

Original Paper

CFI: A Working Hypothesis

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Abstract

Aim of this research's draft is to understand the place and meaning of the arts in the human frame and society. The main hypothesis is that the role of the arts consists above all in producing objects of interpretation. This is not only a "role"; actually, it is an identity and a meaning. Artworks are tools to be interpreted, meaningful structures that live only to be understood. The rule of the game is that the artwork must be per se significant (even when representing the senselessness of the world). Thus, the artwork activates inevitably a Call for Interpretation (CFI), which is the fulfillment of its identity. The essay explores the fields of music/poetry and of cave arts, to get a preliminary setting of the scientific proposal.

Keywords

aesthetics, system of arts, interpretation, music and poetry, cave art

1. Introduction

Aim of this research's draft is to understand the place and meaning of the arts in the human frame and society. The main hypothesis is that the role of the arts consists above all in producing *objects of interpretation*. This is not only a "role"; actually, it is an identity and a meaning. Artworks are tools to be interpreted, meaningful structures that live only to be understood. The rule of the game is that the artwork must be *per se* significant (even when representing the senselessness of the world). Thus the artwork activates inevitably a *call for interpretation* (henceforward CFI), which is the fulfillment of its identity, its *entelechia*. Arts are created by humankind for humankind; they do not anyway transcend the secular dimension—even though it might seem like so—and they have a certain function within the community life. Their function is *to provide meaningful structures* in a world that does not guarantee a meaning. Consequently, the aesthetic pleasure must be reconsidered as an enthusiasm arising during the process of having the sense of the artwork. Grasping a meaning is coexistent with the aesthetic emotion. They are

the same thing. How to demonstrate this assumption?

We want proceed towards two main goals:

- 1) Defining the meaning of music
- 2) Understanding the function of the prehistoric cave pictures

Why these two fields? Because:

1) concerns the birth of the artistic production by humankind (artistic, not merely “aesthetic”), as to say the origins of every discussion about the identity of arts; and 2) singles music out because the debate on meaning in music (particularly about absolute music) has been crucial through centuries to understand the meaning of an artwork tout court. The demarcation of these boundaries we deem suitable for the deepening of the matter and the approaching the result of a hypothetical-deductive itinerary. Why working hard in such an abstract realm? Because within the human society, the place of the arts is not an abstract place, but a terribly concrete field for challenges.

2. Method

2.1 Preliminaries

Which is the function of art (arts) in human society? We start from that question. Let us declare immediately that we have an answer. The explanation and verification of this answer will be the goal of the proposed research. It is evident, therefore, that the development of our inquiry will be formally “hypothetical-deductive”. Nevertheless, we shall avoid every preconception (not *pre-comprehension*) and every *ad hoc* procedure, obviously.

2.2 What We Want

The ambition of our inquiry will be gaining a theory of everything in the aesthetic realm. A paradigm that may be applicable to any artistic production of any time.

2.3 Importance of the Proposal

Before summing up the working hypothesis, few words about the very consequence of this research. Theories about the meaning and purpose of art have been following one another through the Centuries. It is a contradictory historical frame, never ending until nowadays. Unfortunately, most of these theories are not always appropriate to all artistic forms. Furthermore, some classical paradigms—as the *mimesis* theory—blew up during the late modernity. Kinds of conceptual art overturned previous certainties. Historical fault lines annihilated or conversely unearthed past models. Not to talk about the idea of beauty: exalted, violated and “enlarged” or “enriched” in many ways. Thus, the suspect of the implausibility of an aesthetic science arises. Moreover, the brutal suspect of a needlessness of art as well. The latter suspect is a real danger. Artistic productions have been realized by humankind since Prehistoric ages. That is a sufficient supporting document to erase suspects such as the above mentioned. The artistic productions are made by men for men; they are part of the activity of human community. They are not

absolute. Therefore, they have a precise relevance for all of us. And consistently they are suitable object of scientific inquiry. This said we might deem truly important the search for an overall meaning of the Arts. Meaning and function, within the non-absoluteness of our life, are inseparable. Therefore, henceforward, when we talk about meaning we involve also function, and vice-versa.

2.4 First Provisional Conclusion

Finding the meaning of Art entails finding a relevant part of our identity. It is impossible to ignore it. On the other hand, the increasingly reduction of separateness between humanistic and hard sciences offers an additional motivation for such a research as our one. Then we *must* understand the function of the artistic production in our world. And we believe that without an interpretative model available for Art itself (not only for single forms, genres, “techniques”), we could not get to substantial results.

2.5 Working Hypothesis

We just said to have an answer to propose an answer to the demand about a scientific definition of art. We think that the fact of the *interpretation* is not simply one of the phenomena related to the so-called *fruition* of artistic objects. We are firmly persuaded that the *interpretation* has a role unique to define the sense of Art. Interpretation is the identity’s structure of the artwork, of its function. That is not a variation on hermeneutics. The thinking line from Schleiermacher to Gadamer and beyond is undoubtedly very precious for our work. However, our work operates in a further space, perhaps more radical, perhaps very different. Therefore, we shall use the term *interpretation* and never the heavy word *hermeneutics*. We want to move the interpretation back to the origin of the artistic function and history. In a nutshell: we think that every artwork, as such, activates a *Call for Interpretation* (CFI), destined for every human being, and in this way the artwork fulfils its own role in the society. Naturally, there is no transcendent call; nobody is calling from a metaphysical realm. The artwork is a *tool* made for the community by an author (willing or unaware he be), and the sense of this creation is just activating a CFI. The reader/spectator/listener, etc., stimulated by an artwork of every cultural level, *knows*, by virtue of a shared convention, that the artwork *must* signify something. He receives the strong CFI without exception, because this is the rule of the “game”, a serious game of course. The artwork questions us, and the consequence is that we look into it, unavoidably.

2.6 Signification and Pleasure

It is a matter of *significance*. The real life is not compelled to be significant for us. We may find some daily experience, which is not semantic, from the exigent human point of view. Someone goes further, stating the life to be definitely meaningless. That is because the existence does not need necessary an interpretation. *Being is self-justified*. To be is to be is to be is to be. Conversely, an artwork—which is real, obviously, but as human artifact—is created exactly to *have a meaning*. We all agree on that. Someone ingenuously yaps on about the *message*. This is the lowest degree of argumentation. Meaning is something solid, but not merely practical. If we (*homo sapiens*) have created an artistic activity oriented

to make *significant objects* and thus to arouse an effort of interpretation, this does not exclude the *pleasure* in enjoying an artwork. Pleasure exists in aesthetic realm: this is a truism. How to harmonize the grasping of a sense with the delight of the contemplation, when making use of an artwork? This problem could seem the most difficult to solve. By contrast, it is a quasi-fake problem.

First, scientists and philosophers have shown that *thoughts* and *passions* are overlapped, concurrent and—poetically said—“made of the same stuff”. Thoughts are strictly related to meanings, and the meanings of passions are siblings of the formers. *Meaning is the key-concept* to understand our civilization and our way of thinking and feeling. The reaction to the CFI is a blend of aesthetic emotion and yearning to catch a meaning. The *interpretative ecstasy* is the fulfillment of the artistic process, we might say.

Obviously, there are many (though not infinite) interpretations, not only one, least of all the *intentio auctoris*. But also this is a fake problem.

2.7 The “Beauty”

Another fake problem is the beauty’s one. Ascertained that the ideas of beauty have been marvelously contradictory through the centuries up to now, we have to rephrase that concept. Briefly, the intensity of the CFI is proportional to the so-called “beauty” of the artwork. F. i. a commercial b movie may stimulate a minimum of CFI; a film by Tarkovskij or Kubrick drives the CFI to the maximum of intensity. Therefore, we have different levels of pleasure-and-thought, depending on the expressive complexity of the artwork.

2.8 Building a Research

How to verify the CFI theory? We want to confirm that every artwork is born to arouse a CFI and that the value, importance and beauty of an artistic production are measured up because of *the intensity* of CFI. The two main lines of inquiry will be primarily:

- 1) Interrogating an art that is often considered “meaningless”, “beautiful in itself”: *music*.
- 2) Interrogating the function of the primordial art, the *Cave painting*.

2.9 Music and Interpretation

The problem of the meaning of music is so complex and centuries old that some musicologists confess to be bored by it. In any case, it is still a matter of debate, indeed. The two opposite positions in this regard are the formalist one, against the refusal of auto-telic definition of music, on the other hand. The bibliography, as obvious, is huge. In this synopsis, we shall privilege only some aspects of the discussion. We start again from a point of view to demonstrate: we think that a “*meaningless*” art, namely, in the case of music, an art that means only itself, *is a un-logic data*. If there is the possibility of formulating a theory of everything in the area of artistic productions—and there is—we cannot conceive one kind of art absolutely separate from the parameters of all other arts. The so-called “enriched formalism”, which recently intends to go beyond classical formulations as those by Hanslick, does not change the state of art.

It is impossible to presume that the slightest extra-musical indication may transform the absolute (meaningless) music in a music linked to a concept or to a narration and so on. We shall produce some examples in our proposal below. Now we simply say that music (a quartet, a symphonic poem, a melodrama etc.) is always an art like other arts, and therefore it is subject to the same general aesthetic institution (CFI). Understanding well this particular argument will be a qualifying point of our inquiry.

2.10 Cave Art: A Mystery?

The option for the second line of research might look like an odd and incongruous choice. We think in lieu that, after having deepened the situation of an art that is said to be totally “autonomous”, for explaining a contrary opinion, we must turn to the early form of artistic expression in the history of mankind. The CFI system will be tested just on the cradle of human artistic creation. The hypotheses on the function/meaning of Prehistoric cave painting have been a lot, since 19th century. We think that, beyond every geo-historical differentiation during thousands and thousands of years, beyond every possible religious, ritual, apotropaic, augural, magic function, the cave figurations are the crib of artistic expression of *homo sapiens*, that is, of our history. Thus, the challenge is this: may we adopt the CFI theory even to the blurred and mysterious birth of artistic creativity? We think yes.

3. Result

3.1 Statements

The meaning of arts is an object of inquiry that we can see from different points of view. I select preliminarily some areas and conceptual frameworks.

A.

Historically

- 1) We can look for the *role* of arts in human society.
- 2) We can wonder if this *role* is entirely dependent on the various historical frames and moments.
- 3) We can hypothesize this *role* to be grounded in human sensitivity, thus only partially subject to the historical mutations.

B.

Metaphysically

- 1) We can search for a metaphysical perspective, when asking for the meaning of arts.
- 2) We can get to conceive arts as manifestation of the absolute.
- 3) We can conversely develop a materialistic conception of the meaning of the arts.
- 4) We can get to conceive arts as a game system, a quite serious game.

C.

Emotionally

- 1) We can deal with the sphere of emotions, formulating *arousal theories*, to understand the meaning of

arts.

- 2) We can involve also the neuroscience to have hard paradigms for arts' reception and reaction.
- 3) We can entangle thoughts in feelings to define better the complexity of emotional response to an artwork.
- 4) We can conversely exclude the elusive and subjective world of emotions from the inquiry on meaning of arts.

D.

Autonomy/Heteronomy

- 1) We can state that the arts' field is autonomous and never heteronomous.
- 2) We can try to demonstrate that the purpose of art is art itself.
- 3) We can conversely maintain that in the artistic production *pulchrum, verum, bonum* are necessarily present, even in different "dosages".
- 4) We can consistently argue that *dulce* is useless without *utile* in an artwork.
- 5) We can eventually state that the meaning/aim of the arts is humankind's enhancement.

E.

Representativeness

- 1) We can say that making art is the main way to satisfy our human pleasure *in imitation (mimesis)*.
- 2) We can state therefore that the art is above all a *representative* activity.
- 3) We can add that, e. g., the music, or the architecture, are meaningful and indirectly *representative* arts as well.
- 4) We can claim, conversely, that music has no meaning but music itself.
- 5) We can extend that idea of *pure form* to all the arts, concluding whichever artwork is a form that means and represents nothing but itself.

Other perspectives have been offered by the history of Aesthetics through Centuries. Our intention is to verify the hypothesis that meaning and social role of arts dwell in the *activation of a call for interpretation*, and first we have to resume this working hypothesis. Then we shall explain how to actualize that theoretical positioning.

3.2 Working Hypothesis

The aim of our research is then to show that the substance of aesthetic experience is a sort of CFI and our fundamental inescapable answer to it. However, as we said above, there is nothing or nobody calling from another dimension: artworks are tools for human beings, made by themselves. The aesthetic dimension does not transcend humankind: art-craft is a creation of men for men. It is social invention of Homo sapiens, hence a thing with peculiar functions describing its identity. The target of our inquiry is just defining these functions. We think that the main purpose of artistic activities is on one side enabling the CFI (author's side), and on the other trying to give original answers (consumer's side). An artistic

product is a kind of an *interpreting tool*. We would propose a theory of everything in the aesthetic realm—the temptation is so strong... We wish to underline the primary role of interpretation in the aesthetic process. We also wish move the interpretation *back*, to the origins. This is not certainly a new variety of hermeneutics. According to our idea, the interpretation is not something *optional*, a possibility, a matter for specialists. It is not an *a posteriori*. Interpretation is an *obligation*, a necessity. Interpretation is art. Kunst ist Verstehen (overturning the statement of Schleiermacher). Art is interpretation, i.e., it is meaning, thought, and interpretation is pleasure. A pleasure nearly forbidden in the real life.

Communis opinio considered the aesthetic experience to be essentially emotional, intuitional, if not irrational, i.e., anti-intellectual. We think that the interpretation's problem solving is a basic component of the aesthetic experience, and we intrude it deeply into the so-called (blurred) *pleasure*. Tasting is at the same time knowing, understanding and evaluating, that is interpreting: this equivalence was suggested by Baumgarten (1735: §XCII) quoting the Hebraic term *tā'am* (טעם). We dare to speak of an *interpretational ecstasy*, to stress the overlapping of enjoyment and endeavor in answering to CFI. This overlapping is almost a consubstantiality, a *synolon*. Why this concentration of artistic functions into the fact of interpretation? Because life is often (always?) meaningless, while art *cannot* be so: we claim art meaningful. We can say too: concluded, finished, spherical, even when an artistic work depicts the incompleteness or incongruence of life (that is anyway a meaning). In addition, when a tale includes in itself *détails inutiles* and simulates the lack of meaning, the vacancy of "signified" in the referential world. We agree with Barthes: le "réel" est réputé se suffire à lui même. But if being is self-justified, art is not, indeed. Art is similar to religion, as a response to the marks of life's meaningless, but the meanings of art are not dogmatic, they are fluid, while religion's ones are absolute, transcendent.

We saw (E.1-3) that art is hold to be exquisitely representative (except for music and some other abstract works), since Aristotle. Yes, but if we give less importance to the definition of art as mimesis (and contextually to the definition of music as source-imitation of emotions), we nearly eliminate the difference between representative and non-representative arts, confining "realism" only to a merely specific formal domain, although historically relevant. This is not in contradiction with the idea of the birth of modernity as a new relationship between art and reality—from Cervantes to Galileo, to sum it up. Actually, the CFI disregards the quantum of *verisimile* or the effort of *effet du réel* present in any artwork. Thus, we can restate the marginalization of the mimesis' theory, or simply we can say that this ancient theory is not a *totalitarian* theory. Moreover, we can do it just resorting to the analysis of musical art, and particularly of absolute music in relation with music-literary productions. This aspect will be deepened below, in the methodological section of our proposal.

Why do we posit meaning and thinking in a so strict a link? Well, the word *mean* partakes the same Indo-European root with *mind* (OED: Old English *maenan*, of West Germanic origin; related to Dutch *meenen* and German *meinen*, from an Indo-European root shared by *mind*). Simply, meaning is thought

too. Sometimes I heard it translated in Italian with *pensiero*. We cannot think to a thought without thinking to a meaning's production. In addition, a meaning is impossible without a thought, or without someone who would be thinking. The difference between Sinn and Bedeutung (Frege) is without sense, if not nitpicking, in the artistic realm, where sense and meaning are not different (which is not exactly the same as to say that they are identical). An audacious analogy may be proposed with the coincidentia of esse and essentia in God iuxta Saint Thomas. Problems of meaning are not present (included) in reality: being is meaningful, because its sense is being itself; *being is self justified*: being is, not-being is not, as the pre-Socratics taught. This is eventually a materialistic way to describe the same discovery of the Curé de campagne at the end of the *Journal* by Bernanos and of the wondrous movie by Bresson: tout est Grâce. Everything that is, it is = everything is grace. Materialism and theodicy coincide. Spinoza, Leibniz, Sartre in the same fiery cauldron. A hotchpotch. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent (Wittgenstein); that is well, but we may say now: speaking or being silent is the same. Otherwise, we can resort to art and to the CFI.

An artwork is not beautiful *and* (or *but*, worse!) difficult, rather beautiful *because* difficult, more or less. I am not defending the marriage between art and mystery, something holy and quasi-divine. I am saying that art is interpretation, as a matter of ontology. CFI is the radiant form through which artworks manifests themselves. So, more arduous the way leading to interpretation (to interpretations, not to a unique interpretation, not to the true interpretation, true idiocy), more beautiful and exciting the artwork. However, manifestation is not an absurd aletheia-epiphany. *Manifestation* is a simple laic word to indicate the particular rapport with an artistic object, when a saturation of sense arises and grows, generating an exquisite delight. Manifestation is the expression of the function of an artwork, which is a tool, even though it so wonderful as to become for us something of sublime. And something looking dangerously absolute.

There are no absolutes. Artistic pleasure is not an absolute. An artist is not an absolute. An art consumer is not an absolute. Homo sapiens create pernicious absolutes in his mind always and always, thinking about the *massimi sistemi* as well as about the daily prosaic interrelations of his life. An artwork is not an absolute that may stay enclosed in a cavern or in a private room, radiating in solitude. It must be *tested*; it needs a public to make sense. The cook prepares food for the consumers and the measures of the value of what is prepared is found in consumption. [...] To be truly artistic, a work must also be esthetic—that is, framed for enjoyed receptive perception (Dewey). Art is a relative production of meaning-beauty. So art is thought. And the emotions? Yes, the emotions. But the most extreme emotion is a torsion of thought as well, isn't it? The pleasure is a delicious torture of the mind, actually. In the guise of an answer to CFI, I think that even the most ancient form of artistic expression, cave art, was an invitation to interpret that amazing combination of painted beasts, men, hands, lines, and colours. This is the second main methodological horizon we shall see below.

Every artwork must be interpreted, otherwise indeed there is no game. We think this is valid for music, poetry, fine arts, architecture, as if to say for all representative and not representative arts, abstract and figurative arts, narrative and not narrative arts. The game—we do not like this term, but it must be understood in its most serious meaning—is the same.

3.3 Substantiations

Following a hypothetical-deductive line of inquiry, we have to verify the meaning of arts in their identity related to CFI. We want to start by analyzing two fields of research, as above anticipated.

3.3.1 The Meaning of Music

The discussion about a non-representative art such as music may begin from criticizing the new (enriched) formalism of the fortunate *Philosophy of music* by Kivy. If we take the example of *Allegretto* by Beethoven (7th symphony), we ascertain that Kivy writes about it that it is a grand, magnificent piece of melancholic music—but not melancholy in itself, otherwise it would be unpleasant: rather, the *Allegretto* should wonderfully represent melancholy, and the immense beauty of this melancholy, a magnificent sumptuous musical image of melancholy. But in the light of Beethovenian previous *melancholic* quartet 6 op. 18, and by reading its adagio entitled *La Malinconia (lunga-breve-breve-lunga-lunga: ♩♩♩♩♩♩; the same pattern of Allegretto)*, we can philologically identify a precise “rhythm of the melancholy” in Beethoven, and the illusion of an absolute music vanishes, at least for this time. In a manner to speak that enjoying is thinking: The pleasure afforded by music listened to for its own sake is the pleasure of understanding (Davies). I would substitute *understanding* with *interpreting*, but the concept is clear. Then we may speak a bit about Schubert and his celebre trio in Es dur: here the pure pleasure of making music together, ensemble music (i.e., music as meaningless, absolute art) plays in a painful dialectic with the music as angst, anguish (i.e., music as meaning-bearer), and the aftermath is a negative dialectic, without resolution. Moreover, everything that means (i.e., *thinks to*) implies an obliged—never unique!—answer required to the listener, and it reveals the original presence of a CFI, q.e.d. (*erat/erit*). Anyway, the last Schubert poses questions, while for instance Schumann always unveils the unavailability of answers (see, for instance, the adagio espressivo of his second symphony). The last Schubert (think only to the awesome extreme quartet) crushes the previous joyful belief in a simple socially self-validating music. Also the unanswered questions posed by Schumann are a desperate, extreme sort of CFI.

Another more geometric musical example: the sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti hide under the brilliance of the hyper-virtuoso style the neurosis of coactive repetition. Eventually virtuoso habits and the compulsive mode coalesce, particularly so if the performance is not “romantically” slow and meditative but goes on fast and furious. And we can ask: what does a Scarlatti’s sonata *think*? Music is a thought. Alternatively, we can propose a doubt: does a sonata think or rather does it *narrate*? Otherwise, symmetrically, does Hegel think or does he narrate in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes*? (Which is one of

the most beautiful novels in the XIXth Century). Is there a link between the philosophical thought-tale and the musical narration-thought? Probably the answer is *yes*.

Then a poetic-musical example: the crucial western model of complexity, *Don Giovanni* by Da Ponte and Mozart. Here, in the scene of the Commendatore showing up at dinner, the musician alters the libretto's words and mood. The serious-comical blend offered by Da Ponte (who follows his main model Bertati) is transformed in the very tragic scene of a man in front of supreme justice. Voilà a hyper-tragic scene of contrast between the bare human being and the powerful divinity messenger. The comic counterparts-*lazzi* of Leporello are absorbed in the terrible ensemble. The nimbly funny *Ohibò* in Bertati-Gazzaniga—"stolen" by Da Ponte³—becomes a frightening tessera of a serious grand operatic scene. Don Giovanni is an *empio* and he must meet up with his punishment. But is it a real justice, or a supreme injustice? Is really Don Giovanni, the hero of the freedom (*viva la libertà*), guilty? Is his challenge to society a true impiety? The ambiguity of this melodrama is actually supreme. The CFI is incredibly strong. Hence, the artistic magnificence of *Don Giovanni* is incomparable.

Only few examples, these, to indicate the richness of the matter. The debate about the meaning of music is relatively ancient; we think to the *formalism* from Chabanon to Hanslick up to the recent positions; the bibliography is huge (cf. a few suggestions in Gigliucci). The new biomusicology (Wallin), that studies the origins of music (evolutionary musicology), the human brain and music (neuromusicology), the functions and uses of music (comparative musicology), enriches incredibly the frame of inquiry.

How and why to proceed in the field of studies about music's meanings?

Why: we think that the extreme case of music, the less representative art, is telling for us. The problem of the *meaning* is *drastic*, so to speak, in the artistic identity of music. Therefore, we find this problem substantial for our research. To verify the efficacy of CFI theory, the analysis of music looks like a correct starting point.

How: the relationship between music and literature (poetry for music and musical outcome, or in general comparison between *logos* and *melos*) is fundamental to go on toward the definition of *absolute music*. We have to ascertain that CFI paradigm allows to include music in the realm of other Arts, and to give up considering music as a world apart, a meaningless unique art that signifies only itself (as it were, that signifies nothing...). If the problem of meanings' production is the problem in aesthetic sphere, first we must study the musical phenomenology from many points of view: emotions and their intertwining with thoughts, the *meaning* and what does it mean, the social role of music and so on. The methodology will be variable according to these perspectives of investigation.

3.3.2 Cave Art

The second field of inquiry will be the scene of the discussion about the function and the meaning of cave art, particularly of Paleolithic wall paintings. Metaphysics as we know it is all but unthinkable without the image of the cave and, no doubt, without the images *in* the caves (Rosengren). The search for an

absolute beginning involves necessarily our work, to clarify a possible applicability of CFI system already to prehistoric times, to the cradle of artistic production by *Homo sapiens*.

A preliminary investigation on the main interpretations of cave art will be done. Actually, after the ornamental theory, the magic-sympathetic, the structuralist, the shamanic etc., scholars nowadays prefer underline the uncertainty of every hypothesis and the probable variation of meaning and functions through millennia and in the various human settlements. Nonetheless, the questions survive: *homo sum, nihil humani alienum a me puto*, least of all our human past. Cave art calls us for interpretation, and consistently called our ancestors as well.

3.4 Why and How

- We have to understand if the CFI has been the identity of art since the dawn of art itself.
- We have also to consider the (refutable) objections of those who do not deem prehistoric rock art as art.
- We shall try to index opinions, interpretations, images, recent scientific acquisitions.
- We hope in this way to demonstrate that the activation of an interpretative reaction has always been the innermost sense of art making. If there were some religious or holy implications, that should not disturb the simple, calm, perennial grounds of artistic achievement intended as a call for interpretation, an escape from the obscure and frequently meaningless life towards a realm where everything *must be meaningful*, must have a sense, according to a common human convention.

4. Discussion

The two main methodological choices above declared are a sort of pincers to grasp our issue and to verify our hypothesis. The two fields (music and prehistoric figurative art) are two *extreme* areas of interest, and we claim that they are significant for us for this very reason. But we must obviously consider other scopes as well. Only a few examples, before provisionally concluding.

I will take my first exemplar from the field of painting again, particularly from the production of one of the most popular artists of every time, Caravaggio. His *Lazarus' Resurrection* has recently been perfectly restored. Roman people who saw this canvas before its return to Messina's museum, have been living an extreme, bewildering aesthetic experience. Caravaggio's Lazarus: resurrection or deposition? Who is calling whom? Christ is talking with the death, through—almost necromantically—Lazarus? Mors says: *cur me persequeris?*, or: *cras morieris* (alluding to the Passion), *tu seras mort demain et encore plus après demain...* A wholly humanized Christ stands in front of death, of his own death (the cross, foreshadowed by the arms of Lazarus), while resurrection remains only a possibility. It is neither denied, nor proclaimed. Eventually the next resurrection is a hypothesis.

The new exegesis on Matthew in the *Vocation's* painting of S. Luigi de' Francesi corroborates the former interpretation of Lazarus. Actually, if the called is the young avid, covetous publican and not the bearded

old man who should indicate with his finger precisely the rough adolescent, then the instant selected for the picture is just the one before the conversion, so before the “miracle”. Will Matthew answer to Christ’s calling? We are not sure of it; Caravaggio makes it not certain, actually. Otherwise, do we all agree upon this interpretation? Probably, or rather certainly not. However, what interests us is that the supreme beauty of Caravaggio’s paintings dwells in the terrible, unavoidable CFI that they command.

Another example, a literary one, now. A classic: *Bacchae* by Euripides. The last masterwork by the third great tragedian of 5th Century Athens has been read as a religious, palinodic, extreme play, or as a fierce antitheist and rationalist tragedy. If we consider Bacchus as the hero, we propend for the first reading. If we appreciate the rationalist Pentheus and consider him the innocent tragic victim, then we think that Euripides never abandoned his bad opinion about the Gods, and thus we have a proclivity for the second reading.

Eventually, and atrociously shortly, we can say that the dilemma has no solution, because the terrible ambiguity (in the highest sense) of the masterwork by Euripides is just an insoluble conundrum, in which the culpability of the main characters has the same mould and shape of their innocence, in which ridiculous behaviour is at the same time a tragic one. *Bacchae* activates an incredibly powerful CFI, and this is the reason of his perennial bloody beauty. These and other *interpretations* will be considered. The research is now only outlined. Nevertheless, we hope this draft will elicit consequences and reactions.

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