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Dynamic Psychiatry

Multidisciplinary Approach in Treatment of Mental Disorders 3

N. G. Neznanov, A. V. Vasileva (St. Petersburg)

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A. Guilherme Ferreira (Lissabon)

Treatment of mental disorders. The importance of psychodynamic and psychosocial models in therapy. Reference to interventions in situations related to the economic crisis in Europe

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The Myth of Facebook. Relationship between Psychology, Addiction and Technology. Are We Addicted to Facebook, or Are We Just Addicted to Ourselves?

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From myth to the reality of the neurological substrate: the path to psycho-neurologic psychotherapy

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Narcissism in contemporary society: Implications and interpretations of Art psychology

Irene Battaglini (Florence, Italy)

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the dynamics of regression, and especially the narcissistic dynamics, that underlie the production of the work in contemporary art, focusing on the dynamics of development of the “loss of the figurative”. The work is built around the premises for a possible revision of the psychology of art in order to “imaginal thinking” and the mythical and archetypal perspective, to get to the manifestation of these aspects in the work of some famous authors, especially starting from work of Picasso and Duchamp, arriving to Cy Twombly, Andy Warhol, Lucio Fontana. This contribution gives an idea for reflection, to postpone to a later study, on how aggression and emotion traceable in contemporary post-modern art (kinetic, performance, the body art), can be originated from a form of a narcissistic wound – on that “shroud that we persist in calling canvas” – inflicted by the domain of the mediatic metaphor, which tends to renunciation of the “discrete object” (increasingly dematerialized), in favour of a “body-subject” always most used by the artist in his task of desecrating and subverting the conventions and expressive pre-existing codes.

Keywords: Bacon, Fontana, Imaginal, Narcissism, Psychology of Art, Twombly, Warhol

But we are curious about the result, just as we are curious about the way a book turns out. We do not want to know anything about the anxiety, the distress, the paradox. We carry on an aesthetic flirtation with the result.

Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, 1843

I. The architrave and the leaf

Psychoanalysis and the whole modern psychology, not to forget philosophy, sociology and anthropology contribution, make available theories and works entirely devoted to the widest and accurate survey on foundational mitologema celebrated by OVIDIO in his *Metamorphoses*. Narcissus is the beautiful son of river god Censur and Lyrope, nymph of the ocean, who asked the soothsayer Tiresias on his son's destiny and had a cryptic answer: Narcissus would have lived as long as he wouldn't have known himself. Narcissus grew up beautiful, caring for nobody but himself. Thanks to his charm he broke the heart of many girls. Echo the Nymph

happened to be one of them, and fell for him after meeting him in the forest in which Narcissus used to hunt; just like the others, though, she was rejected. Because of such disillusion, Echo wore out of love to the point of turning into a shadow, having just the voice. The Gods decided to punish Narcissus and charged Nemesis, goddess of destruction and justice, to scourge him for his indifference towards Echo's love. Nemesis led the boy to the sides of a clear spring which mirrored Narcissus image to his eyes ...

It's not relevant, to the end of this contribution, to enumerate the many portrayals of this myth in the classic and modern painting. CARAVAGGIO, with his *Narcissus* (1597–1599) and DALI with *Narcissus metamorphosis* (1937) are the extreme poles in this continuum of duplicated figures, which nemesis in the history of narcissism is expressed in the endless series of self-portraits and selfies we are falling, either being the greatest painters or the most common smartphone users.

However the deception of Narcissus against Echo lies in this misunderstanding. First, he perpetrates the theft of the ideal of love as transfert, even before the rapture of the sense on behalf of image. Self-portrait and selfies are echoes of a sound played only by figures. They are but technical retreats of the elaboration of an aesthetic object, which can be established by one's own face like having the features of any other object which the artist or the sketcher feel to be unfinished inside themselves and which they portray in the never pacified attempt of reducing the gap between idea and perception. The echo is the process in which to run out the variance between the original sound and the one who's written down and stamped. By a psychodynamic point of view, a great misunderstanding happened between the narcissistic problem and the need to shape the idea of ourselves and of what we love. Also, the myth is charged by the matter of the theft of representation at the expense of depiction. Narcissus steals to Echo the only chance to turn the object into objectual relationship. And it's this kind of violent usurpation that turns Narcissus into a clearly mercurial myth: it's not a coincidence that Robert GRAVES in *The Greek Myths* (1955) claims that one of the names of Narcissus was Antheus, appellation of Dionysus, and that the flowers associated to its mythological figure were the narcissus, the hyacinth and the bluebottle: an identity with many faces, devoted to meditation and contemplation, but capable to change with sudden outburst of passion.

Narcissus's depiction in a painting or a sculpture, in a stage play or a comedy are expressions, whether brilliant or not, of imagery or narration

in their illustrative function. The narcissistic accent which must be considered as an inner movement, a dynamic that informs the creative process and the concept of an artwork: in other words, narcissism is mostly a starting condition imprinted on the work, an intrinsic motivation or even better the myth that lives inside the author and the work, the archetype riding a shore of art, appropriating it, apart from the artist will. Gilles DELEUZE writes:

[First], photography has taken over the illustrative and documentary role, so that modern painting no longer needs to fulfil this function, which still burdened earlier painters. Second, painting used to be conditioned by certain "religious possibilities" that still gave a pictorial meaning to figuration, whereas modern painting is an atheistic game. Yet it is by no means certain that these two ideas, taken from Malraux, are adequate. [...] In past painting, in turn seems poorly defined by the hypothesis of a figurative function that was simply sanctified by faith. [...] Thus we cannot say that it was religious sentiment that sustained figuration in the painting of the past; on the contrary, it made possible liberation of Figures, the emergence of Figures freed from all figuration. Nor can we say that the renunciation of figuration was easier for modern painting as a game. On the contrary, modern painting is invaded and besieged by photographs and clichés that are already lodged on the canvas before the painter even begins to work. It is dangerous not simply because it is figurative, but because it claims to reign over vision, and thus to reign over painting. Having renounced the religious sentiment, but besieged by the photograph, modern painting finds itself in a situation which, despite appearances, makes it much more difficult to break with the figuration that would seem to be its miserable reserved domain. Abstract painting attests to this difficulty: the extraordinary work of abstract painting was necessary in order to tear modern art away from figuration. But is there not another path, more direct and more sensible? (DELEUZE 1981, p. 6)

Narcissus only owns his image as a way of knowledge. He picks the pomegranate infected from a painful desire not for love, but for a gnosis of life and death: of the extreme self-sacrifice. To look himself from the outside, like a stranger to himself, or to live in the limitation of love that is knowing the other like a condition of self-knowledge through the other? He makes amends of the possibility to portray with religious adherence to the Truth, to God, the World and Man to stay in the game of cross reference of the illusory self-representing which is, in the end, his only vision: his multiple horizon, multiplying at each blink of the eye.

And his pain lays in having to confront with this horizon trying to scratch it and peek on the inside like to a scenery of anatomic forces in the desperate try to return to the canvas the mystery that stays inside reality (Fran-

cis BACON); to placate reality's quiet uselessness gave back from objects debased by routine and celebrated in their immortality (Andy WARHOL), to hurt the projective field like a canvas tight and closed (Lucio FONTANA), to fight against that figure that's semblance and emblem of itself shaking and blurring its outline like a scholar without a teacher (Cy TWOMBLY), but never touching the dress of the gods and of some experiential truth, overstepping the logic of perception and of sensation, in a tiring game of forces that asks over an "untitled".

We focus our approach towards the reality of art: we must consider that each painting comes both from the previous art and the previous extra-pictorial reality, besides the influences and environmental, sociocultural, historical and personal conditions of the authors. It's the historiographic approach learned from Mario Praz with a thematic that "steps over any gap of aesthetic quality" undertaking the "junction responsibility" (ORLANDO 2009, p. XII. In: Praz, 1930). Vision must be heretic to be fertile. Our aesthetic judgement is apart from any positivistic analysis because it runs through intuition, through any history since it assumes art's universality as dimension – not just as a casual experience lent from a lucky building of chaotic perceptions: an axiomatic foundation of human Psyche.

When an artistic process can be defined inhabited by a narcissistic connotation? We can say, using a literary excerpt, that narcissism "isn't due to flesh, but to a sad initiation", as Isabella INGHIRAMI says in *Forse che si, forse che no* (D'ANNUNZIO 1910) about the theory on the painful incestuous delight. Let's try to go beyond the psychopathological dichotomy that opposes the love for self to love for others, and consequently narcissistic and objectual relations.

In KOHUT's vision the artist reveals a narcissistic experience of the world in which there is a narcissistic past, some kind of "inclusion" of the world in his Self, which is in last instance the Self-object. The objectual love then fully combines to bring a positive development of the artist personality, in which the empathy role is crucial for the aesthetic development. He claims that "Self objects are objects which we experience as part of our self; the expected control over them is, therefore, closer to the concept of control which a grownup expects to have over his own body and mind than to the concept of control which he expects to have over others." (1978)

II. "Signo ergo sum"

Andy Warhol's Memento Mori

It is common to think that the perception of the human face changes mostly due to two reasons: its aging as time flows by; and because of the mimic "path" of expressions, emotions, of paralinguistic elements of communication. Of course, a face can change because of a trauma, too, or as it moves through childhood and teenage years, experiencing significant anthropometric variations which can affect the look of its owner even in the matter of identity. Andy WARHOL (Pittsburgh, 1928 – New York, 1987) goes down in the history of iconography by engaging a new level of portraying the face: changing happens on a level of topologic-chromatic organization, turning on connections between areas of the face which aren't usually "perceived together". Warhol marks the debut of the greatest contemporary American art even through his most famous portraits, and with them he makes the big change happen (starting from the 60s) acting on the linguistic genome of Pop Art itself. Even though he ratifies, in his paintings, a brand new way of reading the human face, through a radical change in those neural paths that "build" an identity starting from the face, it is also true that throughout this complex mechanism of cognitive, perceptive and emotional re-construction, he devotes those faces, those human beings that he portrayed to immortality, shifting from a mundane to a hyperuranium dimension with a titanic psychological leap, which has something to teach us upon the correlation between death and the transience of the human life. Antonio SPADARO says:

The death of Warhol's father, occurred when he was very young, left a deep mark on him. But let's also contemplate that he saved himself from a murder attempt by the radical feminist fanatic Valérie Solanas. Lots of signs of death or decay followed him through his brief life. [...] Warhol exorcizes the fear of loss and of fading out, making parading death around its mediatic replication. There's something elusive and "slippery" in Warhol opera. Yes. Warhol fooled us: it was a camouflage all the time. (SPADARO 2007)

Andy WARHOL approaches portrayal art with mercurial guile, through a strong work of avoidance of pictorial rules: in fact he's not universally considered an artist in the most classical meaning, but more a sociocultural, mediatic phenomenon. Truth is that "artist" is an ambiguous term and often used to define all those people whose contribution spreads out from those boundaries which were acceptable up until a certain moment in

time. Nevertheless, his works are a core of contemporary art's dynamics and overall in Art History. Says Walter BENJAMIN in a famous passage of *Theses on the Philosophy of History*:

A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (BENJAMIN 1940; ed. 2007, p. 257-258)

In Art History, Andy WARHOL's portraits are a sequence of physiognomic declinations of the *Angelus Novus* reincarnated in the prophetic characters... When Marilyn Monroe died, in August 1962, WARHOL tribute the actress with a series of works starting from a photography of the now legendary face of the actress which worldwide papers diffused all over the world. Starting from 1972 he commits himself to portraits: stars from fashion and jet set world (Giorgio ARMANI, Carolina di MONACO ...), politicians (Mao TZE-TUNG ...), actors (Liz TAYLOR ...), singers (Mick JAGGER ...), artists (Keith HARING, BASQUIAT ...) and himself, with a long series of self-portraits. Those faces are appearances, countenances, they look, but they "are not", we may say ... but they *mean*! They mean to show an effort to represent the past of their lives in a historiographic perspective which commercializes the identity. WARHOL's point of view has no moral ideal. He's cunning, ineffable, caring towards commitment needs, like an extraordinary *couturier*. The identities expressed in his portraits are „passed“, life has „passed by“, barely touching that body chosen as a simulacrum and became object for the trade of rights of servitude for those bright colours applied on wide areas.

A patchwork can result in warm blankets, but it's hard it becomes something entirely new, because it's made from cluttered pieces here and there, from raw materials wasted, consumed, waste. It becomes new if it's able to generate something new from its single components, but not only because it's something more than the sum of its parts. I mean to talk about the vision that sprinkles from the mosaic of elements that don't suggest the whole, if observed singularly, because that unity is something new that

wouldn't have happened without that peculiar way of joining the parts and which does not depend from the single elements, but from the compositive equation in the mind of the artist. The tints which Warhol uses are now well known in the world of fashion, the faces belong to lives worn out by fame, life, success. How could he reach to create such a radical new portrait of the face, for instance, of Marilyn, without debasing its elegance and without taking advantage of further elements? Through the vendor of illusion, beneath the emerging image and the underlying truth (affluent to the collective memory of that face) spawns a hiatus which inner sense is hardly placed. If the appearance rests untouched (the face), if the name stays unvaried (like Marilyn's), then why do we immediately gain the idea of something completely different, tossing through the future as an icon worth a museum? In other words, why does a simple photograph of Marilyn face is suddenly as worthy as a Cretan finely decorated vase which loses its function as a tool to become the stage onto which a tale is told? Also, what story does Marilyn portrait is telling us? Is it about her or about what she didn't manage to be? Is it talking about things of her face that we never noticed? Her fertile beauty has been twisted on behalf of being consumed through the use of the painting for the spectators needs.

Just like the spectator of his private fantasies would have acted, but nevertheless in plain sight, right in the face, cutting away the Shadow, the "secret" element. The privacy of the transfert – kind of an iconological autonomy every single one of us nurtures in our own psychological domain – is exchanged with the social-graphic value of Marilyn's image, which turns itself into a serial object, like a trade ware, as a Campbell Soup may be.

Not by chance, starting from the 60s, WARHOL seeks for new inspiration, far from luxury wares and turns its eyes on American mass consumers goods sold in Bronx and Brooklyn superstores. The flattening phenomenon out coming from the removal of the volumetric depth – as well as the elimination of shadows, literally speaking, but also of the archetypal Shadow – cuts out several centuries under the dominion of BRUNELLESCHI's perspective rules and therefore activates the mental association for which everything serial goes with the absence of future, meaning, personality, ... like a deployed soldier, a social device useful for the community. All of this simply using flat colour coats. Sure! But that's not the painting of an unskilled scholar, but the chromatic implosions coming from a brilliant creative mind of fashion and communication, in this case an "artist of the times", the restless host of his *Factory*, a focal point in New York's cul-

tural scene. Many artists gathered in this atelier and it's right there where the band *The Velvet Underground* was born. With Roy LICHTENSTEIN, Claes OLDENBURG, Robert RAUSCHENBERG and Jasper JOHNS, WARHOL unwillingly starts the much-discussed American Pop Art.

Philippe DAVERIO (2012) claims: "In the beginning of the 60s, Pop Art conquered Europe and nowadays we cannot overlook this art movement when inspecting art of our times, including artistic experiment of our youngest Italian generations." In fact, the world of art engages, starting with Pop Art – and not only because of it, but answering to an inner, unresolved tension – a regressive dynamic which leads to the dissolution of matter in the artwork. While Picasso is acting in the same way in Europe „hurting” the figure, and bringing to an almost decisive end the millenary moment of the supremacy of the form, Warhol does not harm, but we could say he ab-uses, using the image like a form, establishing a nomination, a labeling: our face is the primary instance connecting to our name, but even his *Brillo Box* identifies a whole world, a category, and Warhol distorts not the meaning, but the representability of this instance. SPADARO, again:

If we consider Warhol's paintings keeping in mind oriental iconography, we can verify that they have a lot of aspects in common. The golden background of icons is translated into the abstract colour background, vivid and bright, of Warhol's portraits. The stillness of oriental display is given by the "freeze frame" look that we experiment when looking at his work, whether portraying people or objects. The de-contextualisation is at its peak compared to visual and historical context. What's also evident is the lack of emotional involvement. Contrasts are neat. Confronting Warhol's painting and icons can seem daring, but flows quite naturally when done in front of the artworks. Warhol's paintings are real "pop icons", as said before. His portraits exhibit pop "saints". By these figures, anyhow, it's worth noticing that in his production is always present the theme of death and the frailty of life. [...] It was impossible for Warhol to escape a sort of constant memento mori. (SPADARO, 2007)

Decontextualize means to eradicate, if identity is involved. An aggressive component, which goes together badly with the theme of spirituality in which it's supposed to be sublimed, canalized. The affection outcomes as coerced, perverted, self-destructive.

WARHOL's greatness mainly stands in having been able to transform the basic aesthetic conflict in a passionate juxtaposition between fame and originality on the one hand, and between reproducibility and seriality from the other.

Still, art critics and formalist theories don't seem to own the diagnostic tools sufficient to understand the change happened in contemporary art, to

understand and explain the novelty that it's facing, and to "read" artworks such as the *Brillo Box* or the *readymade* urinal of Marcel DUCHAMP. Overlooking all this with a diktat, stating that "it's not art" does not explain why, given two Brillo soap boxes, Warhol's one finds its spot in museums, while the "original" (yet "serial") one stays on supermarket's shelvings. Tiziana ANDINA, in the review of *The Abuse of Beauty* by Arthur Danto, claims that

"In this perspective, the elusiveness of Pop Art is, basically, a problem eminently philosophical, indeed on closer inspection, the metaphysical" [Danto says]. [...] In a nutshell Danto would like to offer an essentialist theory. In that means that if we disregard the starting point, which may seem the most historically determined imaginable, Danto aims to provide a universal definition of art, which is not a definition that is forced to change historically, following the changes of its objects. For this, the definition that Danto has in mind must be sufficiently broad and flexible to include the Brillo boxes and can justify the inclusion or exclusion of beauty by contemporary art. (ANDINA 2007, p. 118)

To which necessity, not as much of the artist, but the man, does this phenomenon respond? Who is the man who no longer needs the classical form, but who feels close to his taste the destructive form, the dissonant image, the evanescent installation, who deprives himself from teachers (and therefore from scholars) to leave the scenes to aesthetic artisans? This, because Pop Art wouldn't have had such a great relevance if it hadn't eradicated painting from history. And if it hadn't launched the transformation of art's Dna which development faces today an intricate crossing-over: a point of non-return, a loss of tradition and knowledge which, along with the new generations, will be impossible to recover. But our eyes must be trained to disenchant, because everything is turning, and nothing we can observe is free from a principal unconscious of its own individuation.

The narcissistic drift at the basis of dissociative dynamics, which tends to split the object from the subject, offers several possible interpretive returns, not only for Andy WARHOL, but for a large portion of contemporary art. Let's start from the "aesthetic conflict" by Donald MELTZER:

No event of adult life is so calculated to arouse our awe of the beauty and our wonder at the intricate workings of what we call Nature (since we hesitate nowadays to cite first causes) as the events of procreation. No flower or bird of gorgeous plumage imposes upon us the mystery of the aesthetic experience like the sight of a young mother with her baby and the breast. We enter such a nursery as we would a cathedral or the great forests of the Pacific coast, noise-

lessly, bareheaded. Winnicott's stirring little radio talks of many years ago on the Ordinary Devoted Mother and her Baby could just as well have spoken of the "ordinary beautiful devoted mother and her ordinary beautiful baby". He was right to use that word "ordinary", with its overtones of regularity and custom, rather than the statistical "average". The aesthetic experience of the mother with her baby is ordinary, regular, customary, for it has millennia behind it, since man first saw the world 'as' beautiful. And we know this goes back at least to the last glaciation. (1988, p. 16)

It's about understanding the aesthetic impact that the "sight" of the mother-art has upon the psychology of the sons-artists. This mother appears to be absent, deaf, blind, taciturn, absorbed in her need to generate and spread herself, while the man wears the burden of teaching, learning, improving, igniting, praying, serving, transferring knowledge, setting cities on fire, building cities, crossing oceans, being ready to sail again. She doesn't own, this "Great-Mother-Art", a lengthwise vision on the destiny of the man-apprentice, as striving as she is to extend, to ramify, to embellish every church, to ornate houses, to become history, war, society, organization, business venture. The folding of the man himself, his loneliness, reflected on his symbolic capacity. Meg Harris WILLIAMS (2007) says:

Using an age-old (Platonic) metaphor often reiterated by the poets, BION says the knowledge derived by means of LHK constitutes "food for the mind". This food takes the form of symbols, which incorporate knowledge within the personality. Here psychoanalytic theory comes into line with Romantic poetics, as when COLERIDGE said that "an idea cannot be conveyed except by a symbol" (COLERIDGE 1816).

Andy WARHOL is the man who fully expresses the contemporarily of the artist deprived from the aesthetic conflict: he moves towards an apparently chaotic direction. The beauty of the Great-Mother-Art is alienating, metamorphic, her breast is elusive and maybe too far apart: old Europe with its cathedrals is inaccessible, overwhelming with beauty in its dungeons and catacombs, shut to prevent from the war menace. "Western" society becomes the present mother, allowing the only possible symbolization through the destruction of the beauty denied. The reciprocity of transfert between art and the object of art constellates as the only form of identity, marking the self-referenced and narcissistic destiny of the art that will follow through the years, in America as well as in Europe. Warhol seems to use the emotional negative potential of equipment to annihilate the impact of beauty on his fragile and odd polymorphic structure. His credit is to

have turned into "accessible", as a substitute object, the elusive. Marilyn, elusive. Dish soap and canned soup, shoes and armchairs, remains of memories of a mother-elsewhere.

The gesture in flood of Cy TWOMBLY

Cy TWOMBLY's art is a scream over America. A call of blood and heavens crowded with flowers which shatter in a crimped rumble of infected butterflies. His picture is a gush that breaks the banks of harmony, it's a blow stamping flights for destinations never to be reached, non-possible. TWOMBLY's painting (Virginia 1928 – Italy 2011), express the failure of modernist utopias. Illegible, incoherent, unlikely. Nevertheless it's real, and utterly beautiful. It's important to understand how has it been possible to forge this violent, irreversible union, like an aeroplane plunging at vertiginous speed which tail on fire, and as it spins down like a shooting star. Paintings of such an extraordinary chromatic epiphany, of exploding light. Which signs, colours and shapes are the instrument of land surveying in a deserted planet, warding off its imminent deflagration.

The whole opus of Cy TWOMBLY (painter, engraver, drawer, sculptor) is deep night bursting into dawn, it's the "forgotten language" of Erich FROMM on a screeching blackboard, it's crumbling slate into unlikely shapes, it's the blossoming of burning light scribbles moving fast like a skilled swimmer whose arms babbling into the abyss without loosing – although lost – their wise elegance in the unconscious turmoil.

The "painting" planned by Cy TWOMBLY is a tangible form of non-painting, it's a frantic decision to run towards the language's crisis and sink into this spasm like on the threshold of the neoplasia which quickly eroded the perceptive universe in which decay we play as actors, bound to the monocular vision of reality marginalization or to the merging, regressive confusion of social networks. It's a painting of voices crowding a crossroad, where the contemporary artist is forced to stay, endlessly organizing over and over again images, metaphors and representations in the room of his conscience, while distressed by his own existential paradox, compelled to be at the same time son and god, creature and creator.

Cy TWOMBLY appears to join, to face the stress of the devastating unilateral mythology of the contemporary world, to an "anti-creative" tradition, like his atelier were a renowned academy which highest chair has always been vacant. His originality is so potent that he must hide from himself in order to understand something of his own virtuous and undisciplined

art of the gesture. The technique that has him as a master (the blurring the outlines of his drawings), is the expression of an attack strategy to the sides of orthodoxy, it's a way of saying that the infant is more independent than the Gods and more confident, more violent, more demonic. Moreover, the desire for union is to be moved in a forward flight to the abode of perfection, toward which the puer moves with incessant falls and unfulfilled desire.

The forecast of the future (on what would have been a drawing by Cy TWOMBLY if he had given us the beautiful forms of his immense talent in painting at the expense of his choice of authentic man who decides to become scenery of the myth of the light of the post-industrial), is already beginning to constellate in the controversial environment of the womb of Expressionism, where his first works are born, not in order to a chance, but to become a mythical perspective of the drama of their lives torn apart in which sign and design, outline and shadow, are cleaved yet paired in a tiling in which the dancers seem to stay lonely.

For TWOMBLY the mythical perspective meant strength and feature, meaning and beauty. The painter loved to make his drawings "vehicles for literary contents", and he fought against contours to make free the figures. TWOMBLY's work, if ever ordered on parallel levels, would show a morphology similar to a geologic intra-psycho layering in which alchemical markers have been imprinted. The beginnings, in the early 50s, are defined by KLINE and Paul KLEE influences, and consist in gestural-expressionist paint strokes, in an original and smooth interlacing of lines, words, numbers and portions ("fractions") of objects. He's deeply attracted to Italy, where he finally moves in 1960, when he sets up the first exhibition at Leo Castelli's Gallery.

The 60s are the *Blackboard Paintings* years, big sized works in which he performed calligraphy as in *graffiti* on solid grey, white or brown backgrounds (a technique halfway between painting and engraving) in which writing gets disrobed from its communicative function and transferred in the semantic field of the gesture, until it fully constellates action painting, rich of excerpts like in *Leda and the Swan* (1962) or in the famous battle of Lepanto. In this span of time, which is extremely productive, he starts his first abstract sculptures, which are always, though varied in shapes, covered in white painting. TWOMBLY will use (and will promote through his entire life the use of poor matters) material borrowed from blacksmiths, carpenters, metalworkers, to give distinction to simple shapes put

together, recalling the art of master craftsmen in forging the tools of their trade; a homage to objects, which get free from their condition of useful tools (like letters and written words) to ascend to emblems of their utility: the object, humbled by its specific destination becomes subject of a silent and perennial beauty, like in a process of mummification, in which plaster, varnish, wood, cardboard, metal, paper, fabric, thread, pencils become elements of hand labour and that, covered in white, opaque varnish, undergo their last, immortal treatment.

Halfway through the 70s, TWOMBLY creates "multi-layer" artworks, downright creatures representing the full accomplishment of its unconventional portfolio, built putting together a collage of paper sheets and other pictorial media.

The "hollows" are the necessary cement to the unravelling of a resplendent creativity, making free drawing from linguistic base systems. The sign becomes "lemma" and it's often retracted in a philological mould: like if a brilliant child had the sudden ability to communicate through a language in which word and image met in a volcanic mouth made out of wonders and delicacies, coming to light with extreme care, sometimes with geographic references like in the series of painting of Bolsena (the volcanic lake nearby Viterbo). In these works, the graphic components melt together with increasing technical strength in a whirling dissolution of complete unpredictability, but are sometimes defined by a phantasmagorical sharpness, like some alphabet only a few elected can decipher, like in *Apollodoro*, until reaching, in the 90s, the aesthetic peak of elegant floral specimen that somehow join him, in a sort of reunion with the starting, to the Fauves who characterized his beginnings half a century before, in the American years, during his scholarship with Robert RAUSCHENBERG and Jasper JOHNS.

A brilliant sample is the Four Seasons, gigantic panels which appear to dwell between the stage space and the architectural one, in a dance where colours linking themselves in splashes forever challenging to move downward, pinned against the canvas through invisible strings, like hands struggling to muffle the scream of a goddess of archaic beauty, master of cave art.

The inner plates are filled with violent tension, with intrusive conflict characterized by a cryptic language, that reminds to the constant conflict between violence and silence, sexuality and play, light and background, in a relationship emotionally involving the spectator: a spectator that is

jumping into the painting and soaking his eyes in that mass of colour.

The flowers are, in some works, explosions that belong to the latter part of the pictorial journey of TWOMBLY. He has never been included from American critics in the Pop Art movement; his stubborn style unicity was his greatest luck: his paintings are evaluated millions and desired by most gallerists.

Being his project “non-methodical”, we can only retrace it backward and intercept some of its coordinates, with an inner vision which appears to be the only possible one. And getting back to that alchemical process, stigmatized in the geology of its artworks, it’s not hard to trace an alternation of layers of white, red, black. The dynamic quality of TWOMBLY ‘s work intersects with the static one, guardian of the message, therefore it’s a majestic work separating gold from mud, and adds up an air of mystery and enlightenment, for that unusual proficiency of the teacher to make both the black and the red rich and aware one another, close tight on the line between abstract and symbolism, held together by the invisible chain of the expression of colour in full light, which seems to be able to say anything while in fact it procrastinates everything to elsewhere in an infinite mirror of representations.

The label of “expressionism” is, in fact, always relative because it does nothing but saying over and over again that under the expression there’s a will to show, to say, to express. The message “expressed” by TWOMBLY is still basically undeciphered. An idea, a desire, to go back to the dream of the heroes and to the amphorae of a time gone by.

The force and domain of form in Francis Bacon

Francis BACON (Dublin, 1909 – Madrid, 1992) in a perfect mutuality of narcissistic close examination keeps a stand-alone position compared to his contemporaries, though addressing to the figural range. He operates with the aid of diversified sources (poetry, drama, works of other authors, photography). Critic evidences the intercourse between Francis Bacon poetic, with nihilism, existentialism, and with surrealism, due to Bacon’s resonance with George BATAILLE and André BRETON’s thoughts.

Anyway any attempt to get close to Francis BACON implies and encloses the involvement of parts of our Self. His artworks get in with a tremendous strength that springs from his full and hyper-narcissistic cohesion with his own way of feeling, seeing and perceiving the world. Just like the death of a son touches the deepest chord of a mother (and Echo, missed

the opportunity to be mother-lover, consuming herself in Narcissus loss, aware of being unable to mediate for him the meeting with the world), so the pain of his faces, his bodies and landscapes resonate in the most inner room of who moves close to them. The need to expose the loss of primary objects in BACON’s art is an alchemy of shame and refusal, the apotheosis of reality raped to avoid its imminent crash; deformation as last instance of deflagration of the reflection in the pond, to make the only possible reification of it, the ideal exponent of a negative Self, of the opposite sign to grandiosity, non-censorable from the Superego, because it comes from inner, solely conditioned by instinctive impetus basic to psychic structures: an outer manifestation of the mechanism of the flesh, a satisfaction in which

[Exhibitionism, in a broad sense, can be regarded as a principal narcissistic dimension of all drives]. The object is important only in so far as it is invited to participate in the child’s narcissistic pleasure and thus to confirm it. (KOHUT 1966)

Developed through an extraordinary creative intelligence, somehow able to represent Narcissus drowning into himself, like a sort of narcissistic bond to the inside of the body as a Self-appendage. This radical research is reported by BACON himself, as he claims (1991, p. 35): “I want to distort things beyond appearance, but at the same time I want deformity to record appearance“. Gilles DELEUZE (1981, pp. 40-42):

In art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces. For this reason no art is figurative. Paul KLEE’s famous formula – „Not to render the visible, but to render visible“ – means nothing else. The task of painting is defined as the attempt to render visible forces that are not themselves visible.[...] BACON’s Figures seem to be one of the most marvellous responses in the history of painting to the question, How can one make invisible forces visible? This is the primary function of the Figures.[...] It is as if invisible forces were striking the head from many different angles. The wiped and swept parts of the face here take on a new meaning, because they mark the zone where the force is in the process of striking. This is why the problems BACON faces are indeed those of deformation, and not transformation. These are two very different categories. The transformation of form can be abstract or dynamic. But deformation is always bodily, and it is static, it happens at one place; it subordinates movement to force, but it also subordinates the abstract to the Figure. (DELEUZE 1981, pp. 40-42)

For DELEUZE, BACON acts as a detector of the force and the movement of the force. He identifies three major groups of invisible forces in BACON: the forces of isolation, the deformation forces, the forces of dissi-

pation. Naturally enumerates many others, such as the coupling strength, the strength of the changeable weather and the strength of eternal time ...

The mythical perspective is predominant and the dynamic de-idealizing applied to the figures only reinforces the narcissistic mirror that moves archaic forces, seeking a residual empathy, through a process similar to that in the analysis of transference Kohut calls “transmuting internalizations”, to mitigate and modify the grandiose Self of the patient (MIGONE 1993).

You could call this narcissism aesthetic as a phase of conquest of iconological and iconographic, which defines “a special field of poetry, a situation in which art could take the road of emancipation from means of expression inherited, which in the past had served the tasks of illustration, interpretation, ideological documentation” (TEIGE 1973, In: PACINI, p. 12).

Jean-François LYOTARD, in his critical analysis of the “subject” of post-modernity, dedicated to the relationship between art and figure a seminal essay, *Discourse, figure* (1971). A true landmark, among all the works, portraits: we offer to our eyes slopes as living, opening reflection on creativity and divergent delirious narcissism dialectical. Xenia NIBRANDT says:

The human figure is the subject that “devours the soul” of Bacon, pushing him to persist on portraits, whether of friends, of lovers, of himself. Though all of his paintings may be called, on his own statement, portraits and even self-portraits – in them the intimate relationship of the artist with the world in which he operates, on a receptive and reactive level – the concern of this consideration is the same deformity these self-portraits must undergo. (NIBRANDT 2008, pp. 72-89)

We can now catch the clothing of Narcissus as he’s about to sink in his own reflection (in all the meanings) and let us go to some observation before leaving him to his fate. The instances of disintegration are so evident to interdict the thought, leaving it behind. Emotions tangle up trying to hold onto the ultimate life. The need to represent it replaces by the need to find an adequate language to a minimum understanding that does not leave the eye stiffened and excluded, the only witness to a lost story of loneliness, love and broken mirrors, sorrow for having to exist on the edge of a pond, unheard of screams that are dispersed in the echoes of the ruins and rubble, on a journey to meet the man stranger to himself, permanently deprived of the Other. This language should be formulated, and is perhaps the dream language, or closely resembles. NIBRANDT (2008):

The objectiveness constitution should be perceived as a “hiding-showing”, because it generates a presence-absence, on the model of the “Fort-Da” rela-

onship studied by Freud. The language manages to establish the Sensitive as a substantial object because it makes it present (designs) and it subtracts it to its immediate meaning (signifies) at the same time. But, because of its fundamental reference features, is able not only to set what it displays-states, but also what it hides-denies: existence includes and hides a non-existence, to the invisible side of the perceivable world corresponds a non-world – the unconscious of delightful impulses which have been removed-denied. (NIBRANDT 2008, pp. 72-89)

Walking into the unconscious, Hades opens up to infinite digressions. One of the problems is that in dreams, the languages are only apparently deconstructed and chaotic ... Let’s just say that the Narcissus who decides to take the path of self-knowledge it does not remain an immediate destruction and painless: embarks on a path that is actually the cross and resurrection, a wave whose constant perceptual passes through the body and the human face.

Narciso the Anarca, which touches wandering gaze switched on from the Self stranger, which it can not offer a fate accomplished deprived of the sense of time, it only remains to fall in the unfinished dream and in the underworld, before accepting a cure for his narcissistic wound.

Let’s just say that Narcissus, choosing to head the way of self-knowledge, is not left with a painless, immediate destruction: he actually starts a path of agony and resurrection, a perceptive wave which constant flows through the human body and face. Anarchic Narcissus, cursed to wander with the eyes set on fire by a stranger Self to which he can’t offer an accomplished destiny, deprived by the sense of time, is left with the unfinished fall into the dream and the underworld, before accepting a cure for his narcissistic wound.

The wound on empty of Lucio Fontana

A dream is useful to see the invisible and to hide invisible. A wound is certainly an elective place to access the imaginary world, and to the heart of that “aesthetic of evil” to use BATAILLE’s words, which looks like the backside of a gentle embroidery, that dual sensation of truth that constellates each time the surcharge of Ego finds itself groping in that swamp that was the pond and mirror of Narcissus. Now, what’s this wound in a linguistic order like the one of FONTANA’s extraordinary “cuts”? It’s deeper, image and word. And this change of perspective opens up like a fault, there’s no time left to see things like before the underworld horizon opened up. An horizon that’s *telos* and *nostos*. Because it’s discovery, journey and

memory, it's passage and inner vision. This is the log of the *Doppelgänger* in the theme of dream. And it's metaphor as well. Pure, spaced metaphor, proto-verbal orders and disorders of primeval ideas, *embodied cognitions* of the perceptive shell of senses. It's not forbidden to step the paths of reduction in a map of digressions to understand Fontana's wounded vacuum. The wound is declination, is complex sign, is morpheme that defines a linguistic act compared to what happens, the way it happens.

Reducing Lucio FONTANA's (Rosario, 1899 – Comabbio, 1968) creative production to "holes" and "cuts", it's a blatant stereotype. Still, we can't ignore that these are symbols with which critics and public identify FONTANA. One reason might be the psychological relevance of the "cut", an actual blow inflicted with violence on that naked image that's a mute canvas, without an echo. An act of extreme freedom, that hurts and allows to see, climbing over, reaching a new space, in which formal and imaginative tension undergo the backlash of the journey, of the painful experience: a space that's a new annexation in favour of conscience, a new question.

A cut is prone to infinite interpretations. The problem could be flipped. What is to cut a canvas, if not "telling" something impossible to say in any other way? There, it lays the logos of any picture, the syntax of an otherwise impossible grammar operation. The focus of the consideration must be, in our opinion, the request for passing every kind, form, matter and traditional procedure in the name of a new art, in time and space, one with absolutistic meanings concerning matter, sound, motion, colour, wished from Fontana through his *Manifiesto Blanco* (Buenos Aires, 1946) and summarized in the need of integration into a "psycho-physical unity" in artistic manifestations, and in the *Technical Manifesto of Spatialism* of 1947, written by FONTANA alone. The solipsism of these statements, their rage of grand denial towards all the codes previously used by artists appears to be the last voice of the urge of crossing the road and wiping out the mirroring function, pointing to the impossibility to enter some identification in the previous masters: the irreversible *Twilight of Gods* foresaw by NIETZSCHE (1888) at the end of 1800. If, according to NIETZSCHE, "Everything which is deep needs a mask" (1886), what's the implicit beyond the canvas, which identity occurred in the space craved with such fierce, biting eagerness? Maybe a nauseating vacuum, vertiginous ... "sartrian". And it's the mask, the canvas, the "wounded thing" which acquires identity in place of the desired space: the longing one controls the object appropriating it, integrating it in a place indivisible from the Ego,

just like it happens in the classic narcissistic, psychodynamic formulation.

What kind of alienation can fill the artist, therefore the man, acting such a sharp dissolution of shapes in favour a twist that marks the whole life of contemporary Art, conditioning it to its aesthetic fate? To video art, performance, installation, the rarefaction of matter?

The gestural anger expressed in FONTANA is not different from a lifetime anger trying to outbreak the magma of a solely narcissistic condition. It's a tentative that pursues the way of aesthetic in a heroic dynamic, which we can "re-read" turning over the canvas, examining it inside out, whence Bacon observes the bodies of his portrayed men.

That gap "beyond the line" is the land of an aesthetic promise where the artist arrives at, feeling strongly responsible for the due he's committed to: denying the masters to reach a fully renewed vitality, in an utopic desire of uniqueness and unity. The passion he works with is only equal to the control he needs to exercise not to be tangled in his own nature, as material like the earth-mother he needs to deface, and as the raw canvas on which he operated the first ancestral signs of his art. The blade is sharp, the edge is cruel, the glance is piercing and petrified, saturated.

III. Conclusions: Of Passion and Shadow

Some big artists of modern art used an "important" symbolic-representative system, even resorting to myth, trying to "understand" the dynamics of anger, explaining them, submitting them to philosophical, psychological, religious questions.

In contemporary art, the artist seem to give up his function of "mediator" between unconscious instances and objective reality, sometimes looking deprived of the necessary strength to manage the tension sprung by being "media" and "creator" in the same time, giving up the religious dimension and the philosophical position that would hit him way beyond his possibilities. The 90s nihilism worsen his condition of impotence, often expressed through shifting the artistic action concerning a system of "paths" afferent to conceptual, informal and linguistic scope, into a moving "instinct", an "acting out". The language of contemporary art tends to express anger and violence applying a wound to representation: with PICASSO (*Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1907) falls the domain of form and begins the big transformation of depiction, that move to metaphor's dominion.

Romano BIANCOLI's (exegete of Erich FROMM) interpersonal psychology says us that "control passion never fades, because the safety it chases

vanishes in the moment it's snatched. Demanding to grab life makes you entitled of just one life pattern. [...] The strength and delight of control stand in the turnover between clasp and loosening the grip. The passion of control intensifies until death shows up, and then stops." (1986)

The strong narcissistic connotation of contemporary art makes more unlikely those identification processes at the base of vision and re-vision in creative dimension. Artwork makes way for performance and digital and multimedia art. The massive loss of the "tangible" share in this complex and over-communicative "world" needs an answer from the Man.

Ego, conscience, need a visual, relational, motion and linguistic field that bring back to a primal and primeval condition the real expression of depictive world. Contemporary society exploded the repressed memory of the body through a peculiar form of psychodrama started by the body surface and the world of sexual relations as only available sceneries for the comeback of depiction. The outlining constellation of Shadow opens up to horizons that require amplifications of analysis of the transcendent function in the psychology of the artist, and in the inner dynamics of contemporary art. Social and individual Narcissism, matters of extreme vastness that arouse "fear and trembling".

Zusammenfassung

Das Ziel dieses Vortrags ist es, die Dynamik der Regression, insbesondere die narzisstische Dynamik, hervorzuheben, die der Werkerstellung in der zeitgenössischen Kunst zugrunde liegt. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Entwicklungsdynamik des „Verlusts des Metaphorischen“. Die Arbeit ist aufgebaut um die Prämissen für eine mögliche Revision der Psychologie der Kunst herum, um hinsichtlich des „bildhaften Denkens“ und der mythischen und archetypischen Perspektive zu der Manifestation dieser Aspekte im Werk einiger berühmter Autoren zu kommen. Dabei beginne ich speziell mit dem Werk von PICASSO und DUCHAMP und ende mit Cy TWOMBLY, Andy WARHOL und Lucio FONTANA. Dieser Beitrag zeigt, wie Aggression und Emotion, die man in der zeitgenössischen postmodernen Kunst (z. B. in der Kinetik, Performance und Körperkunst) erleben kann, aus einer narzisstischen Wunde heraus geschaffen werden können – auf jenem „Leinentuch, das wir weiterhin Leinwand nennen wollen“. Diese Wunde wurde geschlagen in dem Bereich des vermittelnden Ausdrucks, der zum Verzicht auf das „diskrete Objekt“ (zunehmend dematerialisiert)

neigt und es durch ein „Körper-Subjekt“ ersetzt, das besonders gern vom Künstler benutzt wird, wenn er die Konventionen und ausdrücklich schon existierenden Codes entweihen und untergraben möchte.

Einige große Künstler der Moderne benutzten ein symbolisch-repräsentatives System, wobei sie sogar zum Mythos Zuflucht nahmen, in dem Versuch, die Dynamik der Aggression zu verstehen, zu erklären und in philosophische, psychologische und religiöse Kategorien einzuordnen. In der zeitgenössischen Kunst scheint der Künstler seine Funktion als Vermittler zwischen unbewussten Instanzen und der objektiven Realität aufzugeben. Dabei wirkt er z. T. des Ernstes beraubt, der notwendig wäre, um die Spannung zu bewältigen, die dadurch entstanden ist, dass er einerseits Vermittler, andererseits Schöpfer ist, der die religiöse Dimension und die philosophische Position aufgibt, die ihm einen Weg freiräumen würde über seine bisherigen Möglichkeiten hinaus. Der Nihilismus der 1990er-Jahre verschlechterte seinen Zustand der Machtlosigkeit hin zu einer Triebhaftigkeit und einem Ausagieren, was sich oft darin zeigt, dass sich die künstlerische Aktion auf einen anderen Bereich verlegt und ein System von konzeptionellen, formlosen und linguistischen Zugängen benutzt.

(Übersetzung: Erwin Leßner, München)

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