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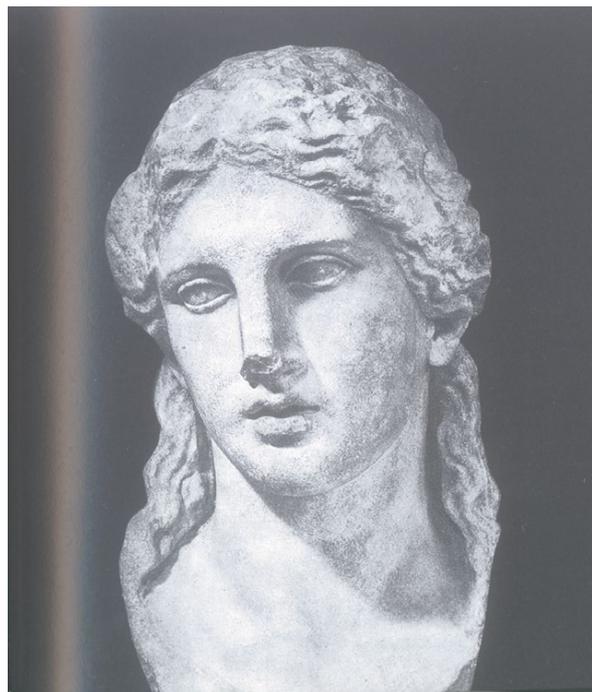
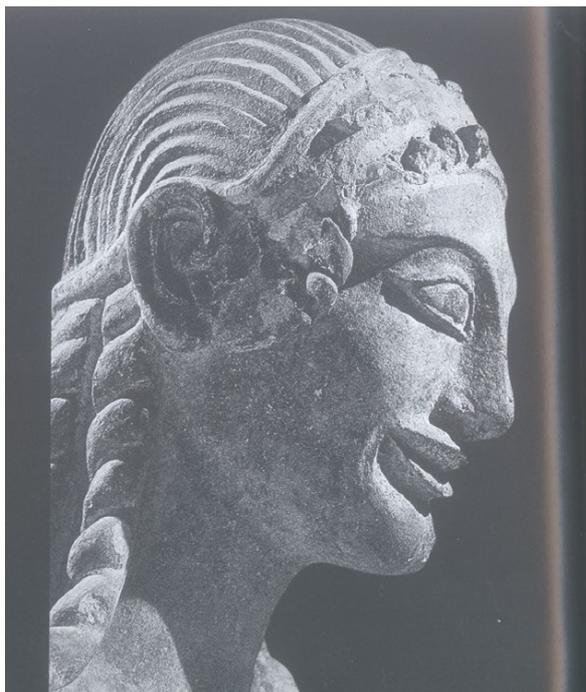
# DARKNESS AND LIGHT/ APOLLO AND DIONYSUS

The Hymn to Nemesis... Like the work of Anton von Webern, it is an extremely short musical composition, it concentrates a powerful emotion in a very few measures and evokes the imminent danger of Divine vengeance. This is Classical music.

In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century, the remaining fragments of the music of ancient Greece were better known than the remnants of Greek architecture. And yet what we call classical music, the music of Mozart or Beethoven, i.e. the neo-Classical music, did not attempt to reproduce the sounds, preferring to let this unrepeatable mix of music, dance and poetry remain dormant in antiquity. If we accept the premise that architecture and the arts in general are basically the reflections of the anxieties, hopes and thoughts which have dominated various periods, we must consider and accept often ignored issues by those who limit themselves to celebrating classicism and rationality. I am referring to the mythical dimension in Classical

culture, to the Socratic indivisibility between two different but complimentary approaches to the search for truth and the meaning of human existence; that of Apollo and that of Dionysius, and which despite their difference are generally only discussed in terms of the cult of Apollo.

In Classicism, defined as harmony, clarity, order and the search for truth, Dionysus is overlooked. The god of orgasms and orgies, the god who does not lead to wisdom and knowledge is a suppressed god. However, this was not so in ancient times. As intellectuals, as teachers of art and architecture, we must translate our thoughts and proposals into intelligent, rational and transmittable terms. But, this does not cancel our experience as artists, our knowledge of a magic moment, both profound and obscure, which accompanies the creative act. There is a moment when one hears the "flutter of the angel's wings", as the Slovenian architect Jose Plecnik said.



The importance of shadow, not as a necessary counterpart to light, and thus to Apollo, but as a realm to penetrate, to traverse and from which to return, like Orpheus. The shadow is the hidden dimension, which arises through, not only modernism or classicism, but all cultures.

In his purity and clarity, Apollo rules over medicine, music and the other arts, but, and that is important, he rules over prophecy. The knowledge which Apollo permits one to acquire is knowledge obtained through ecstasy. The prophetess, or sibyl, is the medium. Knowledge requires a form of mediation, it passes through obscure layers, and it is granted to those who prepare themselves to attain it, and who are able to host the prophetic spirit. Apollo's calm beauty thus coexists with his oracular function, he is harmony, beauty and serenity, but also ecstasy, revelation, and prophecy. In his Etruscan description, Apollo shows how Mediterranean Classicism is not limited to the Mediterranean area. These divinities come from the East. This Classicism, which for us begins with the architecture and music of Greece, has very remote origins. The figure of Dionysius is not just the pleasure seeking, as a lightly inebriated divinity of popular imagination. Dionysus watches the procession of satyrs and fauns led by Pryapus, with a languorous and feminine and almost jaded air.

The orgiastic experience is a collective one; it leads neither to rational knowledge nor to the possession of those truths so jealously guarded by the gods, but permits one to penetrate into the world of the psyche. It has been said that this languorous and disenchanting look is the same skeptical look of Dr. Freud, when he contemplates the weaknesses of human nature. However, we should emphasize that it is not just human weakness which is explored by Dionysus, but also the strength of interpersonal relationships. Here, knowledge is not the result of individual ecstasy, as with Apollo, but an experience which attains fulfillment within a collective dimension. Orgasm itself is not just sensual joy, but the soul's anguish being dissolved in the calm of the universe. It is the encounter between the self and the Other, and the rediscovery of the totality through imminence. Dionysus is the god of reawakening, of the rebirth of nature, his carriage is covered with vine leaves, his is the moment of reproduction, but also of initiation; the vegetation which adorns the god's carriage denotes what is knowable through the collective psychological experience.

Ancient architecture has never been viewed in its erotic, sensual, magical and illusionary essence. For many years, architectural fragments and skeletons

were viewed as complete architectural bodies. Measurements, types and structures replaced reality. The ruin and the cadaver belong to the same world of the dead. On the contrary, ancient architecture, painted and clad with marble was as alive and seductive as the polychrome portrait of a mocking Apollo. Instead of the vitality of forms, it was covered with a veil of nostalgia. The nostalgia for happiness led Neo-Classicism and Romanticism into areas far removed from the Classic.

Johan Winckelmann, who is the father of archaeology in Middle Europe, the discoverer of fragments, and the propagandist of Greek Neo-classicism, confessed in Stendhal, his native town; that he realized the importance of buried things the day he saw his father buried:

"On the day I saw my father being buried, in that moment, I understood that everything that was important was not visible but invisible".

Winckelmann's strange death occurred at the hands of a short and pock-scarred Venetian, Francesco Arcangeli. Winckelmann, the prophet and propagandist of Neo-Classicism, was attracted by ugliness. We must consider the inseparability of beauty and ugliness.

A first explanation can perhaps be found in Aristotle: "When ugliness is harmless, it is ridiculous", he said. But there is a postscript to his observation by another philosopher, Lessing: "When ugliness is harmful, it becomes frightening, and when it is frightening, it becomes majestic." Thus ugliness takes on a powerful fascination.

Nobile, another architect, who studied in Italy and worked in Vienna and Trieste, studied physiognomy. In the same way that he ordered columns and capitals, he created a sort of manual of possible human expressions, from calm to rage. Moods, tones and characters, in terms of type should be studied as much as, if not more than, hieratic expressions. The academy denies the oneiric dimension in Classicism, just as it denies the prophetic dimension in Modernism. The academy fears contamination, which however is at the source of all Renaissance and Mediterranean architecture.

And here, I would like to make one more observation on the Apollonian-Dionysian antithesis, or aporia. The subject of De Chirico's paintings is shadow. It is shadow, much more so than object, figures or memories, which occupies the world of dream. It is in the voyage into darkness that one discovers through.

Now, about purism, Le Corbusier. I would like to

emphasize the eruption of the demonic in his work. It was John Hejduk who suggested to me this thesis. In analyzing the chapel of Ronchamp, few critics have explained the meaning of that imposing break with the previous artistic language which also remains distinct from the monotonous and repetitive works that followed. My thesis is that for Le Corbusier, the encounter with Catholicism is an encounter with the demonic, or at least with witchcraft, the first cousin of the sacred. This machine pour prier is an invention of a magical space full of color, lighting effects, and scenography. We find here the discourse of a protestant who looks at the Catholic Church and its rights as something which owes its popularity and credibility to the miracles and the saints, thereby revealing in contrast to other religions a kinship with magic.

In Le Corbusier's notebooks we find the following annotation: "With this first drawing I have finished the project ... on this hilltop, I felt the hills, the valleys, the whole surrounding landscape; and like an ear or seashell or emptied husk, I gathered these secrets."

Le Bateau Blanc was an exhibition that I put together in Paris at Beaubourg. Its phantasmal character, the assembly and disassembly of figures, even the anthropomorphic caricature of a screen propeller seemed to me to be extremely appropriate. The future of the Mediterranean city is inconceivable without contamination.

In conclusion, please do not misinterpret my comments about light and darkness. I was not referring to the light and darkness of the visible world, which would be superficial; but to light and darkness of another kind. I was referring to the light of Apollonian harmony as defined by Plato, and conversely to the emergence of the laws of nature in our unconscious as described by Vico. I believe that the fundamental relationship between Modernism and Classicism in Mediterranean culture is a regeneration which reveals the future which lived in the past as a new form of possible balance of the poles of light and darkness. At the same time the myth of the Mediterranean cities gives a condition in which the architect in some way becomes dead to himself as a man of his time, in a metamorphosis that sees him re-born in his work. Classicism is definitely not a style, Winckelmann is completely wrong when he affirms the contrary. Instead, the Classical, the Modern, as the Modern is based on the hypothesis that it is always possible to formulate a prophesy on the future. The architect

passes through the obscurity of human nature in order to lose itself in the depth of the soul, not outside of the self, but within the self.

Anton Webern when asked if his music was classical or modern replied: "When I compose, I do not ask myself whether my music belongs to the past or to the future. I try to create good music, the best I can. For this reason, it is not important to go forward or backward but to go "inward" into the music- nach innen – always further inside."

The architect must go into architecture and into the Mediterranean city to study the specificity of each one, to propose a quality of living at its best, with the help of Apollo, Dionysus, and all the angels and the gods.