unusually vigorous and aggressive game of pretend. The main difference in this context between magic and art is that while both are or should be based upon play, it is only with magic that I experience the sense that the medium itself might conceivably be described as playful. I believe this is what Hellenic culture was suggesting when it appointed as its symbolic representation of magic the mercurial trickster-god Hermes, also, of course, the god of communication and writing.

Magic is art is play: this is probably the essence of my creative process in formulaic terms.

CRB: You started as a writer/artist, but could you tell if you are more of a visual or verbal thinker? Do you think you would have been able to write the comics you wrote without your initial visual thinking training?

AM: I have a very good visual imagination and, I think, an equally developed sense of composition and staging. My problem is that I am not sufficiently capable as an artist to produce work which satisfies me without taking an unfeasibly lengthy amount of time in doing so. Working as a comic writer, on the other hand, allowed me to use my real artistic capabilities to my great advantage, while nullifying the effect of my inability to actually draw very well.

So, no, I wouldn't have been able to write those comics without my prior understanding of what the visual arts entailed, but it would be a mistake to think that these considerations were only confined to my comic book work. In my prose work, especially in my novels, I am acutely aware of the lack of a talented artist to translate and transmit my imaginings to the reader, and as a result tend to work harder upon concerns like visual imagery in order to compensate for this lack. I think this is especially evident in *Jerusalem*.

CRB: In most of your works myths, archetypes and symbols are of extreme importance. How do they manifest in your creative process? When you think your stories, do you think them in terms of myths or symbols or do they gradually emerge and only then you connect them with previous myths or symbols — in order to reinforce what you want to state?

AM: I don't think it would work – at least for me – to consciously build a narrative from symbols. The symbolic level of the story always seems to me both more natural and more profound if allowed to emerge from the narrative itself. The poppy motif in *Lost Girls*, for example, emerged naturally from an initial reference to Alice's moderate opium addiction, and then progressed through Melinda's unconnected decision to make Art Nouveau poppies a major feature of the hotel's decor, through our realisation that Dorothy being lulled to sleep in a poppy field is a key point in *The Wizard of Oz*, to the point where I realised that not only did they make an excellent glyph for the imagination itself, but their association with the First World War would make them a powerful symbolic inclusion in the novel's long-planned closing scene. The key, I think, lies not in carefully pre-planning one's use of symbols, but in becoming adept at spotting them when they arise naturally and knowing how to employ them t the end of strengthening and empowering the narrative.

CRB: How would you define the fantasy genre? What is your idea of the fantastic?

AM: Although fantasy may have emerged as a genre only in the 19th century (and I have no problem in accepting fantasy as a kind of cultural dreaming), as a phenomenon it has obviously been around for almost as long as we

have, and if I had to cite an example of an early forerunner of what we mean today by the term fantasy, then I'd have to agree with Michael Moorcock when he positions Bunyan's *A Pilgrim's Progress* as the first modern fantasy work, with its structure – a kind of picaresque journey through increasingly strange lands with strange inhabitants – providing a template for all of the fantasy quest trilogies that were to follow. As for a personal definition of fantasy, if I was being awkward I'd insist that all fiction was fantasy, but catch me in a better mood and I would probably situate fantasy in a privileged position that is exactly on the porous borderline between that which is and that which is not; the borderline that I see as being crucial in the application and practice of magic, which is to say of art. In terms of the observable fact that everything in human creation has made the passage across this borderline, into being from non-being, it occurs to me that the reason fantasy is situated exactly upon this porous ontological borderline is precisely because fantasy is, in itself, that quality of porosity.

CRB: Do you recognise any influence of Surrealism (or any particular surrealist) in your fantasy work?

AM: I've been fascinated by surrealism since first encountering it as a young teenager, and I would imagine it has had a significant influence on the way that I think and the way that I enjoy startling conceptual juxtapositions, but it's so much a part of my basic aesthetic that I couldn't really isolate any specific instances. Of the surrealists, I'd say it is probably Ernst who remains my favourite – I still find it vaguely irritating that even thirty years after I first patiently explained to the emotionally and intellectually arrested people at DC Comics that the first book of V for Vendetta is titled as a reference to a famous Ernst painting, they are still spelling it as "Europe After the Reign".

CRB: What is your point of view of the term "authorial"?

AM: [...] It seems to me that you're saying that while an artist may be considered the author of many works, some of these works will be more personal to, and thus more expressive of, the author as an individual. This is no doubt broadly true, in that works with some overt or covert

autobiographical content – like, say, *The Birth Caul* or *Jerusalem* – will clearly feel as if they're expressing something more essentially part of me than purely fictional exercises like, say, *Crossed +100*. However, I think it's important to acknowledge that the autobiographical work and the fiction already exist as part of a spectrum, and cannot be so easily separated from each other. Any documentary field, be it national history or personal autobiography, which involves interpretation – which is to say all of them – automatically becomes a kind of fiction. In our interpretation we select, we organise our data, we edit, and we construct our satisfying narratives retroactively. We also confabulate a great deal, without being aware that we are doing so. Once the element of subjectivity enters amongst the 'real' documentary events, as it inevitably will do, then I think it is important to recognise that we are to some degree fictionalising those events. This may relate to Lacan's notion of the Real as ultimately inaccessible, forcing us to resort to the Imaginary or the Symbolic. At the other end of the spectrum, with those works that appear to be wholly fictitious without any autobiographical content, I would warn that this state of affairs is just as misleading: it is far from uncommon to find yourself halfway through a purely fictitious work, suddenly realising how much of yourself and your experience you have invested into these fictitious characters, to the point where fiction almost becomes a kind of meta-autobiography, or perhaps, after Jarry, a pataphysical account of the lives we would have led in the universe that is adjacent and complementary to this one. I'm not speaking here of the rather self-aggrandising trend of making the hero of your comic book a transparent avatar of, and advertisement for yourself, but of the experience of suddenly realising that the characters you are writing who seem to wish to withdraw from the world are mirroring an unrecognised desire in yourself, as an example. Or the realisation that your most memorable unpleasant characters were perhaps given their spark of animation by expressing parts of your psyche which you keep scrupulously and securely repressed in any real-life circumstances. I suppose what I'm saying is that, at the end of the day, it's all authorial. I think what puzzled me about your question, and the thing that leads me to suspect I may have misinterpreted it, is your assertion that creators whose work contains more autobiographical content are less alienated by the rigours of the industry. If anything, I'd say the opposite was

true: the creators for whom this is purely a job and who invest nothing of themselves in their work will generally end up having long and happy careers in an industry that was designed by people like them, with people like them in mind. Whereas the creators whose work is intensely individual and personal will eventually and perhaps predictably come to take the way that they are treated personally, which is the most usual precursor to alienation, in my experience.

Interview with Steve Braund

Format: e-mail

Date: 01/03/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Do you think the two professions are indeed very different or do you think they still have many things in common?

Steve Braund: [...] Some illustrators' practices are closer to graphic design practice than others (eg: Christopher Niemann, George Hardie). I view the creative disciplines as clusters with diffused boundaries; any one or more of which can come up against another or others and create overlaps, something akin to coloured filters; each colouring the other. We live in a time of inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary practices. The 'old' creative practice meta-narrative defined concretised definitions that no longer fit our times. If you position yourself from the centre of any one of the creative disciplines, say graphic design for instance, you will perceive from that perspective the distinct nature of that discipline. But if you position yourself on the periphery of graphic design you will perceive a diffused overlap with other disciplines, in particular, and commonly, illustration. There is, for example a large part of illustration practice which blends into fine art practice, particularly in the territories of narrative and contemporary drawing for example. So, each creative discipline: dance, photography, illustration, graphic design, etc., is better imagined as a mass, that becomes increasingly dense the nearer we travel to their centre. This is like the way we travel from the outskirts of a city

perhaps towards the dense centre, but with no absolute point that can be said to be the actual centre. [...]

CRB: Do you consider there is a difference in the way illustrators and graphic designers think and/or process information?

SB: Bearing in mind the definition I have given above, if we compare the densest cluster of graphic design to the densest cluster of illustration we will see some distinct differences in the way illustrators and graphic designers think and/or process information. But from a more diffused position of each discipline their thinking and processes could appear very similar; even inter-changeable. So, at the most polarised end of this scale we might see differences which arise from the nature of each discipline: differences arising from the types of problem-solving each discipline tends towards, differences of subject, content and context. Perhaps an illustrator's thinking and processes is more centred within the pictorial response to these aspects, and the graphic designer's more within a wider set of concerns and therefore more spacial-textual and also including pictorial. But this is very hard to pin down and perhaps not helpful to generalise.

CRB: Illustration might be strongly related to graphic design but also to more expressive art forms such as painting, print, and literature. Do you think there is a big difference between *problem solving* and *expression*?

SB: This may depend on each particular case, but I think that in order to create effective expression the practitioner certainly will need to problem-solve. The important distinction might be that in some cases this problem solving is largely done intuitively and is therefore not measurable, or whether the problem solving followed a rational trajectory and can be more easily captured and repeated. It also depends on whether the creative work is a response to a defined issue or problem, or whether it was arrived at during the creative process without any clearly defined problem it set out to address.

CRB: What is the importance of expression in authorial practice?

SB: These are inseparable in my view. I think that authorial illustration is by its very nature expressive because it refers to a practice which foregrounds the author's personal voice or signature. The 'authorial' values the personal response and celebrates its diversity of expression. Not in the sense of an egoist creator, but rather in the sense of celebrating our differences and unique qualities as human beings.

CRB: Do you think there is a difference in the way designers and illustrators regard themselves and their profession? Here I am referring to thinking processes as related to the creative process involved or followed in each discipline — and keeping in mind the diversity in the nature of commissioned work and/or personal projects and even the fact that some illustrators are also graphic designers or vice versa.

SB: Yes, on the whole, I think designers tend to regard themselves as being within a professional culture defined by business/design group/teamwork/employed often within one company, whereas the illustrator usually feels like a certain breed of artist, who, although often working to a set of instructions, is nevertheless an artist for hire; and an artist of sorts.

CRB: Do you think authorial illustration is a natural response to all these factors or to any particular factor that I have not mentioned?

SB: I remember all these changes happening from the 1990's. Yes, I think that is part of the rationale for us to develop the Masters course in authorial illustration at Falmouth. Much of the above you mention disempowers illustrators, but if we consider how illustrators can themselves harness new technologies, cheaper printing, free internet dissemination, this transformation can be seen as an opportunity for a more enterprising and authorial approach to the discipline to emerge; which I believe it has.

CRB: Is authorial illustration a way for illustrators to add value to their practice in an ever changing marketplace?

SB: Yes, it is. But we shouldn't start, as your question, implies, by pandering to the marketplace, but rather by developing an independent authorial practice, which may subsequently attract commissions and open up many avenues for generating income. But, a developed practice comes first.

CRB: Is authorial illustration the result of a need for artistic expression in a profession that was focused on problem solving for many years?

SB: I think authorial illustration is a natural evolution of illustration which reveals a greater potential of the discipline, often stifled by mainstream commercial constraints. So, expressive potential has been suppressed.

CRB: Is authorial illustration a step towards a social recognition of illustration as "Art" (and not just as a merely functional and commercial practice)?

SB: Again, I think the question is presupposing a commercial practice, but illustration pre-dates this. Illustration seeks to shed light on subject matter. So, yes, it has a function. But function comes before, product earning potential. To answer your question, authorial illustration is a step towards an appreciation of a more mature illustration, and is therefore one that can been given the social recognition it deserves.

CRB: Or is it that we arrived to a need for the term "authorial"? For instance, after the crisis that some commentators call "The End of Illustration" (2000). And why have we arrived to the need for a term that marks a distinction from other or previous forms of illustration?

SB: Because something was glaringly missing. Throughout history, there have been wonderful examples of authorial illustrators, William Blake, Bewick, Masereel, Heath-Robinson, Peake, et al. Perhaps the huge numbers of practicing illustrators these days makes classification more necessary. Or, perhaps we are just beginning to apply critical thinking to a discipline that lacked it because of its ephemeral nature.

CRB: Some illustrators think that the term "authorial" is a new label for something that has been there for a number of years — in some cases under the term "graphic novel". Is authorial illustration more than just graphic novels?

SB: Of course, as indicated, a single drawing can exude the qualities of authorial illustration. A single image can convey a sense of authorship and narrative. It's not only the domain of graphic novels and comics. I think that is a very narrow perspective. Anything that illuminates subject matter (most commonly employing image and text), can be defined as illustration, and then potentially could be seen to embody characteristics of authorial illustration. The key factor is whether the person looking at it is employing a set of illustration discourses to their questioning.

CRB: Is the medium relevant to authorial practice? How related to print is authorial practice?

SB: No, I don't think it is. Neither is it related specifically to print. The audience, which I think it is related to, could be one other specific person, or even, as in the case of self-illuminating cathartic artwork, could even be the one creating the work.

CRB: What about traditional or digital materials? Is authorial more related to traditional materials or is this an irrelevant subject?

SB: I think this is irrelevant. Authorship not being defined by tools.

CRB: How do you perceive the field of illustration today?

SB: Far too much homogenous work is evident today, which isn't emanating from the heart and soul of the creative practitioner, lacks individuality and therefore real value in society and culture. Much of this is mere fashion and a coat that people can put on to have an identity. There are of course great exceptions. But, I believe in each and every illustrator finding their own personal voice through their own unique abilities and talent, not to borrow and depersonalise their output.

CRB: How much relevance do technology and media have on the current situation of the field?

SB: Highly important, because in any age we should explore the potential for communication that innovations offer.

CRB: How do you perceive authorial illustration today? Do you see changes compared to 2012 — when you edited *The Authorial Illustrator*?

SB: It's a good question. One thing that seems much more apparent since then is the chaotic and worrying state of the world: politics, war, terrorism, racism, environmental concerns, migration, etc. This may be drawing illustrators' eyes to consider this subject matter. I hope so, because I think illustration has an important role to play here in raising awareness. I also think there are far more creative practitioners getting what authorial illustration is, and seeing it relevance. I'm not attached to the term by the way. The term can change, but the essence of what the term refers to, is, I think, the important thing.

CRB: Do you see any relationship between the increasing tendency towards authorial illustration and the current economical, social and political crisis?

Do you think "authorial illustration" is a reaction against the changes that are affecting the field (e.g. technology, media, aesthetics, consumer habits, etc.)?

Do you think there are more factors that might have lead to the need of authorial illustration?

SB: Yes, everything is changing constantly in the world and it seems clear to me that an old meta-narrative of mid to late 20th Century illustration practice deeply embedded and inextricably defined by mainstream commerce has in fact died. I read comments about the discipline by many who don't appear to have noticed this yet. What we are in now is a new meta-narrative where the field has entirely opened up, boundaries between creative disciplines dissolved, technology empowering individuals once reliant on the mainstream for exposure. I suppose this is a democratisation of the discipline, and it is

absolutely natural that this development should present the illustrator with greater possibilities to self-author.

CRB: Considering all the previously mentioned factors, how do you see the future of illustration and, particularly, that of authorial illustration?

SB: I think authorial illustration will continue to grow and thrive. But, the mainstream will also continue as it has, without really being very affected by this, as long as it is primarily concerned with turning a profit, rather than serving humanity.

CRB: I have recently interviewed Isidro Ferrer, a Spanish authorial illustrator, and he mentioned that currently he rarely uses a brief for commissioned work; instead, he prefers to establish dialogues with his clients. He said that those dialogues allow better chances of communication and, thus, more possibilities of creative outcomes. How do you see working with a brief as related to authorial illustration?

SB: I entirely agree with Isidro Ferrer's comment. My own feeling is that the authorial illustrator needs to establish their authorial credentials within their own practice and then commissions can naturally speak to their body of work and not feel disconnected. Stefano Ricci is another good example I feel.

CRB: Is the brief the opposite of an authorial approach?

SB: No. Depends entirely on the scope it allows the creator.

CRB: How do you see the relationship between brief and creative freedom?

SB: As above.

CRB: Can you expand on the concept of "see[ing] your work as an evolving practice rather than as a response to an already defined concept or brief"?

SB: Yes, like every other kind of artistic practice, each individual's practice evolves over time. It is important to be aware of this. An authorial illustrator

works on their own terms, but there is plenty of room for dialogue regarding commissions. The type of practitioners I am describing just don't work mechanically to a brief; they apply their own thoughts, personality, integrity and authorship. This may be exactly why, as in the case of Isidro Ferrer, they are commissioned in the first place. They have evolved a way of thinking, not just a 'style'.

CRB: Do you think there is a link between authorial illustration and the rather recent tendency of illustrators to work in self-motivated projects?

SB: Yes. Creative people are excited by the possibilities that exist in illustration for self-initiated work and a sense of ownership of the creative process. And something 'personal'.

CRB: For instance, having more time to work in self-initiated projects (in general due to the lack of commissions) might allow illustrators to delve into their own subject matters, develop a more personal style, etc.

SB: Yes, ironically, this may evolve a better illustration practice than continual commercial output.

CRB: Does the brief make any sense in self-motivated projects?

SB: Yes, I think that it is useful to have a brief in one's mind as a useful constraint even when working on personal, self-initiated, authorial work. Perhaps brief is the wrong term, as it sounds prescriptive.

CRB: In *The Authorial Illustrator* you say, "for those appropriately suited to it as a working practice" (p.7). For me, this means that not every illustrator can become an authorial illustrator, am I right?

SB: I think it's up to each individual to decide if their natural abilities, talent, ideas and opinions, and artistic tendencies, make them suited or not to becoming authors of their own work. This is not a judgment on the value of an individual; all individuals have the same value (priceless!). I just mean, if you feel you are this way … then be it.

CRB: What are the difficulties an illustrator could find in the authorial path? What are the hardest things to overcome as an authorial illustrator?

SB: Writer's cramp! … well, creative block. Authoring of any kind is not a mechanical process, so it has its ups and downs (and it's rewards too). Self-doubt is a difficulty too. It is interesting that a mainstream commercial requirement with a prescriptive brief is so far away from this less clearly predictable approach to practice, apparently wanting the work to be defined even before it has been through a creative process. Little left for the illustrator to do! I remember that Marshall Arisman has made this point very strongly.

CRB: How difficult is it to find one's own voice?

SB: Easier for some than others. I think it is one of the most rewarding challenges and modes of self-awareness and self-education.

CRB: For some illustrators, the current recognition of the profession is mainly a "self-recognition", this means that it happens within the boundaries of the illustration domain — but not really outside of it.
What is your point of view regarding this perspective?

SB: I think this shows the low of status of illustration. This is starting to improve with regular conferences like the ones organised by *Illustration Research*, and by *The House of Illustration* opening in London. But illustration has a lot of catching up to do in terms of critical discourse on the subject. And it needs this to be taken seriously.

CRB: Do you think illustration is a socially recognised profession?

SB: Not very. Mainstream audiences have a very limited view of it. In fact, looking carefully at how mainstream audiences appreciate visual communication is one of the keys I feel, it is seems that visual illiteracy is very common.

CRB: Do you think the term "authorial" allows illustrators to see themselves in a different way? For instance, higher social status, artistic status, etc.

SB: I think it can help encourage illustrators to gain self-respect and to feel they have the potential to be fully creative. Maybe we see this in areas such as political commentary by Gerald Scarfe, Ralph Steadman, Martin Rowson or Steve Bell, where these practitioners have commanded respect for their intellectual insight as well as their creative ability; for their authorship. It is interesting that the combination of equally brilliant skills in both writing and image-making are rare.

CRB: Do you think illustrators are still conditioned by an industrial production system — that might also restrain thinking processes? What I mean is that, considering illustration has mainly occupied a functional role until rather recently, the thinking processes involved in the creative process — and, thus, in the results produced — could be still under the coercion of an obsolete production system that mainly tends to repeat the same kind of results in an industrial (and non-reflective) way. I refer to the use of problem-solving formulas that guarantee production results in a certain given time but also with a certain repetition of outcomes.

SB: Yes, you put it really well. This is exactly what I meant above by an obsolete meta-narrative that still persists because it continues to empower certain individuals. But it stifles progress in the discipline.

CRB: Do you think the authorial approach tends to lead to a less alienated or less anomic way of understanding and producing illustration as compared with the regular approach to illustration (which might imply compliance with clients' needs — instead of expressing one's own voice —, tight deadlines, precarious working conditions, reduced budgets, less professional art direction, increase in the price of artistic materials (e.g. technological devices), more government tax pressure, uncertainty, delayed payments, etc.)?

SB: I think that the out-dated approach we've been talking about here has become anomic. But any realisation of that would impact the mainstream commercial engine that enjoys managing illustration as a repetitive

commodity, rather than having to consider it as a progressive discipline. It has to be acknowledged that there are exceptions to this general tendency and great work can be found in all modes of dissemination and in all ways that illustration reaches a public domain. So, I do think that an authorial approach to illustration, drawing upon deeper readings and conducting authentic research can be more meaningful, connected and relevant in all ways, socially, politically, culturally, environmentally, and therefore more effective and beneficial as visual communication for the 21st Century.

CRB: Regarding the way in which illustrators who write conceive stories, I remember a comic editor who used to tell me that illustrators do not think as writers: they think in images, do you agree with this?

SB: Broadly, yes. Writing and image-making are disciplines demanding very different skill-sets. Similar can be said of graphic designers and illustrators. With writers and illustrators Mervyn Peake is a good example of what your comic editor friend suggests. Speaking about Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast novels Anthony Burgess once described Peake as someone who had 'total mastery of the literary as well as pictorial art – only had one peer, Wyndham Lewis. Burgess stated that 'If their books seem slow-moving it's to do with the visual contents, the lack of interest in time and the compensatory obsession with filling space.' (Introduction to Peake's 'Titus Groan', Gormenghast trilogy, London, Mandarin, Octopus Publishing 1989).

CRB: You have been leading the programme of the "MA Illustration: Authorial Practice" for many years now, do you think illustrators might need special training to bring their stories to light? Do you think illustrators need to explore storytelling in different ways?

SB: Individual ways I think: We have learned by experience on the MA Authorial Illustration course that each student walks their own path and has different needs. So the special training is individually tailored to support the emergent practices and related needs as they become apparent. It's a responsive kind of teaching. We don't have all the answers. We try not to curb innovation and experimentation and often mistakes can be the most important

factors in finding a way. This is perhaps why it is so exciting and such a privilege to watch these practices find their footing.

CRB: Considering the process involved in authorial practice might imply higher levels of self-awareness (including the search for individuality through differentiation; dealing with personal subjects and recognition of inner conflicts that many times depend on particular social contexts — thus, excavating in one's own history —; etc.), what techniques do you recommend for illustrators who want to connect with their own subject matters or find their own voice?

SB: Read as much as possible, absorb as much literature, current affairs, science, etc., as possible, draw as much as possible. Be self-reflective, critically engaged with peers and tutors, and actively enterprising, work as a supportive community of developing authorial illustrators sharing each others' individual progress. Then just let go and enjoy it.

CRB: Regarding the possible ways of illuminating concepts, do you think authorial narratives could allow the appearance of new relationships between contents/texts/stories and images? I refer to the possibility that — not being conditioned by the marketplace — authorial illustrators' could discover new ways of telling and illuminating stories. What is your point of view on this?

SB: Yes, absolutely. I feel this is what we try to do on our course. Once free of the conditioning of the mainstream marketplace, it feels very exciting and new approaches can and are discovered. This is my earlier point about mainstream appearing to champion the discipline but in reality stifling progress. In higher education we should be asking what illustration can be, not repeating what is already is.

CRB: Within authorial illustration, what do you think about the importance of telling autobiographical stories? What I mean is: how relevant is it to tell an autobiographical story within the subfield of authorial illustration?

SB: Someone once said that we each experience the world in unique and personal ways and each person's experience of the world has enormous value when shared with others.

CRB: Could this genre help the illustrator to find her/his own voice?

SB: For sure. It is seen in graphic novels so often these days. For an innovative take within graphic novels see Barnaby Richards 'Beetroot'.

CRB: Could this genre provoke the illustrator to seek new ways of telling stories (framing, timing, etc.), new styles (more experimental or daring) or more emotional contents?

SB: Yes, I think so.

CRB: Lately there has been an increasing recognition of the role of play as related to illustration practice. From your point of view, how connected are authorial illustration and play?

SB: I think all creative work requires the element of play. No play element, no discovery of something previously unseen, no discovery, no creation. Industry is of course somewhat at odds with this because it needs a result and so there is awkwardness in this relationship. If we don't play when we create we shouldn't expect our audiences to feel and enjoy a sense of play in our work.

CRB: Could illustration work be understood as play?

SB: I think play is an important component, but not the whole story.

CRB: At Falmouth, do you encourage any playful activities as a "valid" creative approach? If your answer is yes, what are the benefits of using such activities?

SB: Instilling a lightness in the studio atmosphere helps enormously. Light, but fully engaged. We run many workshops which are not assessed and so the

students can play without feeling any pressure. The results show this works well. This builds their confidence I feel.

CRB: What is the place of experimentation in the programme?

SB: Being a postgraduate course, very high.

CRB: From your perspective, how important is it learning to make mistakes and being resilient within authorial illustration practice? Are play and experimentation ways of allowing ourselves to make more mistakes?

SB: There is a wonderful vimeo of Milton Glaser talking about the fear of failure. Human beings are full of fear, and play melt the frozen parts.

CRB: Do you think combining self-motivated projects and working to commission is the best balance for an illustrator? Why?

SB: I believe each individual has to seek their own comfortable way of working, but yes, for many a balance of these things is good. It's good not to get stuck in any one approach, and to keep the practice moving and developing.

CRB: What do you think about rewards as related to illustration?

SB: Financial reward is wonderful, but it shouldn't define why we do what we do. Perhaps the biggest reward is when we create something we always dreamed we might create. Another is of course getting external validation for our efforts.

CRB: How important are external rewards in illustration practice?

SB: Very important.

CRB: Does the authorial illustrator need to learn how to create without the expectation of external rewards? With this I mean that, even a self-motivated project could be extrinsically recognised (money, awards, etc.) eventually,

there might be a big difference if it was conceived without any external expectations (or may be not).

SB: Actually, I think the answer is probably yes, but not necessarily, because one authorial illustrator may locate a strong authorial voice working within a sphere which also offers financial reward. Another may locate their authorial voice and not find external reward for years. It's an individual path. I am a huge believer in self-motivated projects generating income, but this can take time.

The following interviews were conducted in Spanish and in Catalan. All translations are mine.

Interview with Isidro Ferrer

Format: Videoconference

Language: Spanish

Date: 18/01/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What is your definition of illustration?

Isidro Ferrer: Dictionary definitions are quite nice: to enlighten, to provide light to facilitate understanding, and I think it defines very well the parameters of illustration because it always depends on the text and enables its comprehension or it helps to provide readings that surround, accompany or even invalidate the text, but illustration is always sustained on text.

The verb "to illuminate" interests me deeply because it is also related to drawing. Drawing emerges from light and shadow. After all, graphite is an instrument to add shadows.

CRB: How would you define graphic design?

IF: For graphic design there are many definitions and all are distinct and valid. It operates within the ambiguous terrain of problem solving, but who doesn't

solve problems? We [graphic designers] fundamentally solve graphic communication problems. But there is a definition that I particularly like: to make possible the imaginary.

CRB: If you had to define the way in which you approach your work, would you define it as expression, problem solving or both?

IF: Both. Expression is characteristic of humankind. Every time we are communicating we are expressing ourselves, whether we want to do it or not. Thus, many times that sort of obligation of design to renounce subjective discourse it is either impossible or a good intention because subjectivity is above us. The subjective is the strata where one moves and it is in the subjective where authorship is rooted, in each gesture one makes. Thus, that ideal of problem solving using a sort of quasi scientific approach it is very well in theory but in practice it is not possible because the results would always be different and depend on one's own experiences, taste, and style. Therefore, the same problem solved by different designers would always be different. For that reason, there would be a huge amount of variables that demonstrates that problems are solved expressively.

CRB: Would you define your professional work (illustration and/or graphic design) as authorial?

IF: Yes, and I actually proclaim it. There is a lot of confusion within the profession regarding certain ideas, and one of those was the constant discussion about if we considered ourselves artists or not. Then, those designers-illustrators that, like myself, have a very defined style, a particular way of doing our work, too quickly we are labelled as artists. People usually ask me "Do you consider yourself an artist?" And I answer: "No. I am not an artist, I am an author", which is something completely different. I am the author of what I produce, but always at the service of an external voice, never my own voice. Therefore, I leave art aside, but I profess authorship.

CRB: What differences do you observe between your work as an illustrator and your work as a designer? Do you see variations in terms of thinking processes or in the creative process in general?

IF: The two main differences are process and time. But time is fundamental, but not as much in terms of elaborating the work but rather the time it takes to read the work. In the field of design, the reading time is always very short because the work is always situated in contexts of movement, whereas the reading time in illustration is longer, it is a delayed time because it is situated in a different context: the context of reading. Additionally, the attitude of the reader is also different. In graphic design you have to catch the reader and in illustration you have to tell a story, suggest, stimulate. Furthermore, there are other elements: the use of rhetorical figures is different in design as compared to illustration. In graphic design there is a bigger use of metaphors, humour and symbolism, whereas in illustration, there is a stronger narrative effort because illustration allows the continuity of a storytelling arc that is always at the service of the text. That does not happen in design, design has to be a simple look, a gaze that is caught by a clear and concise image, even though it might also produce semantic echoes and contain enigmas.

CRB: You usually play with objects that have a narrative background themselves and can be read as symbols. Is ambiguity different in graphic design and illustration?

IF: Ambiguity is one way of catching the reader's attention. When the message is not clear enough and has many readings or can be interpreted in many ways, one is posing a question to the reader. In front of that enigma, the reader has two options: try to solve the mystery or avoid it — simply by ignoring it. But attentive readers penetrate in the reading process of the image, they actively participate in decoding it, thus they become readers-participants. I love those kinds of mysteries, those ambiguities; I am interested in the resources that create active readers because they force them to interpret images to reach a conclusion. It does not matter what conclusion, I would not say right or wrong, I would say closer to the starting point... Thus every conclusion could be optimal because it is the result of an analysis.

CRB: What you are saying is that you require a lot of interactivity on the side of the readers, you force them players in a communicative game. You make them participate actively, is that correct?

IF: Yes, I am aware of that. I respect the value of the person who is on the other side, the intellectual aspects. I try to establish a communicative line between what is told and what arrives to the reader. That channel has to be a vibrating channel or a very active one.

CRB: Do you see differences in illustration as related to the moment in which you started to work professionally?

IF: Yes, absolutely. No just semantic, rhetorical or style differences, but also central differences. Let's say we are talking about quite distinct or different professions. We have consecrated illustration to the authorial or artistic terrain, but only within illustration itself because illustration is still unknown outside the borders of the field itself and it is not socially respected yet. But as a consequence of a need of self-acknowledgment it was we illustrators who have rebuilt the profession. This, in part, has to do with Internet, with the need to show one's work. When I started, almost thirty years ago, illustration depended on the marketplace (printing houses, newspapers, advertisement), but never expression nor authorship. And one did one's role, which had a purely professional function, and almost all illustrators had very clear what was that professional role. I think that was a lot healthier that the current need to belong to the hermetic profession of contemporary illustration. And, additionally, there is this need of having to be present, constantly, manifesting the virtues of one's own expressions. Therefore there are like hierarchies. It seems that nowadays it is not enough to illustrate a brochure for the supermarket (something that is absolutely respectable), today one has to publish books and particularly children books. [...] We are living a very confusing moment. The profession of illustration is living a very very confusing moment. At least I perceive it that way.

CRB: What is the role of play in your practice?

IF: Well, play has a fundamental role. Play has an enormous reach, but, in our Judaeo-Christian culture, it is something reviled because — the same than jokes or happiness — it is against the serious things of life, which are productive. Supposedly, play is unproductive because it is a type of mean that does not reach an end in itself. And if it does reach ends these could not be measured in profitable terms. Additionally, play has been addressed exclusively to childhood. Thus, playing is for kids because it is not compulsory for them to be productive or serious. But, when one reaches maturity, one enters the age of seriousness, which also has to do with profitability and production. However, this is just the Judean-Christian thought that has to do with effort and sacrifice, and even with what the world is: because the world in itself is not a place for enjoyment but the threshold of what might come next, which would be the great prize for everything; but this is the great wile of religion: to assume this condition of borrowed life and, moreover, that in order to get this loan one has to suffer to obtain a life in the beyond, which makes you very vulnerable, a slave actually, and it leaves you very unsatisfied. Play is absolutely the opposite. Unfortunately, play finishes when childhood ends. That is the end of the time for play. Then play is used as learning, play is valid only because it serves to learn and to develop skills that might be useful in the future. That is the *value* of play. But, beside all that, play is highly creative. Italo Calvino said that science, literature, and the arts are generally based on play to reach to solutions from places that are beyond belief. In many cases, to reach to results that, otherwise, would not have been possible because play includes chance: the possibility that are beyond the limits of what is ruled and considers the "fortune" of happenings favoured by chance.

CRB: Do you see a relationship between play and experimentation?

IF: Experimentation requires generating a number of norms or rules beforehand, exactly like games. Games are possible because there are rules. If there are no rules, then there is no game. Therefore you have to invent rules to be able to play. And those rules are the ones that will allow you to play. The same applies to experimentation. Experimentation does not happen by itself. You have to define norms before experimenting and you have to set

rules in order to experiment because otherwise the terrain to cover could be immense. You have to channel and direct experimentation towards a particular terrain. It is like creating walls to remain with them. Those are the rules. These rules are the rules that make the experimentation game possible. Hence, in experimentation there is a great component of play and games.

CRB: Therefore do you see a relationship between experimentation and play?

IF: Absolutely.

CRB: What is the relationship between motivation and play in your practice?

IF: Let's say motivation and play go hand in hand because they have to do with enjoyment. And I have to enjoy. I have to spend a great time. I have to take profit of the experience. I renounce to sacrifice, I renounce to vain effort in itself. Then my motivation in this job, either in design or illustration, has to do with enjoyment, but not with silly enjoyment. No, no, no. It has to do with a sort of enjoyment that includes learning, that includes failure, that includes mistakes, and that it also includes my own dissatisfaction, my own doubts, and my own fears. This is not an idiotic enjoyment that has solely with pleasure, but with an enjoyment that is born from the challenge and constant learning [...] I love to discover things, and in order to that — and considering I hate to repeat myself — I need to move from one place to the other. Finding something considers surprise and emotion. Moving from one's stagnant places, from one's satisfaction areas, from the places where one obtains recognition. Moving one from one's comfort zones in order to let things happen, things that were not considered or that are not initially within the universe in which one operates because it is there when things might turn significant and potentially useful to take them to other territories, to the terrain of possibility. This is a motivation and a game. This is the game of searching the surprise of the finding.

CRB: Do you work using a brief?

IF: Currently I use it much less than I used it in the past. Today I usually go to meetings and I establish direct dialogue with clients.

CRB: And how did you experience the brief: as a restriction or as a challenge?

IF: Many times as arbitrary and absurd impositions. Moreover, as impositions that are not even that because they are lines of action that in most of the cases are actually non-specific generalities, which are very difficult to materialise. Generally, the brief makes me tremble because it is composed of huge imprecisions. They never describe anything concrete. What does it mean "a happy image"? "It has to be festive, vital and luminous" or "It has to contain a hole of sadness". How does one translate that into an image? But, if one talks with clients directly, one can establish a dialogue and understand what they want. That happens when I work with the writers of the books I illustrate. And even if they are dead authors, like in the case of Neruda, I try to establish an in-depth dialogue by reading his texts [...].

CRB: That is interesting because it is quite different to the traditional way of working. That in-depth dialogue you mention is not very common nowadays mainly because it can be quite time-consuming, are you aware of that?

IF: Yes, but I am fortunate enough to choose the illustration projects in which I will work, basically because I will spend a lot of time working on them. And they don't necessarily have to be profitable because my incomes mainly come from design. Design is infinitely more profitable than illustration. With a poster one can earn the same than illustrating two books. It is sad but it is like that. Thus I balance my profits that way. [...] I can enjoy the luxury of spending between three to six months working on an illustration project that is not profitable. And it may even sound capricious, but it is like that. Indulging myself to illustrate projects that are not profitable is precisely what allows me to establish those in-depth dialogues with the work. But I also understand fellow professional illustrators who have to produce their work facing it as problem solving because illustration has became a very complicated and mistreated profession with a big lack of financial resources. I am aware that is

not common to have the luxury of dedicating the time I dedicate to my illustration work. It would not be a profitable profession...

CRB: I think you answered what motivates you to work. Can I ask what demotivates you?

IF: Business structures where it is impossible to establish a dialogue. I mainly refer to advertisement agencies with multiple leading heads but none of them really visible with whom one can sit and discuss. And one can never know what the client really wants. [...] Everyone is a director, everyone decides and one, as the designer/illustrator, receives a big number of decisions or impositions. And I think that is frustrating because I do not know how to work like that and I do not want to work at service of middlemen. I like to establish a direct dialogue with the client.

CRB: Have you ever felt alienation or anomie due to professional work? Have you identified what provoked those situations?

IF: Yes, I did — and I'm thinking of precise cases. When the client does not provide one with clear answers. [...] That leads one to uncertainty, but also to exhaustion because there are neither stimuli nor answers that allow one to try other directions. That happened to me sometime ago with Coca-Cola International from USA. They got in contact because they had seen my work and the suggested me to carry out a completely free research of a series of images for Coca-Cola International. Well, I started to work freely and when I communicated with them to ask questions the answers were always completely absurd, really absurd... And every time they pointed a different direction: "Why don't you try this path?" And once they even said: "We have seen this work that interests us — the work of another artist, not me... — that you might find inspiring and interesting..." It was a very profitable work, with a huge projection, but after five months like that I told them, "Look, I'm very sorry, but I am unable to work like this... I don't know what you actually want. And as I cannot understand what you want, I cannot do what you are asking me to do." And I quitted the job. I quitted the job out of exhaustion, but also out of boredom.

CRB: That sounds like anti-play...

IF: Yes, anti-play, anti-play... There was no answer of any kind. Not even emotions. Not even disapproval, which might also be interesting because at least one could know what the client does not like. This was worst it was just silence... And one is not able to interpret it...

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects? Do you self-initiate work?

IF: Yes. They are projects that are born and sometimes materialize and other times don't. Often those self-initiated projects derive into something else, which eventually finds its ways into commercial work or either they adapt to other projects. But many times those obsessions or ideas crawling in the back of your mind need to be materialized one way or the other.

CRB: Does your notebook/sketchbook work fit into this category?

IF: Yes, yes... Well that rather than being a project is a type of...

CRB: I'm asking because you published some of them. That means they found their way into commercial work.

IF: Yes, but they were published because there was a chance to do it, but more than a project notebooks are a vital constant. I need them to order the world.

CRB: It is a sort of paradox because notebooks are usually chaotic. Or does the world become ordered precisely because you have the freedom to do whatever you want in those pages?

IF: Exactly, but the notebook for me has many other functions as well. As a matter of fact it has a lot of functions... It could be said that in my case it has all the functions... The notebook for me it is a journal, a calendar, I have lists there, I use it to remember things, but also to reflect and to accumulate

things... In the notebook everything converges. A lot of personal interests merge in the notebook and thus it is useful for almost everything. It is like a logbook. I need it to find my place in the world, to have a record of the world. For instance, I use the notebook because I do not have a mobile phone. And I will never have one. I am not in the very least interested. I am neither in social networks. Again, I am not interested at all. Hence, the notebook has the function of a diary, whereas most people use a mobile phone, right? And instead of taking pictures, I write or make drawings or I gather information that is very useful. It has an enormous quantity of uses.

CRB: And are those personal projects that you mentioned before born in the notebooks or do they emerge in any other way?

IF: Yes. Let's say they start in the notebooks. In the notebooks there are traces of everything. There are traces of romances, meetings, disagreements, journeys, works, frustrations, books I read... There are lots of traces... Notebooks are almost witnesses of my everyday life. A witness and a reminder of what will happen next and personal projects are not always born in notebooks, but there are always signs or indications that point me to them. [...] An example of this process is the case of *Un jardín*. [...] I travelled to Japan in 2002 to deliver a conference and I visited the National Museum of Tokyo, and there is a room for emakis there. *Emakis* are hand scrolls that tell horizontal narratives, they can be twenty meters long. The illustration goes from one edge to the next and they are not sequenced in panels. The illustration is a sort of timeline and there is a text that usually accompanies the artwork. I was leaving the exhibition and, next to the entrance of the museum, I found a hall with a table and a series of wooden stamps and little ink bowls. A group of children were playing with them making compositions with the stamped images. And I sit there too, I grabbed a number of seals, and I started to play. Eventually, I took all the pages I produced with me and I returned home. [...] Many years later I realised that a number of plant motifs and landscapes that I have never seen before in my practice were emerging. Animals, flowers, trees. It was interesting. At the time I was working for a wine company and I started collecting the illustrations I did in my notebooks and I

suggested doing something like a scroll image but the client did not accept the proposal. The material was still in my studio and I received the visit of editor Arianna Squilonni. She saw the material and asked me what it was. I answered that I was not very sure. As it was a sort of landscape I said: "It is a garden". She said: "I like it very much. Do you think it can be a book?" And I answered: "Perhaps, but it does not have book structure. Thus it should be transformed into a book." She answered: "If you manage to do that, I will publish it." Hence I received a challenge. It was something that I had not expected, so I replied: "Ok. Then you will have to write the text." Some weeks later Arianna sent me some texts, but I did not like them because they were too descriptive, too narrative. And after a number of conversations the name of María José Ferrada emerges and Arianna says, "What if we ask her to write the text?" I sent her the illustration and I explained the project. Initially it was thought as a sort of accordion-folding book but eventually it became an unrolling book —just like an emaki. [...] Only by the end of the process I realised that the images I saw in Japan ten or twelve years before were actually the inspiration for the work.

Interview with Josep Alcaraz

Format: Facebook e-mail

Language: Catalan

Date: 03/04/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What differences do you see between your illustration and graphic design work? In terms of thinking processes, are there any differences in your creative processes? (For example, in relation to divergent processes or artistic procedures)

JA: I see many differences. For example, when I illustrate I try to visualise the idea before starting with the technical process, whereas when I design I have all the available data in front of me and I play with all the elements until I find a

link that connects all the information pieces. Sometimes I find this union as a colour palette, a geometrical composition, a particular typography, etc.

Contrarily, in order to illustrate an image, the idea always arrives filtered through my own memories, feelings, shocking or evoking images, and desires... Thus the process ends up being something much more personal and emotional. Unfortunately, many times all this ends up being eclipsed by the different directions of the client, deadlines and all the other factors that anyone working in the profession very well knows.

CRB: If you were asked to define the way in which you approach to illustration practice, would you define it as self-expression, problem solving or both? Or does this depend on the project?

JA: My first intention is to approach it as expression, but there are always doubts or problems at a technical level and therefore one has to find ways to solve them in order to make it closer to what one wants to express. Hence I consider my practice as both things: self-expression and problem solving.

CRB: Would you define your professional work (illustration and/or graphic design) as 'authorial' or as adapted to the particular needs of the commission and client?

JA: Without any doubt the second option. Totally adapted to clients' needs.

CRB: In relation to your trajectory in the field of illustration and graphic design, do you see differences in the profession as related to the moment in which you started? (Artistic, technologic, economic, social — fashion, status, recognition —, etc.)

JA: Yes, there have been many changes since I started. I started working in graphic design when the shift from analogic to digital started. At that time a lot of high-level professionals educated in the pure traditional school were substituted by young people, inexperienced, but more advanced in the use of digital tools who were also predisposed to receive low salaries in exchange of learning the trade. From this shift I am talking about many years have passed

already and I think society has matured a bit since then. Nowadays handmade work is valued again, and great results can be obtained by mixing traditional and digital techniques. Nevertheless, those professionals who can dedicate exclusively to the traditional practice are a few chosen ones.

Illustration was affected in the same way by the explosion of new technologies.

CRB: From your perspective, how is the field of illustration now?

JA: Except you are one of the great masters, nowadays you are forced to know and control digital tools, either 3D, design, animation or video editing, depending on the sector you want to work.

CRB: What motivates you to work?

JA: Besides basic survival needs, what motivates me to work is to think that my work will arrive to some child or adult. [...] I cannot think of a better reward than this.

CRB: What demotivates you to work?

JA: The main thing that demotivates me is to have to do something I do not believe in or that I simply do no like.

CRB: Have you ever experienced alienation or anomie due to your creative work? Have you identified what provoked those situations?

JA: Yes, one can never forget such a thing. [...] I worked in advertising. There was a point I was so bored with the work that I ended up quitting everything (my work as an illustrator, designer and lecturer altogether). [...]

CRB: Do you think illustration is a profession that can provoke alienating situations?

JA: It can provoke them if one does not believe in what one does.

CRB: Do you think illustration is a profession that can provoke anomic situations?

JA: Yes, there are many clients who do not know what they want and they change their minds every time one presents them with what one is doing. One ends up loosing motivation when one sees that they discard good options. Eventually, the commission is so problematic, that one just wants to finish the job.

CRB: Do you think graphic design is a profession that can provoke alienating situations?

JA: It depends on one's profile as a designer. If one is very creative and is asked to do mechanical tasks such as layout, it is quite likely that one would become alienated. However, the opposite is also true, I'd seen many graphic designers who were very good at a technical level angst-ridden when asked to do creative commissions.

CRB: Do you think graphic design is a profession that can provoke anomic situations?

JA: Yes, due to the levels of stress one lives during the advertisement campaign seasons, the lack of social recognition of the profession, the insensitivity of psychopathic marketing that seeks benefits no matter what, etc.

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects?

JA: Yes, whenever I can. They are always short-term projects; I do not want them to prolong too much because this can make me feel frustrated.

CRB: How do you experience commissioned work as compared to self-motivated work?

JA: I approach commissioned work in a very mechanical way, following more or less the same creative process. If it is a commission that I have to present in a particular format or a subject matter that I'm not familiar with, I always

dedicate some time to data gathering and experimentation before starting to work.

Personal projects operate in a very different way, in such projects motivation and inspiration is the most important thing. Thus, I dedicate very special attention to them, trying to avoid mechanical approaches because self-motivated projects need to have a soul. The problem, at least in my case, is that I dedicate to much time to them and, not following mechanical procedures, the process becomes too slow. Additionally, I also ask more from myself. I suppose the reason for this is that if I obtain a bad result I cannot blame the client or the deadline.

CRB: How do you experience the brief as a restriction or as a challenge?

JA: I think that I experience it as a challenge. When I started I was more imaginative but at the same time I was also more insecure, thus, briefs made me feel a bit anxious. Nowadays, I am less imaginative, but briefs never make me feel anxious. On the contrary, I even enjoy more with the work. [...]

CRB: What relevance do external rewards have for you in terms of motivation?

JA: Firstly, I acknowledge that financial rewards are the most important reason to do work. Nevertheless, I have never been a good example in this sense. I have never been too good making budgets and I always ask less than I should, particularly considering the amount of time I dedicate to each work. Social recognition is important, but first comes my own; I cannot defend my work if I do not value it myself.

CRB: What relevance do internal rewards have for you in terms of motivation?

JA: The financial aspect might be the engine, but enjoying my work is indispensable. If it weren't like that I would not be able to devote myself to this profession.

CRB: How would you define 'play'?

JA: It is something that has the goal of overcoming a challenge respecting a set of rules. In this process it is important to learn how to interact with dexterity using our physical or intellectual skills at an interpersonal or social level. It is also a learning tool that automatically works as a motivational engine. Thus I would also define it as the art of learning something while you enjoy yourself, either if it experimenting or using one's knowledge or skills.

CRB: What relationships do you see between play and creativity?

JA: Creativity is key in order to be able to play. If one talks about a strategic, physical or intellectual game, it is not enough to know the rules, one has to prepare tactics and know how to improvise depending on the reaction of one's adversary. 'To play' means knowing how to enjoy using creativity.

Another relationship I see is: play functions as a stimulus to creativity.

CRB: What about the relationship between play and experimentation? Do you see artistic experimentation as a type of game?

JA: Being a learning tool, experimentation is key to discovering and knowing.

Artistic experimentation and play share many things in common, hence I believe I see that relationship.

CRB: Do you see a relationship between (creative) play and motivation?

JA: Yes, one can find motivation playing to imagine, visualising or constructing things.

CRB: What place does play occupy in your creative process?

JA: I am sorry to confess it, but currently none.

CRB: Do you see differences between work and play?

JA: If we understand work as what one does to make a living, unfortunately, one cannot always approach it as play.

CRB: Do you think work can be approached as play? Why?

JA: Yes, considering one can have that level of freedom because playing is a attitude to face life, when one approaches work as a challenge and one sets out to enjoy oneself while doing the work, one is more capable of overcoming problems.

CRB: Have you ever managed to approach work as play? Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which you cannot approach work as play?

JA: No, actually in very few occasions I managed to work as if it were play, most of all due to deadlines. Nonetheless, there are projects in which I learn through experimentation and I enjoy myself, but I am not sure that would count as play.

CRB: Have you observed variations between work that was approached as play and work approached more conventionally? Do you think that your creative work manifests a ludic component?

JA: Yes, differences are huge, above all due to the creative richness and expressive rendering. If one enjoys oneself always shows on the surface of the work and connects more easily with the audience.

CRB: Have you ever used play as teaching tool? If the answer is yes, what were the benefits of this approach?

JA: Yes, as I previously mentioned, I consider it a very useful teaching tool. I have always obtained more benefits than disadvantages: it has served me to get better acquainted with the students, to know their skills, and to connect with them in a casual way. Play helps to create a more relaxed environment, which helps students to feel more confortable and motivated to learn.

CRB: Did your students welcome those ludic approaches? How did they react to a ludic pedagogical tool?

JA: The majority of the students use to welcome them positively, of course, if you believe in what you are doing and you transmit enthusiasm and interest.

Nevertheless, one realises that education in schools does not stimulate creativity and many students experience insecurity when they have to play, create or imagine. Above all I see this as disastrous in young children; it should be the opposite. What I have observed in the students is their capacity to wonder while they play. They end up discovering things about themselves that they were not aware of.

Interview with David Faüchs

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 08/03/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What are the differences you observe between graphic design and illustration?

David Faüchs: I think graphic design is more demarcated by external parameters and illustration is more organic, intuitive and expressive. Of course this will depend on the type of work but I think illustration is more intuitive, it is something that comes from inside.

CRB: Do you see your illustration practice as problem solving, self-expression or both? Or does this depend on the project?

DF: Self-expression.

CRB: Do you see your graphic design practice as problem solving, self-expression or both? Or does this depend on the project?

DF: Perhaps more in the line of problem-solving.

CRB: Do you ever do both works together (illustration and graphic design)?

DF: Yes, but when I have to do both things, for me it is easier to search for an illustrator who does the images so I can finish the work with graphic design.

When I'm commissioned to do an illustration I do it myself but when they ask me both things at once I prefer to split the work. Of course this also depends on budgets... Let's not talk about that subject... [laughing].

CRB: Would you define your professional work as an illustrator as adapted to the particular needs of the commission/client or as expressive?

DF: In commissioned work I adapt to the needs of the client but my personal illustration practice is more organic and expressive.

CRB: Do you observe any important differences in both approaches?

DF: Yes.

CRB: What differences do you observe between your graphic design and illustration work? For instance, in terms of thinking processes.

DF: In terms of differences, when I'm making an illustration I never think of the final result but instead it is a creative evolution, whereas in graphic design one is always thinking in the final result and also in a number of rules and limits.

CRB: Do you refer to the limits of the communicative situation including the needs of the client and what they want to convey with the message?

DF: Yes.

CRB: Do you perceive any differences in terms of your experience when you practice illustration and graphic design?

DF: Illustration is more pleasurable, and design too, but I see design more as work, whereas I see illustration not as a hobby but as something more personal. Lately I do more graphic design work rather than illustration. [...] For me, illustration is more related to experimentation. [...]

CRB: What motivates you to work? What is your central motivation?

DF: I like to work and I like what I do because one never does the same thing. I like commissioned work, although there might be a number of repetitive things, they ask you to do new things. I like the challenge of not knowing how I will solve the problem. Jobs might be similar but not the same.

CRB: What demotivates you when you work?

DF: Certain clients and certain commissions... Many times these situations demotivate me. One has to learn to say no in order to avoid demotivation.

CRB: Do financial rewards influence motivation or demotivation in any way?

DF: Yes. [laughing] Yes, yes, yes. Let's say financial rewards motivate me and demotivate me depending on the amount of the compensation. [...] There are even non-rewarded works... Nevertheless, there are some cases in which non-rewarded works could be more motivating than some compensated works... If I like the project, the conditions, the team.

CRB: Have you ever felt alienation or anomie due to your creative work?

DF: Yes, both of them.

CRB: Have you identified what provoked those situations?

DF: Yes, in the case of anomie, when you deal with clients who do not know what they want. Regarding alienation, when clients are too demanding, they ask you to do a lot and the compensation is not balanced with your efforts. Finally, a combination of both: very demanding clients who do not know what they want. It is very complicated... I have found a bit of everything over the years...

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects?

DF: Not at the moment, but I did in the past. Nowadays it is hard to find the time.

CRB: Are you very busy at the moment?

DF: Not very busy. More than anything it has to do with the search of financial safety... Instead of dedicating time to my personal projects I search for new commissioned works and the few time I have for myself I use it to rest. It's not a lack of motivation...

CRB: Does the search for security generate a conflict with experimentation and risk-taking?

DF: I guess as one has a certain level of security working in projects that one knows how to do, enjoys and are compensated, before dedicating time to experimentation and risk-taking one starts thinking: "what would be the benefit of this?" Even though it might provide a personal profit or an experience, one starts leaving those projects in second place.

CRB: What are differences between commissioned works and self-motivated works?

DF: In commissioned work there is a financial compensation. Ideally! [laughing]. One enjoys more self-motivated work. However, there are some commissioned works that can be pleasurable. But personal work is more organic, experimental... One does not know where it will lead and how the final result will look like, whereas in commissioned work one tends to know how the final result will look like or what should be the final result. In personal practice one experiments and searches for that result without knowing...

CRB: Do you think work can be approached as play?

DF: Yes.

CRB: Do you see differences between working and playing?

DF: Yes, nevertheless, when one works one tries to play or search an element of play...

CRB: Do you associate play with the characteristics of self-motivated projects, such as experimentation, exploration, and not knowing the results beforehand, or does it involve anything else?

DF: It implies having certain ground rules but not knowing where the whole thing will end.

CRB: So, for you play, entails an element of surprise, is that correct?

DF: Yes. At the moment I am working in a project in which I do not really know how the final result would look like and it is highly motivating but at the same time it involves many challenges and a high level of risk. [...]

CRB: So you are saying that certain commissioned works can be approached as play, is that right?

DF: Yes.

CRB: And in the case of self-motivated projects do you feel the ludic element?

DF: Yes, the difference is one does not have that level of pressure. And perhaps that is the reason why one does not dedicate so much time to these projects because as the result is not very important... It is not for someone else. Actually, it is for someone: oneself! But in terms of pressure it is not so much.

CRB: It is a more relaxed process then?

DF: Yes, and may be that relaxation does not help. If it is a self-motivated project that one has to submit or present anywhere or to someone else that small pressure will help one to dedicate more time or to search for the time to do it.

CRB: Do you think that when you use a ludic approach, that playful element manifests in the final results of your work?

DF: No, I don't think so.

CRB: What about the experience? Does the ludic element manifest in the creative process?

DF: Yes, but it depends on the materials or techniques I use.

CRB: Do you see a relationship between play and creativity?

DF: Yes. Both involve an important use of imagination in order to achieve the goals.

CRB: Have you ever managed to approach work as play?

DF: No, not always.

Interview with Fanny Espinet

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 08/03/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What are the differences you observe between graphic design and illustration?

Fanny Espinet: Graphic design is about corporative or brand image, whereas illustration has to do with instincts, it is more artistic. Additionally, at a personal level, illustration has a therapeutic function. I use it to express myself. Graphic design is functional. I would never do graphic design work for myself.

CRB: Would you define your professional work as an illustrator as adapted to the particular needs of the commission/client or as expressive?

FE: Expressive.

CRB: What differences do you observe between your graphic design and illustration work?

FE: As I said before, graphic design is always client-oriented, whereas illustration I do it for myself and even when they commission me to do something it involves affect.

CRB: Are you saying that graphic design always require you think of someone else, whereas you make illustrations for yourself even when it is commercial practice?

FE: Yes.

CRB: And in terms of the thinking processes involved in graphic design and illustration, are they similar or different?

FE: No. They are different. I think one can let oneself go a lot more in illustration. I do not know why but it is like more introspective... Illustration is like a "mini-world" or a "bubble" [...] In graphic design you have to think a lot more in terms of an audience. Even though both have to do with communication but for me illustration has to do with instincts and emotions... Illustration allow one... I feel it in my guts, I'm not sure I can explain it better than this...

Additionally, for me, illustration is more related to traditional materials and graphic design with digital technology.

CRB: Do you see your illustration practice as problem solving, self-expression or both? Or does this depend on the project?

FE: It depends on the project, but expression it is very important, it tends to predominate in illustration.

CRB: Do you see your graphic design practice as problem solving, self-expression or both? Or does this depend on the project?

FE: Graphic design is more about problem-solving, however, it also entails expression because it wants to transmit something. But it is usually more rigid

because clients want to communicate very particular things. Graphic design is colder.

CRB: Do you perceive any differences in terms of your experience when you practice illustration and graphic design?

FE: I enjoy much more illustration. Having to think of another person, the client, the context, the situation, makes the experience colder as well. [...]

CRB: What motivates you to work? What is your central motivation?

FE: Money is evidently important. It is work. Therefore, one does commissioned work with the expectation of having a reward in order to survive, but one is fortunate enough to work in a profession one likes.

CRB: Do you always like working?

FE: More or less, yes, I always like it, but depending on the specific conditions of the work, I could like it more or less. But, at first, I like the work I do.

CRB: All of them: graphic design, illustration, art direction?

FE: Yes.

CRB: Do you know why you like these professions?

FE: Because they are always different, you never do the same thing, you do not stagnate doing every single day the same task.

CRB: What demotivates you when you work?

FE: What demotivates me is the little value they grant to... Most of the times one spends lots of hours doing work that is not monetarily rewarded or at least not as it should be. [...] and then one thinks: how come I cannot make it to the end of the month having worked the whole month? Ok, I enjoy working but, considering I enjoy working, why cannot I have a higher standard of living? That is what demotivates me: the little value they grant to *everything*

artistic. In the end it seems that clients consider we do not work but we just have fun. And, moreover, some even say, "you should be grateful because you are charging your work..." and one says, "What? Should I be thanking for receiving a compensation for my work? I make a living out of this. This is my profession. I have trained to be able to do it. I don't just do it because I like it, I am lucky enough to like it but I should be able to make a living out of it."

CRB: Have you ever find yourself in the situation that they don't pay you for your work or that there are delays in payment?

FE: Yes, many times. Both situations: delays in payment and unpaid commissions.

CRB: Has that affected motivation in any way? Do you still feel passionate for the profession?

FE: I still feel passionate about it, but one moves more carefully regarding clients. One starts to know clients better... [...]

CRB: Have you ever felt alienation or anomie due to your creative work?

FE: Yes, yes. Both of them, in illustration, graphic design and art direction.

CRB: Have you identified what provoked those situations?

FE: Normally, both of them. For instance, when they commission one work and everything starts with lots of demands and additionally they need it in two days... One wants to do good work but one thinks "I just have one day to do it and they are paying me crap! How can I make good work without having negative consequences?" And one feels angst because we all want to do good work. That provokes lots of stress. It's a very bad thing. It is not cool at all... [...]

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects?

FE: Yes, in a number of different illustration projects but never graphic design projects...

CRB: What are differences between commissioned works and self-motivated works?

FE: It is very different. There is no pressure in what one does for oneself because there are no deadlines and nobody will tell you if it is right or wrong [...], one does not have any expectations about results, whereas in commissioned work, one has the pressure of hitting the target and approach as close as possible to the idea the client has in mind. Therefore, one has to establish a communication with them in order to try things... It is a complete different approach to work... There is a lot of pressure, deadlines, one does not have enough creative freedom, even when clients say you will have it, it is not the case because even if they say: "Feel free to do what you want" and you do something and they say "No, no. That is not what I had in mind. You have to do this, this and that" and you say: "Then it is not freedom because I cannot do what I want to do..." Therefore, clients are setting a number of parameters and limits, thus, you say: "You are not letting me do things my way, quite on the contrary, you are clipping my wings..." When you work in personal projects things are completely different.

CRB: Has it ever happened to you that you leave personal projects without finishing them?

FE: Oh yes. Yes, yes. That happens very often. Lots of ideas that were never made real... [...] [laughing]

CRB: Quite different from commissioned work, right?

FE: Yes, totally.

CRB: Nevertheless, have you managed to finish personal projects?

FE: Yes, of course.

CRB: Thus, can you compare both approaches? What are the differences? How do you feel when you manage to finish a self-motivated project? Do you feel prouder of the results?

FE: Yes, perhaps I do, because one was able to start and finish the project. It seems to have more merit. Let's be clear: to start and finish a self-motivated project takes a lot of effort [laughing]. Particularly when one is not very methodical, I am not very methodical... Thus, when I start and finish a project it means a lot! [laughing] I've finished it! Evidently, when it is for a client, one starts and finishes the work because one has to submit it. Nevertheless, for me self-motivated projects are much more satisfactory.

CRB: Do you think work can be approached as play?

FE: Yes, of course.

CRB: Why?

FE: Well, especially in our line of work that involves a creative process. Sometimes or either you approach it as play or... Well, it is not mechanical because if it is creative it allows one to let oneself go... As a matter of fact, it will be interesting that everyone considered creative work a bit more as play in order to lose automaton-like mechanical habits or dark repetitive patterns... It is cool that a stain comes out different... Even though these things might be considered mistakes but mistakes are cool sometimes...

CRB: I guess that is one of the reasons why you prefer to work with traditional materials, right?

FE: Yes. Trialling materials, experimenting, letting oneself go... When one starts playing one opens up... It is as if fear disappears... If one takes things too seriously, it is like a final exam [...] But if one plays, one starts testing things... Let's try this, let's try that... If things do come out right, fine; if they do not come out right, there is no problem... Let's try again... I think it is very important to play.

CRB: Do you see a relationship between play and creativity?

FE: Yes, they go hand in hand.

CRB: What is your definition of play and/or playing?

FE: It is a way of learning in which you enjoy the moment, you let yourself go, you experiment, you try out new things, you lose fear of doing things... Mistakes are accepted in play. Play implies entering into a state of mind that allows you to open up.

CRB: It seems you observe a relationship between play and experimentation but is it exactly the same?

FE: Yes, why not? Yes.

CRB: Do you think work can always be approached as play? Do you manage to approach all the works you do as play?

FE: No, not all. They cease to be play when they imply lots of guidelines and limits. When they provide you with lots of parameters and they say: "it has to be done like this and like that and within these limits. Do it." When they don't let you... I was about to say, "when they don't let you play", [...], when they don't let you create but instead they tell you to do precise things. Therefore, you are not playing you are working. For instance, when they ask you to do a mechanical work... One plays when one is able to create, when there are no guidelines...

CRB: Nevertheless, I guess you like to play using certain rules... I mean you might have some freedom but a number of rules and rewards as well, otherwise it wouldn't be work, right?

FE: Yes, of course.

CRB: Do you see a relationship between play and motivation? For instance, comparing the "mechanical" assignments you were mentioning and

assignments that give you enough freedom to play, do you feel the same levels of motivation?

FE: I think in order to feel motivated one needs to play a bit before starting the work.

CRB: Are you suggesting that play should be used as a warm-up for creative work?

FE: Yes. [...] Play is a way of opening new paths. That is why I think it is important to play. [...]

CRB: Do you observe differences, both in terms of experience and results, between those works you manage to approach as play and those you approach more conventionally?

FE: In terms of experience, it is cooler if it is more ludic because one is able to feel work as if it were one's own. [...] One feels as a part of the project even if it is done for someone else. Results should be the same, even I acknowledge that one feels more motivated by a ludic project, rather than by a project with rigid guidelines.

Interview with Pablo Navarro
Format: face-to-face
Language: Spanish
Date: 14/08/2015

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What motivates you to work? What is your central motivation?

Pablo Navarro: Not to betray myself — there is something inside of me that I do not even know what it is that pushes me to do it —; then there are more social things, such as what people that surround me would like [...]. It is satisfactory to do so. Then there is something inside of me that drives me to

express something. It is difficult to put in words but there is something inside of me that moves me. [...] It is curious because many times this process involves a lot of suffering, something that goes beyond effort. My central motivation is something that burns inside and urges me to express myself. [...] One has a feeling inside that needs to come out. [...]

CRB: What demotivates you to work?

PN: Mediocrity. When mediocre people decide what one has to do. [...] What most demotivates me is when someone commissions work for what one can potentially do and then they do no let one do it... When they set limitations, such as "you cannot use the colour red" or "you cannot use this word", these can make you more creative in other ways. But, for instance, when they say, "The character has to have four legs but has to move as a two-legged human." Then they are blocking the creative process with illogical requests. That fits within what I call "mediocrity": people who do not know about the field and are directing or leading projects. This is what demotivates me a lot. But, eventually, one, as a creative person who tries to enjoy with one's work, mediocrity ends up being one more constraint coming from the client. Thus, one ends up considering mediocrity as another limitation one has to deal with. Sometimes this works and sometimes it does not. Of course, the results are not always as good as they could have been and therefore one does not end as satisfied as if they had allowed one to do one's work correctly but... That is what most demotivates me.

CRB: Have you ever felt alienated due to your creative work?

PN: No. Not really. Even in the cases I had to betray myself doing something I do not like, I always found ways to do the work in a manner that I found something interesting there. However, in certain cases one realises that one has smoked more cigarettes during the process... [laughing] Nevertheless, the creative process can be quite self-destructive at times; one has to give a lot of oneself. [...] Sometimes one even gives a bit of one's sanity... One uses it as an exchange currency.

CRB: That is precisely what I am asking. What do you think it means when one is suffering such things? What provokes those situations?

PN: There are many types of destructive situations. In certain cases one feels one will suffer a heart attack for having to shut up about the absurdity of a brief or reaches a point in which one wants to say "you can go to hell!" to the client or one would just want to leave the room running because one feels one is about to suffer a panic attack. There are lots of things. Those are just examples... But even when things go all right one gives a part of one's sanity to the project.

CRB: For you, what is the difference between working and playing?

PN: If they let me do what I want to do, there is no difference. If I cannot do what I want or if they start bothering me badly, it is work. If they let me do my thing it is not like work. Otherwise one would not resist it. One resists because one is able to transform work into play. Even within bad works.

CRB: You are saying that one has to be able to find time to play within work?

PN: Yes. If I were not able to find an element of play at work, I would have left this profession a long time ago. If one did not have the illusion that work can be transformed into play, it would be unbearable. In some cases one is able to find the play element during all the work, in others it lasts only ten minutes... It is a hard work.

CRB: When you started with your professional career, did you see drawing as a type of play?

PN: Yes. That is probably the reason why things went so wrong! [laughing] Yes... I could only do it the first day of work... I'm just joking. Yes, otherwise I would not carried on working in this profession...

CRB: How do you approach work now?

PN: With more maturity. With the experience of all these years. I enjoy it more, even when I do not enjoy it... I anticipate a lot of things. There are very

few things that surprise me nowadays. That helps one to remain calm. Things come out better and faster. The suffering I was mentioning before has reduced a lot. Experience is very important. Nevertheless, that does not mean that one does not need to leave the comfort zone at times, and you feel as if it were the first day of work again. Some artists might say, "You are stuck now. You are too comfortable." But I believe the obsession with avoiding stagnation and constantly searching for new challenges is impossible to maintain for a long period of time. It is a controlled suicide. The brain would not resist. Things are as they are. There are things that are more comforting than others but... This is what I mean with being more mature about the way I face work now. Nevertheless, at times, I feel as the boy I was when I started drawing.

CRB: Do you draw a line between those two worlds: the world of the boy who started to play with drawing and the world of the adult who needs to make a living out of drawing?

PN: Yes. It is like that; a sort of dissociation. There is the person who has meetings through Skype with clients and then there is the boy who plays with drawing and wonders with each frame he draws.

CRB: Do you see that phenomenon as dissociation or is there a strange association operating at some level?

PN: No. It is as if I were two persons. [laughing] There are two persons: one that has the feet on the ground, whereas the other has the head in the clouds... And the one who plays hides from the grown ups. The one that plays hides from the client. I cannot show them that I play. If I did, they would probably do not allow me to play... [laughing] [...] In some works one can show that one plays and they even pay one to play, but these kind of works are very scarce... However, the jobs in which one is allowed to play and they pay one to play are the ones that produce the best results. Otherwise, one has to hide and then show the results. Then the client very happily asks one, "How have you done this?"

CRB: How many times did that happened? I mean that you were paid to play.

PN: Two times... [laughing]

CRB: Two times. In how many years of practice?

PN: Since 1995... More than a hundred clients. Two. [laughing] In the work I am doing now, they allow me to play.

CRB: Would that be the second or the third time then?

PN: No. This is the second time. [laughing] I cannot even remember the first time. But I know it happened some other time! [laughing]

CRB: What is the place of play in your creative practice in general?

PN: I believe it is at the base. [...] I think it is going to play to idea world where everything can happen, a sort of Neverland. [...] I think when one is able to play the results are extraordinary [...]

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects? What place do these personal projects occupy in your professional practice?

PN: Yes. They are a sort of shelter... They are always there... They are sort of motivation when you have do crap work. One sets the rules. It keeps motivation alive; they allow one to create new things. It doesn't matter if they remain in a platonic level. [...]

CRB: What are the differences between commissioned work and self-motivated practice?

PN: In self-motivated projects one experiences freedom and happiness but they do not have the main components of commissioned work: deadlines and someone bothering you reminding you that you have to finish and submit the work. Thus, they are never-ending. Of course, one could finish them if one were stricter but, if one works on self-initiated projects during one's free time, it is hard to be strict with oneself. Perhaps if one were exclusively working on

those projects, one might be able to finish them but even like that one is not one's best boss... [...] I find pleasure in both. In one's projects nobody tells one what to do but, when someone tells you what to do, and you play and you manage to make the clients like what you do, it is a double level of satisfaction... You are winning a battle against mediocrity. [...]

CRB: Do you see your practice as problem solving, self-expression or both? Or does this depend on the project?

PN: I see commissioned work as problem solving and self-motivated practice as self-expression.

Interview with Genís Carreras

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 26/01/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Do you see any differences between working and playing?

Genís Carreras: I work because working is my favourite game. I would work even if didn't need to work [...]. For me it is a creative game. Basically, it is about taking up challenges, overcoming problems and achieving objectives. Thus, I consider work a type of game.

CRB: What is the place of play in your creative process?

GC: If I do not enjoy with my practice, I understand that my audience will not enjoy seeing my work either. There has to be a sparkle within the work and that sparkle comes from the play aspect, how play engages you.

CRB: How would you define play?

GC: Videogames had a special place in my childhood; I grew up with them. [...] I think one useful thing about games is that real life many times it is very chaotic, one does not arrive at conclusions in projects, whereas in a game rules and objectives are very clear and also the time one has. Therefore, the rules and the structure of the game are very useful for work.

CRB: So you apply it to your work. According to what you are saying, you are quite conscious of this, is that correct?

GC: Yes, yes. [...]

CRB: Do you see any relationship between play and creative practice?

GC: As I said, when one is immersed in the creative process, perhaps this is not play, but one has to feel this sparkle, this thing, and I think to approach it as a sort of game helps to make the creative process more fluid. [...] Thus, how one feels during the creative process is reflected in the results. As a matter of fact, I use a lot the word "playful" to define my own work.

CRB: Do you see any link between play and experimentation?

GC: I think, as years pass by, I experiment less in terms of letting my imagination go wild [...] Nowadays I do not experiment that much in personal projects. I would say experimentation in personal projects is a type of play, but I am not using this approach a lot at the moment.

CRB: Have you always managed to approach work as play or are there any works you cannot approach this way?

GC: It all depends. I have worked in advertisement agencies in which work was just a compulsory thing to do, but I have almost always approached my freelance practice as a type of game.

CRB: Do you see any relationship between work approached as play and motivation?

GC: Yes.

CRB: In terms of results, do you observe any differences between those works that you approach as play and those in which you do not?

GC: As I mentioned, when I work as a freelancer, I approach my practice as a game, but when I worked for someone else [hired] I was very aware of those projects in which I felt comfortable, in which I felt I was producing good results, and those in which I did not.

CRB: Was that the compulsory feeling you were mentioning before?

GC: Totally. And I think the art director, who was my boss, was also aware of this. He knew when I was having a good time and when I was not... [...]

CRB: Do you use any play-based approaches or creative games of your own?

GC: No. I use lots of lists. I am a big fan of lists and calendars but I wouldn't say that I use any kind of creative games.

CRB: You use them to define challenges and to mark off the ones you fulfilled, right?

GC: Yes, yes. Achieved objectives.

Interview with Gemma Rabionet

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 01/11/2015

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: Do you consider your practice as self-expression, problem solving or both? Or does this depend on the project?

Gemma Rabionet Boadella: Both. But there are also differences depending on each project.

CRB: What motivates your creative work?

GRB: [It is a sort of inner need.] What motivates me is to bring new things to society. [...] And also to bring new creative models, to stimulate people.

CRB: What demotivates when it comes to creative work?

GRB: When one has to work in, let's say, a production and one starts creating and many times one is not able to use or include skills or parts of oneself that one likes or needs to manifest. At this point I have assumed that, but that is the reason why it is important to channel part of that creative energy in personal projects because otherwise there is no space for it. But when one starts working and the clients do not provide answers or when you need to work as part of a team or with someone else and they do not give you enough information or they provide you with the wrong information. That demotivates me... Well, it upsets me... Yes, it is a kind of demotivation. If they do not value my work afterwards, well, that's not so important, but when they communicate with "greys" and that makes you to execute badly or to underperform that demotivates me. As I said, if they don't recognise my work, I don't care because they hired me for it and if they don't give my work enough importance I acknowledge it myself. But when you cannot perform because they come out with snags because the work is not planned, it is wrongly designed, uses bad logistics or is ill-organised, then I disconnect from the project. Nevertheless, I always try to do my best but these kinds of things demotivate one. Instead if one receives feedback, if there is a return signal, if communication exists, this does not mean that everything should be positive, but constructive. If the parts that compose the project are allowed to grow and to do it correctly, that motivates me, but when they start shutting doors without providing explanations or when they make you perform badly or when they put you in a risky position or when they make you do the work four times, that demotivates me, and alienates me.

CRB: So communication problems could summarize it...

GRB: No. Disorganisation. When you work as part of a team and there is no good organisation that has an impact on the work because there is no good communication and that leads to disorganisation because they haven't talked with you, they haven't said a number of things because they haven't thought about possible problems... When they make decisions on the way... When they say, "We'll cross the bridges when we come to them", that is unacceptable working as a team. When works in personal projects one can be very chaotic but when you work with another person, even if it is just one person, it is inadmissible. I think that is one of the few areas where I am quite rigid. I am very flexible in a number of things, even chaotic, but when I work with another person, I don't like that. As time is very important for everyone, I don't like people to waste my time. Then, when apart of wasting my time, they make me underperform and, additionally, I have to stay without sleeping because they make me do the same work more than once, affecting my body and my life... That is all consequence of disorganisation because the work was not planned, pre-production was bad, they have managed time badly... They should be giving you answers and, as they do not have time, that does not happen and this ends up affecting not just one person but the whole team. The worst thing is that this problem affects both small and big productions. Unfortunately, I have enough experience to tell already.

The fact that they do not see your potential or that they do not help you to manifest it is also another thing that demotivates me. The lack of interest in the people, that also demotivates me. I think it is quite important the human dimension as related to work. I am talking about respect for another human being, when they do not see you in the eye. I cannot bare that lack of respect for the other.

CRB: What is the importance of economic rewards in terms of motivation or demotivation?

GRB: Yes, they should and important factor but, unfortunately, they are never really balanced with one's efforts and dedication. Of course this ends up demotivating one.

CRB: Have you ever felt alienated due to your creative work?

GRB: Well, yes. [...] When they ask you to copy someone else. That alienates me because supposedly they hire one due to one's creative skills. Or they hire one to do a creative work and then they end up asking one to do bureaucratic work or something else that is not what they hired one in the first place. It is a sort of cheat. It upsets me and demotivates me and alienates me. Sometimes I think that clients or hirers might not even realise of the effects of such things and other times I think they consciously don't want to acknowledge one because they might need to treat one with more respect, pay more, etc. [...]

CRB: What is the difference between working and playing?

GRB: For me, when I play I drift. When I start playing I let myself go and I do not seek anything in particular. [...] For me play is essential to stimulate my creative practice and to remain motivated. It allows me to explore techniques, materials, and compositions working with not very clear objectives and enjoying a lot without judging myself. [...] I allow myself to give birth to a number of strange things or disharmonies. The results always surprise me. Play generates exploration, spontaneity and fresh ideas. Even I acknowledge that, in order to be creative, ideas have to end up being something concrete, when I play there is an openness that allows me to find new things without searching anything in particular. Whereas, when one works in a commissioned project, although one might be opened to new ideas, there are a number of parameters one has to keep in mind. Therefore, if there are sizes, colours, budgets or a series of elements that I have to consider in order to develop the project. Hence, within those parameters, there is a creative process, and I can play a bit with ideas, but these parameters that one has to respect define a clear difference. For me this distinction is very important because in this case I am seeking for something specific. Even though the creative process might seem similar, when I play I do not seek something concrete, perhaps sometimes I search something in particular, but if things end up far away from the initial goal, I let myself drift and I enjoy it, whereas if I have to do a professional assignment, I need to submit it and I cannot stay longer than necessary or if they pay me a certain amount of money I cannot

dedicate myself longer than what is required. I do not deny there is a play aspect in commissioned work [...] but the attitude is quite different.

CRB: So, in the former, the drifting mode, the goals are experimentation and discovery, right?

GRB: Yes, totally, experimentation and discovery. It is like going to a place in which I don't see anything. It is like going towards the night. There is darkness. I don't see anything. I don't see... Instead, the other approach [commissioned work] is like a bright light. I see things in a defined way. [...] I have to go in that direction. The path or the route is demarcated, and thus everything is much clearer, whereas in the play approach parameters change: play is explorative, experimental. I allow myself to make mistakes because if it comes out badly one can transform it or use it as a starting point for another work. It is like putting oneself at risk, abandoning the comfort zone doing things that you do not know how to do. For me, to explore and to experiment entails that. Instead, in commissioned work there is a creative aspect but it does not have to do that much with play or if there is play it is not the same. The biggest difference is the rigidity of the parameters. Of course, if one plays a board game there are a number of parameters but the kind of creative play I like is almost like a game without rules: invent your own path, go wherever you want. For me it is like a free play indeed, where I find new things about me or inner subjects that I do not really know where they come from. [...]

CRB: Have you ever found yourself in the situation where you cannot play in commissioned practice?

GRB: Yes. In almost every work... Well, in theory, my professional practice has a creative aspect because one has to conceive something, develop it and materialise it, but although it has that creative premise most of the times, one cannot play. [...] Not the kind of play I like at least. This is particularly the case of film productions. When I work in theatre there is a bit more space for playing.

CRB: So what is the space you manage to give to play within professional practice?

GRB: In many projects you cannot do it but, if I think of theatre projects, which usually allow me a bit more of space for creativity, I always manage to play a bit. [...] Nevertheless, in a scale from one to ten, if I compare them with my personal projects where play has a space of seven to nine, professional projects allow you a maximum of three to four... I guess play is always there but it is much more difficult to give it the right space.

CRB: So have you ever been able to approach professional work as if it were play?

GRB: I try... It is never the kind of play I prefer but I try.

CRB: Then, do you think work can be approached as play?

GRB: I try because it is part of my creative process and also because I think one enjoys it a lot more. If one just do it as a task... if one just executes... but play as a process leads to enjoyment [...] and stimulates one and it is less alienating. [...] The playful attitude is very important. Nevertheless, it is not very easy to keep it all the time. [...] But if one does not play, everything could become too depressing and heavy. [...] Play is very positive, it is very constructive because it takes away pressure and thus there is no fear of making mistakes. Of course, when one works one has to do it right, one is a professional, and one has been trained to do it right but sometimes one ends up losing enjoyment... [...]

CRB: Do you work in self-motivated projects?

GRB: Yes, yes. Different kinds, some have to do with illustrated fantasy stories [...], others are related to product design, others are editorial projects, and some are collaborative projects. And all these project nourish one's creativity because as one enjoys them a lot more they provide much more interesting results [...] and also give one strength to do the other type of [commissioned] work, which is less in tune with one's interests. Thus, they

give one confidence to connect with one's true goals and go beyond. And they also provide strength to do the more undesirable aspects of one's work. They give a chance to find one's creative space so that people can know better what it is one really want to do and they give one strength to resist working in more alienating jobs... Now, one has to be extremely disciplined to find the time to work in these personal projects because it is quite difficult...

CRB: Then, what are the differences between commissioned work and self-motivated work?

GRB: In commissioned assignments in which I have worked so far there is not a lot of space for imagination, fantasy, different characters and strange and new ideas, everything is more mundane [...] and in the projects where there is more space for imagination budgets are tiny and not a lot of time [...]. Thus, one uses personal projects to experiment and try things, materials, subject matters that one is not able to introduce in commissioned work. [...] Personal projects are more self-rewarding. [...]

CRB: Before you were saying that self-motivated projects require more discipline, is that correct?

GRB: Yes. Commissioned work provides you with financial support and one gives it an important amount of one's time, and then one has one's self-motivated projects that touch other aspects of your life [...] but to have the energy and the time for these projects it is quite difficult.

Interview with Pere Cornellà

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 22/02/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What is your definition of 'game'?

Pere Cornellà: An activity that provides the user with a rewarding experience and demands an active participation and interaction with a system organised by rules that are different from those of the world that surrounds the player.

CRB: What is your definition of 'gamification'?

PC: [...] I will give you my definition, which is related to education because that is my field: 'gamification' means to design learning experiences that can be lived as a game. [...] Nevertheless, I think that any definition of 'gamification' should place at the centre the person or user. For instance, those definitions that state: "the use of game-mechanics and play elements applied to contexts that are not games...", provide quite an ambiguous definition and I am interested in definitions that talk about the final target of the gamified experience.

CRB: Do you see differences between the terms 'play-based dynamics' and 'gamification'?

PC: The former can be the case when a lecturer brings a game to play in class together with the students in order to generate interactions and discussions, although this could be a powerful approach, from my point of view, it is not gamification.

CRB: How long have you been using gamification?

PC: Consciously, five years, but I have been using games for more than two decades.

CRB: How did you arrive at the need of gamifying your classes?

PC: Well, there is a point in which one redefines one's approach to teaching one seeks new ways of doing things. If one settles too much with teaching habits there is no progress. So it happened quite naturally, I started reading some books that talked about gamification as a teaching approach and gamified experiences and I thought, "that sounds like fun" because it linked with my previous interest in games as a teaching tool. Thus, I felt quite

comfortable with it, even though it forced me to leave my comfort zone as a lecturer and to do a rather different thing, which implied a redefinition of my whole teaching approach, including evaluation. Therefore, it ended up being an excuse that allowed me to observe my whole teaching practice. Hence it enabled me to shift my perspective and to see myself from a different point of view and to question everything I had been doing up to that moment and to search for new ways of teaching and to centre on users' experiences, my students in this case.

CRB: Do you think these tools are necessary to compete with and as a consequence of the high amount of information and other stimuli that we are used to receive nowadays?

PC: [...] It is not about competing but to integrate things that students consider natural such as using their mobile phones.

CRB: Do you still use non-gamified teaching techniques?

PC: Yes, but it is very hard for me...

CRB: What are the differences that you observe between these two teaching approaches?

PC: It is hard not to gamify... In some modules it is hard to introduce it because I share modules with other lecturers. I observed that gamified classes provide much better results. People engage much more. [...] For me the key is to combine gamification with real classroom experiences. [...]

CRB: So you observe a radical shift in the students in terms of attention and involvement, is that right?

PC: Yes. By the end of gamified courses I usually ask students a number of questions regarding their experiences. [...] I have never met a student that told me that s/he has not enjoyed the experience. They usually tell me that they had a great time and that the experience and that they found it very positive in learning terms.

CRB: Do you think gamification is easier for digital natives?

PC: I'm not sure... Nevertheless, I would say it is not important... Even considering that digital natives have lived immersed in technological contexts in which videogames had an important role, but that shouldn't be enough because the concept of gamification is not necessarily linked to technology.

CRB: Why do you think students are more motivated with this gamified dynamics?

PC: I think one provides students with one more element of membership, they become aware that they are part of a group, one is proposing them to share something in common and they need to become involved in the project. [...] The power of play is magical. It is very difficult to find students who do not like to play. So when one suggests the tasks within the game mechanics and provides students with surprises, all these elements motivate them. Of course, one has to use of these resources gradually. For instance, I use Moodle a lot and I use it to gamify. At the moment I am even writing things about "gamoodlification"... [laughing], which implies the question "how can I use Moodle at the service of gamification?" Small details, such as a progress bar. Students see that progress bar and they are aware of all the tasks they have finished and also of the tasks they still have to submit. [...] That element gives them a clear vision of where they are in terms of the course progress. Additionally, there is another element that is central, which is the lecturer's motivation. So, as I enjoy gamifying, I am very motivated in the classes and that motivation is transmitted to the students and they end up very grateful for this. [...]

CRB: Gamified teaching techniques imply more work for the lecturer?

PC: [laughing] Yes, but the type of work one does with lots of enthusiasm. And yes, the first time you do it. Nevertheless, the more you do it the less work it implies. [...]
Arguably, good teaching in general implies more work. [...]

Interview with Jordi Márquez

Format: face-to-face

Language: Catalan

Date: 06/03/2017

Carlos Ruiz Brussain: What is your definition of 'game'?

Jordi Márquez: It is a device with predefined rules that one uses to enjoy oneself.

CRB: What is your definition of 'gamification'?

JM: It is the use of game elements in a context that is not that of games. Education could be a good example of this.

CRB: Do you see differences between the terms 'play-based dynamics' and 'gamification'?

JM: Yes. [...] I see differences. 'Play-based dynamics' use a number of play elements, such as rankings, points, etc., but in order to be 'gamification' there is one more level needed, for instance, the story and the design that help to put all those elements together. [...] The former, using rules or ludic criteria, that can produce feelings of enjoyment in the users, for instance using competitive parameters, whereas the latter involves an immersive experience.

CRB: How long have you been using gamification?

JM: Three years.

CRB: How have you arrived at the need of gamifying your classes?

JM: Well, my module [programming] was quite heavy for students. Most of our students come from art school and my module has a strong technological and scientific component. I observed that when I proposed certain tasks students were not very motivated and I thought I could solve the problem shifting a bit the methodology I was using to teach until that moment, and I also invented a

game with a scenery and a story where they could apply the things they were learning in order to make them feel more motivated. In the previous model, by the end of the course many students were aware of the utility of what they were learning but at the beginning they were not very enthusiastic about the contents of the module. Thus, gamification makes them 'enter' the module in a much easier and more relaxed way.

CRB: Thus, it had to do with increasing the levels of motivation of the students?

JM: Totally, but it could also be increasing the level of learning. Nevertheless, even if the learn the same but they have a great time, I would be happier. But it is quite evident that if their level of motivation is higher so they might also learn more.

CRB: Do you think these tools are necessary to compete with and as a consequence of the high amount of information and other stimuli that we are used to receive nowadays?

JM: Yes. I think so. Today it is a lot more difficult to pay attention to just one thing when you are receiving many different inputs at the same time. One possible way of attracting the students' attention is to create something different, innovative, creative, dynamic, etc. [...]

CRB: Do you still use non-gamified teaching techniques?

JM: Yes. As a matter of fact, at the moment I deliver the same module contents to two different groups but using different teaching approaches. One is a control group with which I use gamified techniques and the other is a group where I use traditional techniques.

CRB: What are the differences that you observe between these two teaching approaches?

JM: I still cannot arrive at any conclusion at a learning level but I observe a higher level of attention and practical results coming from the group where I use gamification.

CRB: Are your students digital natives?

JM: Yes, they are.

CRB: Why do you think students are more motivated with these gamified dynamics?

JM: Because they are in class but it is a complete different experience. It is an immersive role-play experience in which they have to be a different character.

CRB: So you provide mimicry elements so they can pretend they are something else for a while, right?

JM: Yes. They disconnect from everyday reality for a while.

CRB: Can you think of something else in terms of motivation that justifies the use of these teaching mechanics?

JM: I also think students are more motivated because they are aware that one is attempting to offer them the module contents in a different way and that you are working harder for them, that you are making and effort to help them learn and enjoy with the course. [...]

CRB: Do gamified teaching techniques imply more work for the lecturer?

JM: Yes, particularly when you start implementing them. [...] At the beginning you have to work at least double hours...