



A first, superficial approach to 'Antichrist', the magnificent 2009 production by Lars von Trier, may lead us to deduce that right after the awful accident in the opening scenes, only the mother was deeply blown by her child's death, since she immediately plunges into a chaotic, explosive mad behavior. But are we really allowed to take her husband's apparently calculated and cold, hyper-rational behavior as a proof of his little suffering, perhaps even suggestive of a plain indifference for the loss of that little son? A more attentive, thoughtful analysis of this tragic drama makes clear that nothing could be more mistaken than such a hurried inference. Both protagonists feel seriously responsible for the guilty infanticide, which expelled them from a life of paradisiac orgasms.

While she reacts in an intense and flowery psychosis, in the father erupts a spasm of extreme, cold, and superhuman, nonsensical rationality, which leads to his imposition as the sole psychologist of the maddened partner, so taking for himself a role doomed to an unavoidable failure. It could not be otherwise, given the chaotic emotions' avalanche which had just collapsed on both.

Such kind of reason's abuse commonly taken for a typical masculine trait, must be regarded here as a serious break with their experienced reality, denoting a good deal of omnipotence, showing a grave contempt to all commonsense tips about partners relationships. These latter give very simple advice about lovers' quarrels, without any need to resort a fashionable psychological theorizing.

From then on begins this husband's dip in hubris *, in the ancient Greek sense. By taking her wife away from a treatment by a neutral therapist, in the midst of that whirlwind of so serious, even bizarre emotional circumstances, the male protagonist seems to seek only a way to shield himself from any word, or even from mere glances of distrust, which could possibly be enough to his own acknowledgement as a culprit in that death. There seems to be only one possible sentence for this so weirdly self-nominated judge to utter:

"You, mother, are the mad witch who killed your own son by negligence, while you sought for carnal joy by abusing my male body. Sinner, like every woman since Eve, it is your fault that we have fallen into this hell".

Females' intuition is said to be more powerful than that of males. A character trait related to their more intense bonds with life, nature, and

the earth. In addition, women seem endowed with mysterious gift of catching deeper nuances in human emotional exchanges, and perhaps for such are they more prone to believe in premonitions and omens, things that the male mind usually just takes for poor superstitions. By the way, weird, ominous phenomena often used to happen in the "Forest of Eden", the family's small bucolic refuge, well before the boy's death. Could they mean bad omens?

Why a mention to the Genesis?

Since *Adam and Eve* men say they do not quite understand women, and for many among them this is explained by the latter '*demonic power*'. The Genesis states it was Eve who first listened to the serpent's bad advice, having then induced Adam to violate the divine prohibition and eat from the forbidden fruit.

How powerful symbols are brought by the word 'Eden' to this plot! In '*Antichrist*', von Trier builds an allegory of the endless struggle between men and women, which is supposed to be a perpetual war inherent to the human condition.

"You tell the truth, and the truth is your gift of deceiving".

Sings Gal Costa in a verse so well kept in our memory, in Caetano Veloso's song [*'O Dom de Iludir'*]. Free translation from Portuguese, by this blogger.

The father, using logic arguments to his wife, repels a priori any guilt of his own, analogously to the Adam's alibi by pointing Eva when faced with the guilt in the original sin. He shrewdly assembles a quick, aggressive and successful hitting strategy, by imposing himself with sound

arguments to his wife in as her psychoanalyst, as if being able to remain neutral and disinterested in that psychosis's dissection, so much as in the unfolding of the couple's catastrophic crisis.

Remarkable to mention at this point the so widespread commonsense statement according to which a neutral look into a partner's sufferings is quite impossible even in the trite ordinary daily life of any couple.

Human reason, here once more boasting to be omnipotent, often dares to despise the meaning of the word 'impossible', taking it for no more than a border mark setting apart the conquered knowledge from the still unknown. Whether the impossible is just an ephemeral landmark, human reason's haughtiness is endless.

There is a sci-fiction inspired, so rationally grounded theme in contemporary biotechnological futurist minds according to which sooner or later immortality will be within reach of human beings. What a stupid nonsense coming from people supposed to be among the most intelligent on Earth! To be pointed here is not whether the biological sciences will ever reach a technological leap, sooner or later, able to render feasible the perpetuation of the human body. Yes, the focus is whether this same body that came to be through the fusion of our genitor's germ cells might someday be perpetuated by an effective Faustian "potion". The problem would then be posed by the experience of time by such an "immortal" body. Faced with the perspective of an infinite future ahead, every action of this individual would be from then on forever postponed. All frustrations would lose their consistency, since in an infinite tomorrow all desires might become fulfilled. That imagined

individual would have absolutely no reason to begin any motion, whatsoever it would be.

No possible death, no frustration, no desire, no time, no motion.

Well, it is easy to see that such a perpetuated body would "live" a stoned life. *Are stones a kind of immortal living beings?*

Back to Antichrist's struggle between male and female ways of dealing with the harshness's of life, it must be considered that wars have always been won over the millennia, by the best rational calculations. Exceedingly rare exceptions may have been due only to chance. Is there a historical record capable of questioning this advantage?

Women's way of fighting, despite some significant, ephemeral victories, seems destined to always lose the final battles to the coldness of those who only use rational calculus. Will the female power lose the Armageddon battle, too?

This great production by the Danish filmmaker clearly alludes to the destructive power of mankind exerted over the living Nature, which is rooted in the rational, male aggressive character traits (obviously not exclusive to men), a growing threat to the very survival of future generations.

Seized by relentless hyper-consumerist hedonism, contemporary humanity fails to give importance to the signs that it is in the process of killing its own children, by denying them the Earth itself.

Will Homo sapiens be able to survive this heavy addiction, this present hedonistic, hyper-consumerist dependency?

Like this movie's partners, who in their ecstatic intercourse were unable to pay attention to the grave danger in which their baby was, we, *Homo sapiens 'hyper-consumerist'*, cannot see the killing misfortune ahead of the present time horizon.

'Antichrist's opening coitus, a hot erotic scene that surely sparks the movie watchers' sexual drive, represents undoubtedly an allegory of our time's carelessness towards future generations' survival. Greta Thunberg's desperate appeals obviously have their real justified groundings.

The owl of Minerva* (Hegel) perhaps in a final twilight already over flies us.

NOTES:

*The goddess Palas Athena, known as Minerva in Roman mythology, was always accompanied by her owl, animal symbol of Philosophy. Georg W. Hegel mentions this bird when talking about the study of human civilizations, which may be revealing only in their last, decaying stages. Thus, the philosopher's work could be compared to the owl's hunting, since the latter happens only at dusk.

** Hubris is a concept brought from ancient Greece, meaning a rupture with the natural order of the world as it emanated from the gods of Olympus.