

“Lack and Loss” in the Art of Suse Benedict Stoisser *Ernesto di Mauro*

The meaning of certain words is perfectly ambiguous, as is their interpretation. The first example that comes to mind is just the word “*Mind*”. *Mente* in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, *Mind* in English. All derived from the Latin *Mens*. In French, where this word does not exist, the same purport is indicated by the term *Esprit*. However, it is certainly not the same thing to talk about Spirit or about Mind, about Vital Afflatus or Pneuma, about Soul or Breath, about Thought or Consciousness. All examples of ambiguity. *Art* is another perfectly ambiguous term.

Same is true for Lack, whose meaning in English we could start interpreting with the concepts of Loss and of Missing. Difficulty of translation that becomes unresolved and insoluble if we consider the all-mental difficulty created by the ambiguity of these very concepts. Loss and Lack: something that existed and now is not there anymore? Something whose absence we feel or something that they told us would have been there but actually never existed? Awaiting or Loss, Happenstance or not-happened Ereignis? The difficulty of the translation lies in the haziness of our thought, mirror of our words.

Loss and Lack are the two focuses of the same ellipsis, space in which Absence, Wait, Disappearance and Nostalgia fluctuate. The circle that contains them all is our life, the space that we fill with meanings, simply, by living.

Loss and Lack are two very different words. However, at the same time, they are the two faces of the same sheet. They are inseparable and indistinguishable neuronal connections; it is as reading in contraluce, with backlight, the same score that is taking shape along the same thread of the same days.

Loss and Lack are exactly what de Saussure dubbed Sign and Meaning, the inseparable and indistinguishable faces of the same matter, the matter our expectations are made of.

It is here that Art comes into play. It is here that Art may provide explanation and purport to the common ground onto which Anxiety is moving.

The Art by Suse Benedict Stroisser is perfectly and entirely intellectual and is, at the same time, objective, made of things. Suse incarnates specularly the Observer’s Principle, embodies its reverse. The Observer, according to this principle (founder of quantum physics, the physics that has finally made us relative, dissolving forever our Euclidean certitudes) cannot, observing, not to modify the reality that is in front of him. With Suse, the situation turns around. The Observer is not anymore able to modify the reality, true or apparent, facing him. He himself is changed, dragged again inside into the interior of the perimeter of the ellipsis whose two focuses are Loss and Lack.

If Fernando Pessoa said “*I am, in large part, the very same prose that I write*”, and if Flaubert said “*Madame Bovary c’est moi*”, then we must remember that art and artist are the same thing, that without pity the two focuses tend to coincide. With the exception of rare moments of estraniation (those of normal life), life being for the artist the projection of art, not vice versa. A glimpse to any of these Works is sufficient to explain this point, to make this consideration clear.

And it is here that we reach the true intimate role of the Observer that we are called to be, the role we are invested with in front of these Works. Taking a stroll in Lisboa, uphill on Rua da Trindade, Barrio Chiado, an inscription in big black letters above a lateral door of Palacio da Trindade, unsigned, solves all existential doubts, ours and those of anybody else: *Penso mas não existo*. I think but I do not exist. Besides the elegance of the sentence itself, the first consideration that these words impose to the wayfarer is that they put a question, and provide no answer. This is exactly the sensation that we feel in front of the Works by Suse. Open questions impose themselves, which only can have individual answers from whom we try, in the beginning of this travel, to escape. “*Not to exist*” means to remove from our thought the magical and auto-referential component, the root that tries to reduce life uniquely to thought itself. The function of Art is to solve this apory. The sentence comes from the Brazilian philosopher and theologian Daniel Lima.

Then at the end of the whirl-wind of flight from the pure rational, out of the roaming about of the aesthetic sensations that has distracted us in front of these Works, we enter again, if we are strong enough, into the normal circle of thought and of existence. Out again of the forced raving in which Art, when it is such, drags us. The words on Lisboa’s wall remind us that the existence is an illusion created by the consciousness (which after all is nothing else than the whistle of the

locomotive that is our brain, abused metaphor). It is in Art that Illusion and Consciousness become Existence, that Loss and Lack dissolve into Life and Mind.

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