



THE DEATH OF MUSES THE FIRST STAGE OF THE MECHANISM OF IMMORTALITY

IOANA MAN

'I was in a sort of ecstasy [...]. Absorbed in the contemplation of sublime beauty ... I reached the point where one encounters celestial sensations ... Everything spoke so vividly to my soul. Ah, if I could only forget. I had palpitations of the heart, [...]. Life was drained from me. I walked with the fear of falling.'
Stendhal

Prelude

And whose crime is it? of an absolute god who offers death as a beginning, and not as an end? Is it a suicide in front of beauty, like a narciss? Is it the end of a dream and the moment of opening the eyes of consciousness? The miracle of death does not consist in what it ends, but in what it begins.

Stendhal syndrome, or death due to ecstasy in front of the sublime, is a psychosomatic condition defined in the nineteenth century, which involves rapid heartbeat, fainting, confusion and even hallucinations, which are supposed to occur when individuals become exposed to objects or phenomena of a special beauty, out of fascination. This phenomenon seems to be the absolute crime of a god with a carefully predetermined plan.

The stages of emotion that manifest at the limbic level, from beatitude, ecstatic state to paroxysm, the syndrome mentioned above, are the effects of metamorphosing the feelings of the creator during the artistic process. A creator is constantly in a sea where he bathes to seduce, his personality flows, increases and decreases, fascinates and wraps muses and spectators in his nets. What must be pointed out is

the fact that the states characteristic of the creative moment are extremely varied and dynamic.

Most of the time, enthusiasm is what defines an artist, it is the first creative gesture. Enthusiasts often induce themselves enthusiasm; besides the actual condition as an effect of some activities, the enthusiasm becomes something almost palpable, as we could see in Salvador Dalí's life, artist who began his day like a god, like a narcissist full of egotism, feeling the glory of life by the very fact of being him.

In the ancient world, enthusiasm leaves the impression of being sacred, generating states of epiphany. In today's society, enthusiasm is often something defined by aphorisms, capital letters, clichés that impact and attract attention through effervescence and the continuous search for the sublime.

Argument

But, in the early stages, in addition to the creative enthusiasm, the artist is also in a condition of duplication, as if someone were dressing his thoughts and thinking with

them; here is actually the point of intervention from the outside, the moment of inspiration.

Then there are muses, daughters of Zeus, or beings who intertwine their destiny with those of the artist, beings of epiphanic or fatal nature... in a oneiric dimension. Coincidence is just the anonymous way of the supreme divinity to manifest its presence and let us be aware of it.

In a contemporary sense, as Danto defined the period as the end of art, as the finality of the narrative and the moment of waiting for self-becoming, vis-à-vis the artistic process there is an analogy with the bildungsroman, the novel of formation and self-discovery. The topicality of this subject is highlighted in the artist's own continuous search for himself in a period that is defined by multidisciplinary, the visual no longer being self-sufficient in the composition, configuration and artist-viewer, actor-spectator dialogue. This search begins with the interaction and influence of the sources of inspiration and continues with the participatory presence of the art consumer and with the elimination of the role of the muses and finally their death.

This metaphorical death is a death as a transformation to another stage, a continuity due to the fact that an access to divine knowledge is opened. It is perhaps just a lever of saturation, in which nothing can be added, nothing can be removed, just like the perfect work of art itself. A condition of excess. Excess that creates implosions on an unconscious level.

What is the paradox of the moment of the decision of creation? To succeed in dissecting the opposite of the result in the moment of anticipation? Is it a betrayal of one's own or is it a betrayal of the supreme being?

In his work, "Mythological Slanders" ("Calomnii mitologice"), Octavian Paler tells us about the enthusiasm to realize that nothing is too much, that achieving and reaching certain stages of excess are due to the need for improvement and self-transcendence.

The excess appears to be reprehensible and has disastrous effects. After Dionysos fulfilled his wish that everything he touched turned to gold, Midias begged the god to get rid of the gift he received once both the food and the drink turned to gold. Marsyas suffered because he claimed that he was able to sing with his whistle more beautiful than Apollo himself; Orpheus, when he came out of Hell, was not satisfied that the memory of Eurydice went after him and he turned his head, and at that moment the illusion could not help him. Psyche was not satisfied that she was loved and happy either, she wanted 'more', violating the only condition on which her happiness depended: not to see the face of the stranger who had taken her from the mountain where she had been abandoned by her parents and taken her to a Palace. Thus Eros disappeared. Cassiopeia attracted the wrath of the gods by claiming to be more beautiful than the nereids.

After Paler explains to us the sequence of deities that come to be defined by the very exaggeration of some circumstantial attributions or phrases, the question that is debated is 'Can one get out of mediocrity without being guilty of any' excess '?' Who else would have heard of Icarus if he had not wanted "too much" to reach the sun, instead of continuing his journey with Daedalus to Sicily? Antigone has an extra pride that gives her the strength to remain inflexible. Heracles has a plus of arrogance that helps him accomplish his feats. Theseus has an extra cynicism that makes him not feel obliged to Ariadne who ensured him, with her thread, the exit from the labyrinth. Narcissus wanted too much. He wanted to carry on self-knowledge what the gods do not allow.

This excess, and the desire to reach the climax is manifested once the presence of the muses is pregnant and consuming for the creator. Through this very desire for evolution, there is a continuous competition between the two antithetical highlights, the artist - the muse.

As some writers have written about silence, about things that people could not say, this artist-muse dialogue talks

about the philosophical mechanisms behind the creative process, about the Dionysian (creative chaos) that anticipates the Apollonian (visual rationality) finality of the work of art, with direct role in accessing the viewers' subconscious.

If we move in a labyrinthine, concentric way, towards the unconscious (the superego), as a universal foundation of the human and the social, to understand the impact of the muse at the subconscious level, the connection between conscious and unconscious once the artistic concept takes another life after the finality of the creative act. The subconscious does not differentiate between reality and the virtual. It is the place where creative magic takes place (in the field of arts), it is the place where the role of deity due to the decisional factor on the work is entirely owned by the artist. In this aspect, by metamorphosing emotions, it can betray the reality of a spectator.

In the game of art, according to the theories of Hans-Georg Gadamer, there is no separation between the work of art and the person who lives the aesthetic experience. Through a hermeneutic theory of the work of art, starting from the analysis of the essential features of the game, the essence of art will have to be looked up in the creative process and in the concept of genius. Due to Hagel, the understanding of the spirit is through art, *ars pictura* represents the understanding of the artist's alter-ego and how he manages to have a transformative role for the art consumer through his self-becoming as a creative continuum, but only once he manages to detach himself from the indirect influence of the muses.

In other words, there are times when there is no separation between the work of art, the artist and the muse. Given the fine line between the concrete and the ineffable, between the artist and the work of art, one can observe a departure from mimesis and an inclination towards an elegance of suggestion, empty space, absence, a tendency to essentialize, to leave a role much more significantly to the viewer through the narrative capacity, in other words highlighting the concept of diegesis. The narrative behind the figurative speaks of the overlapping state of glory from the moment of connection with the muse. Once this narrative ends, there is a limitation of the role of these inspiring beings, the main role now being played by the viewer, by those who live the aesthetic experience.

Often the source of inspiration is a harmful and unpro-

fitable one, disastrous and generating obstacles, coming from some entities whose enthusiasm to grow is through the mask of others (persona = personality, a term that in ancient times had the etymology of theatrical mask) is self-sufficient. An entire social morphology becomes an absurd cliché, the muse itself competes with the artist. But the finality is the dilution and finally the dissolution of the muses, the absolute consumption and forgetting, practically killing them, and the first step towards the absolute.

Oscar Wilde said 'give a mask to man and he will show his true face!' now the paradox of the period rarely gives us the chance to see faces without masks, both denotative and connotative, but living a vivid life is the own betrayal of the creative god, when he manages to create his own death of the death, and to survive through his artworks, freed from the influences of the muses.

'The only justification for an existence is the life in it, its intensity, fertility, depth. Joy, light, victory, charity, overcoming, continuous overcoming, hope - all these are signs that life is full and organized there. I appreciate a man, a thought, a work - according to their authenticity; that is, by the degree of proximity to coincidence, existence = creation.'

Mircea Eliade



'The muse (V)', Ioana MAN, detail, oil on canvas, 2019



'I'M', Ioana MAN, oil on canvas, 2019

The first stage of the mechanism of immortality. Considering the fine line between the real and the ineffable, between the artist and the work of art, one can observe, in the contemporary era, an increasingly distant detachment from mimesis and an approach for diegesis. This contemporary period of the end of art – of the death of art, as Danto defined it – overlaps at the metaphysical level with the death of the muses, as long as existence is in pure COINCIDENCE WITH CREATION, AND THE CREATOR WITH A MOMENT OF waiting of his own self-becoming. Thus the death of the muses is a metaphor for the detachment of the art creator (named god – through the inherent decisional power), from the incipient inspirational idea, from the seeds of life born from the sparkle of thoughts and the condition of genius. Compare to the artistic concept, there is a paradoxical analogy with the bildungsroman, the novel of formation and self-discovery, of the life after death, of the death of the end, as long as artistic creations last through their own capacity to fascinate.

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