L'ordine delle cose

I meccanismi di ripetizione e rappresentazione delle forme del tempo

#representation
#interpretation
#heretical design

testo di/*text by* **Thomas Pepino**

The order of things. The mechanisms of repetition and representation of the forms of time

"Every heresy is the monstrous exaggeration of an aspect of truth" (1)

To represent means to bring into form through cognitive abilities the fragments of a world that is past, present or never existed. The imaginary world, which bursts through the analytical capacities of our intellect, unites and traverses fragments that are distant in time and space from one another, returning a dreamlike, dystopian image of the world. The figure that is produced through this operation of reassembling the forms of time can be seen as an image that carries within itself heresy (2). This form of communication can be used to criticise society or to protest against existing social norms. The term heretic is understood by the artist Andres Serrano (3) to refer to that form of art that defines heresy as a departure from accepted beliefs or practices. Serrano in one of his most subversive works, Piss Christ produces a semantic field through an image that uses the heretical form to describe art that challenges conventional ideas about beauty, morality and culture. Piss Christ in its sacrilegious action challenges morality, operating within the religious sphere by highlighting the reality that the gesture produces: on the one hand an image is staged through the technique of photography that conveys idolatry and the form of worship, on the other hand the process that produces such an image is able to accuse its very origins by denouncing the evil of silence to which the Catholic hierarchy has abandoned itself (4). In order to understand how the mechanism of image construction repeats and retraces archetypes over time, it becomes important to grasp how the religious aspect, culture, symbols and forms of the past are determined in their use by a classification that looks at reality in two categories. Emile Durkhem, in

"Ogni eresia è l'esagerazione mostruosa di un aspetto della verità" (1)

Rappresentare significa portare in forma attraverso le abilità cognitive i frammenti di un mondo passato, presente o mai esistito. Il mondo immaginario, che irrompe attraverso le capacità analitiche del nostro intelletto, unisce e percorre frammenti distanti nel tempo e nello spazio tra loro, restituendo una immagine onirica e distopica del mondo. La figura che si produce attraverso questa operazione di riassemblaggio delle forme del tempo può essere vista come un'immagine che porta in sé l'eresia (2). Tale forma di comunicazione può essere usata per criticare la società o per protestare contro le norme sociali esistenti. Il termine eretico viene inteso dall'artista Andres Serrano (3) per orientare quella forma di arte che definisce l'eresia come un allontanamento dalle credenze o dalle pratiche accettate. Serrano in una delle sue opere più sovversive, Piss Christ produce un campo semantico attraverso una immagine che usa la forma eretica per descrivere l'arte che sfida le idee convenzionali sulla bellezza, sulla moralità e sulla cultura. Piss Christ nella sua azione sacrilega sfida la moralità, opera all'interno della sfera religiosa evidenziando la realtà che il gesto produce: da un lato si mette in scena attraverso la tecnica della fotografia una immagine che veicola l'idolatria e la forma del culto, dall'altra il processo che produce tale l'immagine è in grado di accusarne le stesse origini denunciando il male del silenzio a cui la gerarchia cattolica si è abbandonata (4). Per capire come il meccanismo di costruzione delle immagini che nel tempo ripete e ripercorre gli archetipi, diventa importante cogliere quanto l'aspetto religioso, la cultura, i simboli e le forme del passato siano determinate nel loro uso da una classificazione che osserva la realtà in due categorie. Emile Durkhem, nel libro *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (5), precisa come:

> "All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred. This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought" (6).

Il disegno è la macchina di progetto (7) che l'eresia usa per manifestare un discorso in forma d'arte. La figuratività che emerge nei disegni eretici - che intenzionalmente trasfigura l'immagine archetipica - si disallinea dalle strutture della conformità, disattende l'adesione alle regole o ai principi di una scienza ortodossa che spesso diviene controversa nel momento in cui sfida la tradizione e sovverte le forme della realtà. I dipinti surrealisti di Max Ernst presentano immagini distorte di persone, animali e oggetti, e sono un esempio di quelli che possiamo definire disegni sovversivi, immagini controcorrente. Nei dipinti di Max Ernst, La tentazione di Sant'Antonio e La vestizione della sposa il disegno si formalizza attraverso l'assemblaggio di figure che appartengono ad un mondo antico; Ernst: "*has constantly searched for testimonials and images, rites and symbols, putting into visual questions those mysterious forces, those daemonic tensions within our conative drives, as well as the overing world of our deepest dreams*" (8). L'uso di figure mitologiche e di frammenti provenienti dalle forme del passato diventano, durante la ricollocazione nello spazio-tempo, oggetti in grado di produrre nuovi significati, evidenziando il rapporto tra rito e mito. Il mondo distopico rappresentato da Hieronymus Bosch nel trittico "Il Giardino delle delizie" costituisce il tentativo d'introdurre l'eresia tramite le operazioni di scalarità e assemblaggio di parti di figure che mai avrebbero potuto sussistere in quel modo tra di loro, mettendo in luce la complessa e frammentata

the book The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (5), points out how:

> "All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: they presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words profane and sacred. This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought" (6).

Drawing is the design machine (7) that heresy uses to manifest a discourse in art form. The figurativeness that emerges in heretical drawings - which intentionally transfigure the archetypal image - disaligns itself from the structures of conformity, disregards adherence to the rules or principles of an orthodox science that often becomes controversial when it challenges tradition and subverts the forms of reality. Max Ernst's Surrealist paintings present distorted images of people, animals and objects, and are an example of what we might call subversive drawings, images against the tide. In Max Ernst's painting, The Temptation of Saint Anthony and The dressing of the bride drawing is formalised through the assemblage of figures that belong to an ancient world; Ernst: "has constantly searched for testimonials and images, rites and symbols, putting into visual questions

those mysterious forces, those daemonic tensions within our conative drives, as well as the overing world of our deepest dreams" (8). The use of mythological figures and fragments from the forms of the past become, when relocated in space-time, objects capable of producing new meanings, highlighting the relationship between rite and myth. The dystopian world depicted by Hieronymus Bosch in the triptych The Garden of Earthly Delights constitutes an attempt to introduce heresy by scaling and assembling parts of figures that could never have existed in that way with each other, highlighting the complex and fragmented reality of mankind and anthropic space since "the eye does not see things but figures of things that see other things" (9). Bosch's architecture is an object of anthropomorphism, the fascination of contamination and hybridisation rewrites the relationship between things, transfiguring real objects into the surreal. The Garden of Earthly Delights, is an obsessive and refined painting that shows the ability of an erudite artist with profound historical and theoretical knowledge, aware of controlling and taking possession of references from other paintings, places, texts and figures (10), in order to reformulate them into a puzzle of knowledge and imagination (11). Virginia Pitts Rembert writes that Bosch "was a master of illusionistic spatial recession, often applied more vertically than perpendicularly... He could indicate ephemeral effects, such as a smoke-filled sky, with startling effectiveness" (12). The

question that is legitimately introduced is that of trying to understand whether heretical drawing produces cognitive and descriptive value for the forms of time and the architectures that dwell in it, and whether the objects and figures that the techniques produce must absolutely start from an immediate reality that is capable of being translated into a plausible image of the invisible world.

> "Bosch was undoubtedly illustrating in a rational manner ideas received from theology and folklore. He would make his creatures, their activities, and their environments as weird and unworldly as possible, yet make them believable by rendering them with all of the technical mastery he would ordinarily use to produce the illusion of the natural world" (13).

Bosch's use of this technique allowed him to produce several cascading planes running at different angles through the triptych - earth, air and water - each showing scenes of beings (animal, human or hybrid) so dissimilar to one another, yet somehow sharing a total and complete sense of Bosch's topological space. The same vertigo produced by the surreal world of The Garden of Earthly Delights is reflected in the works of Giovanni Battista Piranesi: a reality made up of figures from a past architectural world, as they both make the non-visible visible. However, Piranesi distorts reality by altering perspective in a phenomenon called geometric restitution of perspective (14). In the etching

The Drawbridge, Pirenesi illustrates the structures of a drawbridge supported by pillars that act as towers. Hence the formative-experiential importance becomes for Piranesi, using Brandi's terms, cognitive substance (15). Piranesi also renders his forms in such a way that, at first glance, one gets the impression that the drawbridge depicted is a reproduction of one that actually exists, but only when observing the multitude of perspectives depicted does one realise that it is unlikely that such a structure exists. Rapp explains the fascinating trick behind this phenomenon: "In his drawings he places great emphasis on detail, yet at the same time he wanted to show the larger scene. Combining two perspectives allowed him to show the detail, but still to keep the whole drawing well proportioned" (16). Rapp further deepens Piranesi's style:

"Piranesi proves that despite being a much-regulated method, perspective can be extremely versatile. It is true that it has a set of rules, but as a geometrical tool it must have. Despite this, Piranesi used these rules very creatively to convey his message about the city of Rome. He did not breach the rules of perspective, but used them in a very ingen-

realtà del genere umano e dello spazio antropico poiché "l'occhio non vede cose ma figure di cose che vedono altre cose" (9). L'architettura di Bosch è oggetto di antropomorfismo, il fascino della contaminazione e dell'ibridazione riscrive il rapporto tra le cose, trasfigurando gli oggetti reali in surreali. Il Giardino delle delizie è un dipinto ossessivo e raffinato che mostra la capacità di un artista erudito dotato di profonda conoscenza storica e teorica, consapevole di controllare e impossessarsi di riferimenti che provengono da altri dipinti, luoghi, testi e figure (10), per riformularli in un puzzle della conoscenza e dell'immaginazione (11). Virginia Pitts Rembert scrive che Bosch *"was a master of illusionistic spatial recession, often applied more vertically than perpendicularly… He could indicate ephemeral effects, such as a smoke-filled sky, with startling effectiveness"* (12). La domanda che viene lecito introdurre è quella di provare a capire se il disegno eretico produce valore conoscitivo e descrittivo per le forme del tempo e per le sue architetture che vi dimorano e se gli oggetti e le figure che le tecniche producono devono tassativamente partire da una realtà immediata che sia in grado di tradursi in una plausibile immagine del mondo invisibile.

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L'uso che Bosch fece di questa tecnica gli permise di produrre diversi piani a cascata che corrono in diverse angolazioni attraverso il trittico - terra, aria e acqua - ognuno dei quali mostra scene di esseri (animali, umani o ibridi) così dissimili l'uno dall'altro, ma che in qualche modo condividono un senso totale e completo dello spazio topologico di Bosch. La stessa vertigine prodotta dal mondo surreale di Giardino delle delizie si riflette nelle opere di Giovanni Battista Piranesi: una realtà fatta di figure di un mondo architettonico passato, poiché entrambi rendono visibile il non visibile. Tuttavia, Piranesi distorce la realtà alterando la prospettiva in un fenomeno definito restituzione geometrica della prospettiva (14). Nell'acquaforte Il ponte levatoio, Pirenesi illustra le strutture di un ponte levatoio sostenuto da pilastri che fungono da torri. Da qui l'importanza formativa-esperienziale diventa per Piranesi, usando i termini di Brandi, sostanza conoscitiva (15). Anche

ious way. By composing the view from different viewing positions he did not want to undermine the technique, but rather to use its potential to communicate more in a single image" (17).

In this way, the contrast between conventional structures and formal expression leads to "imagine that Piranesi found inspiration in the kinds of lessons that acquainted young artists with the tradition of architectural representation precisely at the moment that he was freeing himself from the limits of conventional image making" (18). This duality and transfiguration of the meanings of the figures, which hybridise formally and semantically, has been traversed in some of Massimo Scolari's works, projecting images and figures that, emerging from a past time, wrest from the present a new look at reality. Scolari, in particular, is famous for his avant-garde portrayal of surreal images in both works of art and architecture. One glance at his watercolour The Ark and the observer undergoes the spell described in detail by Francesco Moschini:

> "The chilling rigor mortis emanating from the individual projects seems to project them to an abyss-like distance from the viewer. This very remoteness intrigues the spectator, whose disenchanted glance is compelled by Scolari's virtuoso acrobatics, his obsessive and scholarly renderings, as finely tuned as other tools of his trade, to follow the broken threads of his progress. The observer thus finds himself look out the wrong end of a telescope at a work which squeezes open expansive images into an exasperatingly small format, a miniature which is the final result of an attempt at focus" (19).

This essay does not seek similarities or the identification of the frame, but rather tries to understand whether the construction of the heretical image can be traced back to a principle of generalisability of the operations that cultured artists are able to produce through the use of fragments of the past. The product of man, the artefact, reaches its maximum expressiveness at the moment when a systematisation of knowledge is produced. Paraphrasing Friedrich Schlegel, if the heretical drawing is a fragment in the future, it becomes essential to understand the very nature of these fragments.

Piranesi rende le sue forme in modo tale che, a prima vista, si ha l'impressione che il ponte levatoio raffigurato sia una riproduzione di uno realmente esistente, ma solo osservando la moltitudine di prospettive raffigurate, ci si rende conto che è improbabile che una simile struttura esista. Rapp spiega l'affascinante trucco alla base di questo fenomeno: "*In his drawings he places great emphasis on detail, yet at the same time he wanted to show the larger scene. Combining two perspectives allowed him to show the detail, but still to keep the whole drawing well proportioned*" (16). Rapp approfondisce ulteriormente lo stile di Piranesi:

> "*Piranesi proves that despite being a much-regulated method, perspective can be extremely versatile. It is true that it has a set of rules, but as a geometrical tool it must have. Despite this, Piranesi used these rules very creatively to convey his message about the city of Rome. He did not breach the rules of perspective, but used them in a very ingenious way. By composing the view from different viewing positions he did not want to undermine the technique, but rather to use its potential to communicate more in a single image*" (17).

In questo modo, il contrasto tra le strutture convenzionali e l'espressione formale induce a "*imagine that Piranesi found inspiration in the kinds of lessons that acquainted young artists with the tradition of architectural representation precisely at the moment that he was freeing himself from the limits of conventional image making*" (18). Questa dualità e trasfigurazione dei significati delle figure, che si ibridano formalmente e semanticamente, è stata percorsa in alcune opere di Massimo Scolari, proiettando immagini e figure che, emergendo da un tempo passato, strappano al presente un nuovo sguardo sulla realtà. Scolari, in particolare, è famoso per la sua rappresentazione avanguardistica di immagini surreali sia nelle opere d'arte che nell'architettura. Basta uno sguardo

NOTE

(1) Mircea Eliade, Il mito della reintegrazione, ed. and trans. Roberto Scagno (Milano: Jaca Book, 1989), 31.

(2) Eresia, dal latino haerĕsis, deriva da αἱρέω, scegliere. Il termine eresia precisa il porsi delle cose che divergono dalla dottrina formalmente riconosciuta. L'eresia esce dagli insegnamenti del sapere, non appartenere più al pensiero generalizzato ma sceglie di istituirne o seguirne uno diverso, rimarcando l'etimo originario del termine. / *Heresy, from Latin haerĕsis, derives from αἱρέω, to choose. The term heresy specifies the posing of things that diverge from formally recognised doctrine. Heresy exits from the teachings of knowledge, no longer belonging to generalised thought but choosing to establish or follow a different one, emphasising the term's original etymon.*

(3) Vedi: Oral History Interview with Andres Serrano, 2009 July 29-30. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. / *See: Oral History Interview with Andres Serrano, 2009 July 29-30. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.*

(4) Cfr. Ilan Stavans and Jorge J. E. Gracia, "On Desecration: André Serrano, Piss Christ," Michigan Quarterly Review 52, no. 4 (2013), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0052.415.

(5) Emile Durkhem, The Elementary Forms of the Religous Life (New York: Free Press, 1965).

(6) Durkhem, 52.

(7) La macchina è intesa come l'insieme delle operazioni tecniche che analiticamente indagano la struttura delle cose che si formalizzano nel disegno e che nella modalità stessa dell'accadimento del progetto in architettura attivano attraverso l'isolamento delle parti la relazione con un altro sapere disciplinare. / *The machine is understood as the set of technical operations that analytically investigate the structure of things that are formalised in the design and that in the very manner of the occurrence of the project in architecture activate through the isolation of the parts the relationship with another disciplinary knowledge.*

(8) Carola Giedion-Welcker, "Max Ernst: Irony-Myth-Structure," trans. Ernst Scheyer, Criticism 6, no. 2 (1964): pp. 105-113, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23094202, 105.

(9) Italo Calvino, Le Città Invisibili (Torino: Einaudi, 1972), 21.

(10) Bosch costruisce nuove figure attraverso l'ibridazione, scomponendo e trasferendo parti dell'unità di una figura da un corpo all'atro, seziona e contamina specie o varietà diverse provenienti da animali o vegetali. Vedi: Rembert Virginia Pitts, Bosch. Hieronymus Bosch and the Lisbon Temptation: a View from the 3rd Millennium (New York: Parkstone Press Ltd, 2004), 100-101. / *Bosch constructs new figures through hybridisation, breaking down and transferring parts of the unity of a figure from one body to another, dissecting and contaminating different species or varieties from animals or plants. See: Rembert Virginia Pitts, Bosch. Hieronymus Bosch and the Lisbon Temptation: a View from the 3rd Millennium (New York: Parkstone Press Ltd, 2004), 100-101.*

(11) Vedi: Elena Calas, "Bosch's Garden of Delights: A Theological Rebus," Art Journal 29, no. 2 (1969): pp. 184-199, https://doi.org/10.2307/775227. / *See: Elena Calas, "Bosch's Garden of Delights: A Theological Rebus," Art Journal 29, no. 2 (1969): pp. 184-199, https://doi.org/10.2307/775227.*

(12) Rembert, Bosch, 100.

(13) Rembert, 117.

(14) Vedi: Joanna Barbara Rapp, "A Geometrical Analysis of Multiple Viewpoint Perspective in the Work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi: An Application of Geometric Restitution of Perspective," The Journal of Architecture 13, no. 6 (2008): pp. 701-736, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602360802573868. / *See: Joanna Barbara Rapp, "A Geometrical Analysis of Multiple Viewpoint Perspective in the Work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi: An Application of Geometric Restitution of Perspective," The Journal of Architecture 13, no. 6 (2008): pp. 701-736, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602360802573868.*

(15) Cfr. Cesare Brandi, Teoria del restauro, 13th ed. Reprint (Torino: Einaudi, 2011) 15-16. / *Cf. Cesare Brandi, Theory of Restoration, 13th ed. Reprint (Turin: Einaudi, 2011) 15-16.*

(16) Joanna Barbara Rapp, "A Geometrical Analysis of Multiple Viewpoint Perspective in the Work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi: An Application of Geometric Restitution of Perspective," The Journal of Architecture 13, no. 6 (2008): pp. 701-736, https://doi.org/10.1080/13602360802573868, 720.

(17) Joanna Barbara Rapp, 732.

(18) Louis Marchesano, "Invenzioni Capric Di Carceri: The Prisons of Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778)", Getty Research Journal 2 (2010): pp. 151-160, https://doi.org/10.1086/grj.2.23005415, 159.

(19) Massimo Scolari, "Acquerelli e Disegni" 1965-1980, ed. Francesco Moschini (Firenze: Centro Di, 1980), 8-9.

al suo acquerello L'Arca e l'osservatore subisce l'incantesimo descritto in dettaglio da Francesco Moschini:

"*The chilling rigor mortis emanating from the individual projects seems to project them to an abyss-like distance from the viewer. This very remoteness intrigues the spectator, whose disenchanted glance is compelled by Scolari's virtuoso acrobatics, his obsessive and scholarly renderings, as finely tuned as other tools of his trade, to follow the broken threads of his progress. The observer thus finds himself look out the wrong end of a telescope at a work which squeezes open expansive images into an exasperatingly small format, a miniature which is the final result of an attempt at focus*" (19).

Questo saggio non cerca le somiglianze o l'individuazione della cornice, tuttalpiù prova a capire se la costruzione dell'immagine eretica è riconducibile ad un principio di generalizzabilità delle operazioni che gli artisti colti sono in grado di produrre attraverso l'uso di frammenti del passato. Il prodotto dell'uomo, l'artefatto, raggiunge la sua massima espressività nel momento in cui si produce una sistematizzazione delle conoscenze. Parafrasando Friedrich Schlegel, se il disegno eretico è un frammento in avvenire diventa fondamentale capire la natura stessa di questi frammenti.

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