

ABSTRACT

Human nature, creativity and the mimetic theory

Within a reflection on the complex nature of human desire, I would like to develop a metareflection on the meaning of the aesthetic experience and creativity, on the function of arts, and literature in particular. To reach this aim, we first have to ask ourselves some preliminary questions: which is the relationship between imitation and human desire? Which one between imitative desire and human cognition? How can we consider the relationship among the nature of imitative desire, the aesthetic experience and the creativity? Which methodological hypothesis can we conceive to discover and understand their possible connections?

An efficient cognitive strategy is represented by the *active roaming* practice, which is an invaluable guide for the path one can follow in Girard's and Serres' works. It could be useful in deepening the reflection about the complexity of human nature, which is far from the "will of power" characterizing current philosophies and forms of knowledge.

Last year at Cov&r conference in Innsbruck Prof. Paul Dumouchel gave me an illuminating example. "Let's imagine – he told me – to be at the restaurant for a romantic dinner with the person we love. It's just we two, *vis-à-vis*. One's glance melts into each other's, and our emotion springs from this sights interaction. Then let's imagine that we are still at the restaurant, but this time we are observing a couple in love from our table: we observe them, we can understand their being in love, but our vision is completely different".

From the observer's point of view, I think that the artistic and aesthetic phenomenon can be built in the same way, that the aesthetic enjoyment depends on the observer's position. This experience is made up of several level of visions. When we read novel, we watch a movie or we attend a play performance, on one hand we dive into reality – made of loves, accidental meetings, desires, jealousies, betrayals, violence – on the other we escape from it, we are out of reality.

Following Edgar Morin's explanation¹, the aesthetic experience can be considered as a modern culture emergency; it brings with it the "image fascination", is real and, at the same time, sur-real, far from reality and near it. The modern age has been characterized by discontinuity and a differentiating process which has brought the aesthetic sphere far from the others – the mythological, magic and religious spheres – and has had the classical myths – generated by the contamination of these spheres – evolved into the modern myths, produced by the dis-junction and the re-joining of mythological, magic and symbolic.

This process also represents a development of human desire, which Girard calls "peaceful cultural mimesis", that is a peaceful resolution of mimetic crisis, differing from the "mimesis of rivalry"². Giuseppe Fornari has developed this concept through his analysis of internal mediation, where the double

¹ See Edgar Morin, *L'identità umana*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2002.

bonded structure of desiring mimesis, which can be acquisitive and conflictual or, however, positive and creative, clearly appears.

As Mauro Ceruti suggests, the creative action always brings with it a “threshold effect”, and it appears as a real cognitive “re-organization”. Such a dynamics of re-orientation can be seen as the evolution, on a different level, “of a conflictual situation that, in itself, can lead to paralysing and often pathogenic results”, but it can also lead to unexpected solutions or start those creative processes developed by artists or scientist³.

² See René Girard, *Origine della cultura e fine della storia*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2003 and G. Fornari, Fornari G. (2001a), *Fra Dioniso e Cristo. La sapienza sacrificale greca e la civiltà occidentale*, Editrice Pitagora, Bologna

³ See Mauro Ceruti, *La danza che crea*, Feltrinelli, Milano, p. 77 and following.

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