

Rapture

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It has been said that artists were given a role when the image wizards lost theirs. Rather, let us say that some stole the role from others, dismissing as archaic what was once called *raptus*, *syncope*, *excessus mentis*, rapture, or vision. Millennia spent fearing or cherishing the heavens and the earth were not enough for the whims of the soil and the firmament—unjustly secularized by the hegemony of Western culture—to preserve their honor. To the point where the gods apparently no longer know wrath, nor keep their promises.

All of this has thus been abandoned and relegated to the edges of the ineffable—a way of dismissing anything that doesn't align with the reign of Reason. The artist, according to the triumphant narrative of the avant-garde, is to be an authority rather than a guide, one capable of leading us somewhere beyond just where they wish to go.

Recapturing this posture—that of the guide—requires forgetting oneself, surrendering oneself, but only to return to oneself, certain at last of having something to feel, to convey, to finally give form to. As Simone Weil puts it, we must “renounce everything that is not grace, and not desire grace”, even if that grace is not particularly pleasant to behold. Whether it is called *vacatio animae* (vacancy of the soul), “letting-be,” or *anātman* in Buddhist terms, it is, in any case, about an emptiness, waiting for a fullness that, after all, needs emptiness in order to dwell.

To be without ego, but also without purpose: just as the intellect fasts, so too must the body be surrendered—opened and opening, cracking and splitting in its gestures and certainties to let in light and currents of uncertain truth. Thus, a dancing body is a body in trance, with all the disorder that entails. In its immediacy, driven by unknown forces, it erases the ancient distinction between the corporeal soul and the free soul, becoming both matter and medium, yet as pure transparency and complete innervation.

Henri Michaux put it differently, claiming to have been “born pierced”, pierced by everything through which the syncopal experience bursts forth: fleeting voices; shadows sated with all that sunlight; the suggestions of liturgical smoke and their hypnotic pull; the murmur of a world smothered by the noise of big cities, where the faint pulses of the immemorial and the ancestral resonate, along with the imminent and the immediate; the disorder and defilement of what has never been classified; the vertigo of death and the eternal tremor of resurrection, reincarnation, and rebirth; all the formidable violence and tumult of that which advances unannounced.

Stopping images in the continuum of mystery, drawing them from the corridors of the underworld where they lie dormant, awaiting a gaze, would be like trying to catch a cloud, for there are great signs to which no signal need be made. A sacrifice of language is necessary, one that can only be expressed by disappearing.

An image, a sound, a gesture from there, in any case, torments and demands the creation of a space for eruption, one capable of welcoming the violence of the sacred into the secular world. To create, then, as one gives birth: giving everything without a precise idea of what is coming into being; invoking rather than crafting.

In short, to know, we must go to the threshold and break through, find the place of a sacred eroticism, for where there is contact, there is Eros; fill in the gaps in the perceived world by sensing the tectonics of buried, reclusive worlds, which harbor images that will remain as many impenetrable enigmas. This is the task of art and poetry, which has been described as an “asylum of theological mysteries”, an asylum where the flesh of the world meets the flesh of the body, and where the complete sensitivity of the artist and poet is nurtured: a sensitivity that is perhaps excessive, certainly immense, certainly total.

Guillaume Blanc-Marianne

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