

Round table: Pain

Summary of Presentations

Carlos Moguillansky

A difference can be established between the ways of avoiding the pain of the mania and the painful acceptance of mourning. However, anonymity arises equally in the frenzy and silent figures of Aizemberg (2003) in the *Parque de la Memoria*¹: There the anonymity is different. If the manic behavior seeks in the anonymity an escape to ease the pain, the processing appeals to it as an expressive generic style for a pain that aspires to be shared. This different purpose leads to a discursive strategy that differs in its goal and in the used device. The places of the evident author of the behavior and of the subject of the sense that emerges in its production are different. Manic shallowness contrasts with the empty contour that silent commemorates the John Doe sullied victims. If the mania is blind to deny the pain, the empty contour looks at us from the indefinable visual point that we create when looking at it. (Didi-Huberman, G. 2006).

So far we have seen the defensive function of anonymity associated with the manic defense of pain; it's necessary now to address the anonymous way back of pain in the search for its recognition. Both catastrophic experiences as well as the mourning need a contour to host the scattered experiences until a selected fact gives them a sense of attachment. This outline can be seen as a concrete visual data: a silhouette, a cairn or a designated area (Moguillansky, C. 2009) or it can emerge as an interval in the desire of a fellow man that lends his ear to the suffering one. In any case, the contour must be anonymous as long as it's directed by the desire to welcome in its full unconditional dimension the suffering demand without an added obstacle to that emergency. The anonymity leads an abstinent, opened and unconditional reception. The Aizemberg's silhouette evokes in its anonymous geometry the silhouettes of countless human beings with a recognizable face and a unique history.

¹ Monument erected in the *Costanera Norte* in memory of the victims of the terrorism of State (1976-83)

The anonymity is also expressed in the production of the contour that shelters that pain, when producing a neutral, generic demonstration that doesn't belong to any author because it holds the shared pain. However, the anonymity includes the specific reference to the single case: an individual victim expresses his solitary manifestation much more than a vague number of the thousands of cases. The dual requirement of anonymity and reference to each case is shown in the need of numbering and containing each and every one of the victims in a litany of figures and names: the wall that nominates the known ones and the contour that figures known and unknown, suspected and unsuspected, grouped in the generic John Doe. In these empty figures the generic subject that is embodied in each case appears. The double reference produces a single roundtrip of the individual pain to the shared pain and of the general pain to the personal recognition in each case.

The abduction of the individual pain towards the shared one promotes the identification that groups each individual case in a plural one involving those who belong to us and the others, victims and witnesses (Rorty, R. 1991) as an ethic group that gets involved and can't refuse to be affected by the painful event. The group is forced to take over a cause which it would gladly consider as not belonging to it. Many times the pain is only on the margins of the victims and doesn't produce the altogether, in others, each case moves and hits. The impact multiplies itself and creates a growing identification when it's shared. Each case finds another to share a cause that becomes generic. The expansion of identification adds direct witnesses and by hearsay that had heard around the thread of pain. The individual cases lose their personal cause for an abstract and neutral generalization that combines a generic cause. Faces are given up as well as names for a stylization that only shows a line drawing a contour. Individual representations are emptied of their personal meaning for the further extension of the collective imagination that produces a generic and shared fact. Laclau (2005) points out a similar point when describing the political role of the empty signifier. The visual contour illustrates in its anonymity the renunciation to personal causes in favor of the group of an involving "we". The return from that generic is given in the embodiment of that abstract figure in the "each case", in the careful numbering of each one of the cases, a figure for each case, a number for each victim, so that none be left outside of the recognition required by each one's pain. The figure representing the "we" is now a symbolic constructed object that can move from one place to another getting to be, in each case, one in each one of that "we": it's an emblem that groups, but it's also an object that incarnates itself to carry out in each case a recognition effect. There are clear differences between the singular recognition of the each case and the belonging of a member to the group symbolized by the display of an emblem. Aizemberg's figure is

empty and this is why it's embodied in John or Mary. It makes multiple movements of production of an emblem, of grouping, of distribution and incarnation. All of them are that figure and that figure is all of them. The representation, far from taking a distance that denies the pain, takes a narrative distance that allows figuring the unrepresented in a possible contour that hosts although it doesn't close it. The anonymous appears here as a necessary quality to represent the intimate pain, so far from the anonymous underground. That figure produces a somersault; it embodies the intimate recognition of each disappeared in its clandestine battle. If the unequal struggle forced to the public anonymity as the only way to introduce a resistance, the public recognition introduces a public anonymity to reintroduce an intimate cause that requires that all resistances, social and individual, bow to be present.

The contour operates as a metaphor that has just been born. Its presence evokes and sustains an indefinable sense though perfectly located, which can't be punctiliously translated into any word, but that perfectly fits within this metaphor. Aizenberg human figures framed straight human lines in its geometry, but besides they interact with the river and the river appears within them. The river, witness of the carried out atrocities, is now framed in the peaceful and straight geometry of the statue.

Something similar happens in the psychoanalytic experience. It's from that anonymity that the analyst intends to participate in the presentation of pain. The presentation contains in its awkward constellation the essential referential points that locate what matters of this experience. The anonymity of the analyst provides several services: he refrains from his desire and from his ways of being at the service of a passive participation in the patient presentation and becomes the toy almost of his almost hallucinatory subjectivity. In this way he's a part of the subjective suffering furniture and his presence is permeated with what is presented. The least the analyst can do is to live the scene of his patient and participate in it, even if he doesn't want to. So he extracts a knowledge which subsequently he will use in its interpretation. In a second step, the analyst returns to a new anonymity at the time that he makes his interpretation; he does it from the anonymous place of a nobody, with no other desire than to tell what he knows. This double anonymity of the analyst is part of the abstinence rule. The difference between the true story and the intrusion of the subject finds in Castellucci's theatrical language the distance between the interpretation of a guide text and the improvisation of the actor who puts his own inventiveness into play; these are Castellucci's words: "*This infers how dangerous it is when an actor does without the director, without the author, because it changes from being performance to being life*". (Ibid.24). Anonymity and interpretation are two essential ingredients of the *mise en scene*: the actor shares with the analyst the respect for the text that must be

interpreted in order to make it credible and to aspire to be lived as an almost real scene. The reality of what has been lived is clearly on the patient's side. He puts his life in risk and invites the analyst to participate partially of it, at least for the time the analyst needs to understand from his participation something of what the patient wished to express. Then, like the actor, from the mask that was awarded to him or from the role of anonymous chronicler, formulates his text making it clear that he isn't a part of the real life, but of a fruitful fiction that allows the understanding of life.

In presenting his anonymous participation he allows the achievement of the transference scene. Thus he ensures the proper expression. It will be lived as real and authentic only if none of the actual presentation remains without expression. The receptivity of the transference scene produces an encounter space with object-support-of-the-transference. The analytical toy will allow a new encounter with the original transferred object. This reunion will have a hallucinatory weight, as greater as lower will be the resistance of the toy, to present the object of the past. Its lack of strength expresses the analytic abstinence as a receptive attitude. The analyst places himself as the anonymous toy in his patient's projections and admits that that toy plays his position in the transference game. Only in a second stage, when the game was enough played and both the patient and the analyst have extracted a knowledge of it, the second time of the interpretation takes place, in which the analyst ceases to play the toy role and plays from a new anonymous place, describing what he believes has happened.

The anonymous reception of pain seems related to the unconditional attitude that controls the contact with the pain. Nobody accepts a painful potential exchange without expecting the guarantee of a care that imbues that experience. That care has some devotion for the desire of the painful one. This ensures maximum respect. On the other hand, it has something of the annulment of the desire of the person who accompanies and who participates without another desire than to allow the pain. This cancellation of the own desire is outstanding and his effort illustrates the considerations that people have for the pain: for one's own pain or for the pain of the other.

In short, anonymity is presented in two different ways: a) the defensive anonymity dismantles the relationship between pain and the subject that suffers it, either by the manic replacing of an anonymous object, or through the anonymous participation of the subject in activities that don't compromise him with his pain; b) the anonymity processing is a contour that pretends to host the pain; its presence gives testimony of the abstinence and of the desire of a fellow man to ensure a free and unconditional space where to show deep pain and its possible implications.

Claudia Contreras

I was born in Argentina in 1956. I'm a visual artist of the Argentine missing generation. As a visual artist I believe that art is linked to life and should not be indifferent to the crime. My work is nourished on a deep commitment to an indivisible ethics of aesthetics responsible for the language, the representation and the search for meaning.

In 2000 I found, at a gastronomic shop of my neighborhood selling old stuff, original tableware of the armed forces with its logo that were used during State's Terrorism. From this material that "found me", I produced a series of photographs and confiscated objects. These works are traversed by a deep pain, its themes are identity, violence, education, feminism; from a distant point, from one's own conceptual symbols favoring the reflection to be able to process so much pain.

These works involve and leave questions, ideas of presence because of their absence in these objects. A number of the Armed Forces glasses with water and dental radiographies: another series of works with lists of Missing People, published by the CONADEP*, where their presence is seen symbolically in letters and numbers. These works of presence by absence are linked to emotions that I work with collage techniques, with fragments of small parts, in the same way that my memory works: fragmented. The rolled paper beads are formed by rolled up paper strips printed with listings and they form the works "Rosary", "Holy Shroud", "Resilience", "To remove Heaven and Earth".

In 2000 I made a series of objects and perfect focus pictures with this tableware, making up my first individual exhibition (*Cita envenenada*, 2001)².

Today, 12 years later, I return to work on them expanding sizes, printing them in cotton fabric, resignifying the unpublished ones, out of focus and others semi-fogged; as part of the recovery of those gaps in my memory, I embroider some of those pictures. The embroidery is emotionally a necessary ritual act and, possibly, a reparation one. As I embroider, I calm myself, repeated stitches, as a mantra, try to repair wound pains that

* National Commission on the disappearance of Persons. In Spanish CONADEP: *Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*

² To see all her works: www.claudiacontreras.com.ar

don't close, they are my permanent challenge to work thinking art as education for future generations.

I speak of our recent past Memory of the pain, of social transformation projects. I am very interested in what refers to aspects of our society that still need to be modified. From my poetic universe I work conceptually with different languages: collage, photography, embroidery, objects, installations, painting, articulating the quote, the metaphor, simple and everyday's symbology with a distance that allows the viewer not to be paralyzed by the pain anguish.

I believe in memory transformative power and that's the object of research and development of my work. It gives me the possibility of finding new meanings to the facts and to give them a new channel. These modifications are parallel to the multiple possibilities that offer the collage as a ludic technique capable of subverting the meaning.

The Argentina society has changed, and also my artistic look. And it's at that point where I draw again a landscape that speaks of the pain but threading certain questions in order to acquire some certainties. "*Banco Nacional de Datos Genéticos*"³ and "*Luciérnagas curiosas*"⁴ are lovingly hand embroidered works, works that speak to us of the pain of appropriated babies, of everyday complicity from everybody's pain.

In the series "No more no less" I appeal to a certain irony from the comic, I reveal such tremendous and painful situations that pierced those who dare to the courage of being able to say, to hear and to see our recent past: to build always our identity, healing the present with the aim of having a more dignified and less painful future.

³ In English: "National Bank of Genetic Data" 2010

⁴ "Luciérnagas curiosas" 2013.

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.340705902728518.1073741838.296527550479687&type=1&l=30fe0b507c>

Vicente Zito Lema

*Not always these days will be
a forced sadness
and it will perfume
you will perfume life as the wise rose
beyond our precariousness
and it will illuminate
you will illuminate life as harmony's rose
in infinite province of light / that protects / and calm
until the fattened sifted
and black storm
will get lost in haste after the first moon
without sorrow or glory
life if even among agonies
you last
you invade us
Grow!
don't stop life
and all aging heart and all heart full of mournings and
fatigues
will open to you
Would dogs like or resist*

its grief and hatred

grow life continue rose

grow tree of the whole rosebush grow

even is no longer my hand

the one that brings you the water over

and bodies and names may be just hardly

a flash or a smoke

and illusions could crash to the floor

and words dry in the mouth

and loneliness become poison

but life you'll continue with crazy sweetness

knocking at our door

you'll continue stubborn and stubborn in this square

or in that garden

removing stones and weeds

for the new and always

upright / short / humble and high

the so fragrant

faint very faint

eternal rose.

You can live as if there were no past; you can walk miles to get away of the own footprint, to believe that you move forward avoiding looking back.

However, putting into words poses the challenge of looking sorrow directly face to face. It's a difficult task but are the words which help us to name the horror and the fear, to shape them, and maybe to attach that what hurts. The words allow us to build a common memory, and to start a new path.