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# Mutilated bodies and memories of violence:

# Displacements and contestations of representations of violence, in contemporary video art and photography in Colombia, 1993-1998.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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How do contemporary artworks address and give visibility to the wounded body without reinvigorating trauma, without repeating the spectacular and homogenizing strategies used by the media? How do artworks move beyond denunciation to aesthetically and historically name and rearticulate bodily violence? And fundamentally, how do artworks offer an historical understanding of the political historicity of contemporary violence without uncritically resorting to myth and structural trauma? We intend to answer these questions within the context of art and violence in Colombia in 1990s. In this direction, we examine four artworks produced between 1993 and 1998, by artists Alberto Baraya, Clemencia Echeverri, José Alejandro Restrepo, and Juan Manuel Echavarría; artworks that deal with the challenge of thematizing trauma and memory of violence in conditions of coloniality, particularly in relation to spectacular and terrifying mutilations produced during the period. These artworks have been traditionally regarded in terms of a registration or denunciation of violence and (neo)colonialism, or else in terms of registration of collective trauma. In this study, however, we show that these works also problematize themselves with regards to such acts of registration and denunciation [in order to] critically address cultural mechanisms of memory. More precisely, we argue that these artworks inaugurate an effort of offering decolonial redistributions of the sensible that reveal, interrupt, and rearticulate ways in which historical trauma and loss have been problematically assumed, by Colombian society at large and artworks in particular, in terms of myth, absence, and transhistorical structural trauma. We finally analyze these group of artworks as a constellation (i.e., bringing them together without reducing one to the other or to a general idea), and build from them a map that help us to conceptualize how they mobilize techniques of parody and subversion in order to deal with trauma and loss. This map may serve, in the future, for further studies of artworks produced during the period and later. In this study we have interpreted and appropriated Dominick LaCapra's analysis of absence, loss and trauma, Jacques Rancière's notion of redistribution of the sensible, and Santiago Castro-Gómez's and Ramón Grosfoguel's decolonial proposal.

*To my loving, and lovable parents,*

*Juan and Carmen,*

*and sister,*

*Angélica*

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# INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Álvaro Medina curated the exhibition 'Art and Violence in Colombia since 1948', at the Museum of Modern Art, in Bogotá. This exhibition, the first and largest intending to offer a retrospective of how artists and artworks dealt with violence during the second half of the 20th century in the country, is still considered the most iconic among curatorial projects interested in those subjects. The election of the year 1948 as 'starting' point was not accidental. It actually betrays traditional imaginaries of violence key for both the exhibition and the present study. Those imaginaries undoubtedly influential in the disciplines of history until mid-1990s, have assumed the assassination of Liberal Presidential Candidate, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, on April 9, as what precipitated the *Bogotazo* (one of the largest urban riots ever in the American continent) and significantly increased tensions between Liberal and Conservative party elites and grassroots,[1] disclosing with it important dynamics of violence in Colombia. It is not by chance that the year 1948 has served as starting and central reference for histories of violence in the country.

On the one hand, it opened a period that has been knowns as 'The Violence', which according to historians spans from 1948 to 1960. For the reader slightly familiar with history of violence in Colombia, it may sound paradoxical the fact of speaking of a period called 'The Violence', when it was certainly neither the first, nor the last of period of substantive violence within Colombian history. Without any hint of sarcasm, we can say that since independence from Spain in 1810, there has been hardly a time, with the

[1] Daniel Pécaut, *Orden y violencia: evolución socio-política de Colombia entre 1930 y 1953* (Bogotá: Grupo editorial Norma, 1987 c2001), 597

exception of short period around 1920s, without systemic violence. Remarkably, during the 19th century, Colombia went through nine civil wars, and the 20th century was 'inaugurated' by the so-called 'Thousand Days War' (1899-1902) between the factions of the Liberal and Conservative parties. The latter was the bloodiest war of the first half of the twentieth century in Colombia.[2] Even if the estimated number of deaths during 'The Violence' is perhaps larger than during the 'Thousand Days War,'[3] the most important reason why 'The Violence' has become iconic during the 20th century, and referential for artists at the end of the century, was the fact that, for the first time in history in Colombia, existed visual and transcribed testimonies of forms of extreme violence exerted on the bodies of peasants in rural areas. We are talking of postmortem cuts and reorganizations of body parts usually produced in massacres,[4]and probably exerted since independence. In Colombia they have been called 'cuts' (*cortes*), and in this study will be referred to as mutilations. In this sense, the year 1948 and 'The Violence' became referential for a new approaches to and studies of political and partisan violence since 1810.

Notably, the first and most famous account of 'The Violence', *The Violence in Colombia* (1962, 1968) offered a rudimentary sociological approach and included for the first time a large selection of photographical registers of massacres, actually helping society to start to realize the sheer magnitude of violence. This account fostered the emergence of something like a 'social memory' concerning the mutilations. In this sense, 'The Violence' names a first figuration of a history of violence in relation to the disfigurations of the body.

In this order of ideas, we can identify the reference Medina had for the title for the exhibition, and address one reason why he celebrated artists like Luís Ángel Rengifo, Alejandro Obregón, Marcos

[2] Marco Palacios, *Entre la Legitimidad y la Violencia Colombia* 1874-1994 (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2003), 71

[3] There are official records of the number of deaths in both periods. It has been calculated that about two hundred thousand died during 'The Violence', and between one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand died in the 'Thousand Days War.' Gonzalo Sánchez, *Guerras, Memoria e Historia* (Medellín : La Carreta Editores, 2006), 84

[4] Germán Guzmán, Orlando Fals Borda and Eduardo Umaña. *La Violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá: Santillana Editores. 1962, c2005),

Ospina, Enrique Grau, and Alipio Jaramillo, who in the late 50s and early 60s were interested in rendering the mutilations as the way violence became itself visible, recognizable, and representable. Nevertheless, is problematic the fact that in 1999, Medina interpreted these artists as "the original core of the Colombian artists that since then [i.e., 'The Violence'] has depicted the subject of violence."[5] Medina's statement was not secondary in his curatorial proyect. In fact, even if he followed a chronological order (in both the exhibition and the catalogue) apparently distancing himself from the problematic narrative of violence proposed in 1987 by the Violence Study Commission[6] —which problematically affirmed the existence of multiple faces of *one same* violence—, Medina imposed an ideal core for the art production depicting the "subject of violence." He imposed in the whole exhibition an iconography of violence based on these celebrated artists; iconography meant to reveal the artworks produced by younger artists as different faces of it.

In his commentary on the exhibition, Juan Camilo Sierra both criticized and agreed with Medina. On the one hand, Sierra pointed out the fact that Medina's list of 'core artists' was biased, and the curator's preference for painting had left out the photographical series of Sady González registering the Bogotazo, the resolute expressionist and intermedia work of Norman Mejía (vg. *The punishing and horrible woman*, awarded the First prize of the National Salon in 1965), the also existentialist drawing and serigraphic work produced by Pedro Alcántara (Vg. *The Martyrdom makes the men-root gigantic* (1966) and his series *Testimonies*, of which one piece was awarded the First prize of the National Salon in 1966).[7] At the same time, Sierra stated that exhibition "was concerned to show how, from all sorts of trends and techniques, many artists, including many artist with bad artworks and uninterested in violence, have addressed violence; situation which leaded more to a representation of what has been the topic of violence in art, than to the role of art within it." In other words, Sierra coincided with Medina's implicit

[5] Álvaro Medina, *Arte y Violencia en Colombia desde 1948* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1999),, 19
[6] Comisión de Estudios sobre la Violencia, *Colombia, violencia y democracia: Informe presentado al Ministerio de Gobierno* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1987).
[7] Juan Camilo Sierra, "Apuntarte: Arte y violencia," *El Tiempo* June 15, 1999. URL: http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-909000

judgment, according to which most of the artworks produced after 1970, had uncritically followed and adopted the iconography and representational trend, that has adopted sort of baroque or explicit violent iconography as communicational and denunciatory strategies, which nevertheless were celebrated by the curator and the art critic.

However, we cannot ignore Medina's and Sierra's silence regarding artworks that, even if part of the exhibition, deviated from such iconography and strategies, and even addressed them critically. In fact, neither the curator nor the critic paid attention to how, in their artworks presented in the exhibition, three artists here studied (Restrepo, Echavarría, and Baraya) used *video* and *photography* in order to problematize both 'The Violence' and the canonic iconography mythic references.

This omission is partially owed to the actual context of production of art and discussion about video and photography. In this regard, we should recall the pertinent diagnosis that sculptor and art professor Trixi Allina (1950) offered in 2004, when indicated that during the 1990s most of the artists in Colombia were still working "with their hands", and their strategies were still in the "toolboxes of the eighties,"[8] even if the times were already demanding open and more "permissible processes" and mixtures. In fact, we should not ignore that the art academy in Colombia only saw the consolidation of those new processes in the early 21st century, when universities finally started to offer BAs in 'Fine arts' with a decided emphasis in photography, new media, and intermedia.[9] This sort of development went hand in hand with the timid emergence of new approaches to art history and art criticism in Colombia. In this regard, it is indicative that only existent history of video art in Colombia, is a very superficial account written by Gilles Charalambos and published in 2000. In the same vein, the first known attempt to a history of photography was published the same year, as catalogue of the exhibition "History of Photography in Colombia', curated by Eduardo Serrano. Symptomatically, the catalogue follows a

[8] Trixi Allina, "sobre un proceso de construcción académica en los años noventa en la Universidad Nacional de Colombia," in Arte en los noventa, Vol. 3 (Bogotá: Universidad nacional de Colombia, 2004), 50
[9] Idem, 32

traditionalist approach that gives no account of post-photographic processes and ideas.[10] This omission happened again in the only study on conceptualist photography in the 70s in Colombia, recently written and published by Santiago Rueda.[11]

In order to address the omission, this study will discuss, for instance, Alejandro Obregón's celebrated canvas *The Violence* (1962) and Luís Ángel Rengifo's famous aquatint series also titled *The Violence* (1968), which can be considered as references against which one can understand the originality and resignification of the mutilations and violence proposed by the video and photographic artworks in the 1990s. Yet, if we propose such contrast between Medina and Sierra's references and the contemporary works we will study, we do not assume this contrast in those terms proposed by María Margarita Malagón-Kurka's doctoral dissertation. She has indicated that while the works of the celebrated artists of the 1950s and 1960s (and some other in the 1970s) were "neo-figurative" and represented "highly distorted, fragmented, and at times eviscerated"[12] bodies, the artworks produced in the 1980s and 1990s by the also celebrated Beatríz González, Óscar Muñoz, and Doris Salcedo, were rather evocative and "indexical," and the human figure was "only suggested, and at times completely absent."

As it was already suggested, among artists interested in dealing with violence in the 1950s and 1960s, it is arguable that the neo-figurative language was closely related to the idea and need of denouncing and fostering social and collective memory of violence, and to the idea and need of affirming a "potential and hope and defiance" [13] within the autonomous realm of art. While this representational strategy was mainly focused on the 'objective' side of violence (vg. the mutilated body), the postmodern strategy identified by Malagón-Kurka was rather oriented to offering traces as "symptom[s] and

[10] Eduardo Serrano, *Historia de la Fotografía* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2000).
[11] Santiago Rueda Fajardo, *La Fotografía en Colombia en la década de los setenta*. (Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes, 2014).
[12] María Margarita Malagón-Kurka, "Dos lenguajes contrastantes en el arte colombiano: nueva figuración e indexicalidad, en el contexto de la problemática sociopolítica de las décadas de 1960 y 1980," in *Revista de Estudios Sociales* No. 31 Diciembre (2008): 27.
[13] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible* (trans.) Gabriel Rockhill (New York, NY: Continuum, 2004), 28.

indication[s] of an anomaly" and "dysfunction[al] human behavior."[14] This strategy not only intended to render trauma visible by separating (if not rendering inconsistent at times) the idea and the sensible,[15] but also intended to reorientate denunciation from the informative representation of destroyed bodies, to the indifference and neglecting attitude of the informed public and subjects.[16]

We agree with most of Malagón-Kurka's interpretation of artworks she studied and the evident contrast between modernist neo-figurative language and the postmodern notion of idexicality, which she adopted from Rosalind Krauss´ structuralist proposal. However, instead of affirming such contrast, we are interested in understanding how contemporary artworks in the 1990s intended to overcome such problematic and at times superficial opposition between modernist and postmodernist strategies, between fractured body and traumatized subjects, and between denunciation of reality and denunciation of an attitude towards reality. Paraphrasing Jacques Rancière's understanding of "modernatism" (i.e., the "identification of forms from the aesthetic regime of the arts with forms that accomplish a [supposed] task or fulfil a [hypothetic] destiny specific to modernity"), we think that those oppositions not only tend to contrast "the old and the new" and to identify historical forms and languages within the practice of art with forms and languages that accomplish an ethical task. They tend to identify those artistic languages and ethical forms with forms of political subjectivity. These oppositions become questionable, for instance, when considering the actual possibilities for a critique of how trauma has been historically and problematically assumed by artists and by society at large in conditions of current violence, and when also considering the actual political possibilities of transformation of a traumatized society. In fact, the opposition between explicit modernist representation of violence, and the postmodernist visualization of "symptoms" of an "anomaly" and "dysfunction," cannot critically and historically address the very

[14] Malagón-Kurka, "Dos lenguajes contrastantes", 31.
[15] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 29.
[16] "Unlike artists who worked in the sixties and who sought to represent physical and psychological atrocities, these three artists [i.e., González, Salcedo, and Muñoz] opted for presenting scenes, processes, and objects that rather than representing, presented complex images of indifference, neglection and suffering." Malagón-Kurka, "Dos lenguages contrastantes," 27.

condition, experience, and transformative possibilities *of* trauma and of political and post-traumatic subjectivities. In the present study, the artworks we have analyzed show us that modernist and postmodernist approaches (and an opposition between them), tend to leave unthematized trauma, respectively, as either (and both) mystified form of violence, or as structure of violence.

Neither Medina's exhibition, nor Malagón-Kurka's dissertation and selected artists are the focus of this dissertation, but they have served us in this introduction to point out the idea and need of offering an analysis of how the artworks selected for the present study, critically distanced from the tradition of 'representing' violence, and how addressed with a conceptualist approach historical trauma and practices and images of mutilations. In this direction, let us go back to the mutilations and include now the most important discussions regarding them and violence in Colombia, as well as describe notions, conceptual and methodological references we will appropriate in order to understand how the selected artworks reveal, interrupt, and rearticulate ways in which historical trauma and loss have been problematically assumed in terms of myth, absence, and transhistorical and structural trauma.

At the end of the 1980s, historian and anthropologist María Victoria Uribe studied the mutilations produced during 'The Violence', and found they resembled culinary practices among peasants, and were intended to terrorize while being meaningful in themselves.[17] In this regard, we will address the 'Necktie cut' and 'Flannel cut' in a pair of footnotes in the second and third chapters. In her influential book published in 1990, M.V. Uribe showed that even if presumably each of those 'mutilations' started to be practiced by followers of a particular party around 1950 (implying some meaning and messages), nonetheless they rapidly spread out and by the end of the decade any party had supporters exerting and being victims of such postmortem cuts.[18] This did not mean the loss of the meaning, but its rearticulation,

[17] María Victoria Uribe, *Matar, rematar y contramatar* (Bogotá: CINEP, 1990) 173-186
[18] Idem, 189

making of mutilation complex practices and body-images, and complicating the relationship between mutilations (as images of violence) and political ideologies.

Her book inaugurated a new approach to a violence that was increasingly becoming difficult to analyze at the time, when researchers, newspaper, and TV news registered massacres and mutilations exerted in large scale by armed groups, especially by paramilitary forces that emerged in 1985.[19] Remarkably, during the 1990s, and particularly around 1995, violence not only resembled and apparently reenacted central elements of partisan violence of the 50s, but also mercenary violence committed by 'bands' during the 60s, revolutionary violence and counter-revolutionary violence (including State Violence and the dirty war) of the 70s and 80s, drug cartels' violence of the 80s. It is not by chance that, in 1996, French sociologist Daniel Pécaut underlined the artificiality of current analysis of violence that differentiated violence related to social tensions, drug trafficking, and armed conflict between the Guerrilla, Paramilitary, and State forces.[20] This artificiality was something which many artists, and particularly those here studied, were likely aware of.

[19] In 1985 appeared what is currently known as "paramilitary groups" supported by right-wing politicians, rich families and landlords, army officials, drug trafficking lords, and foreign Corporations mainly USA based; support that has continued until recently (i). The goal of those groups was the annihilation of the guerrillas that affected the economic interests of landowners and companies not only by supporting unions, but also threating land owners of kidnapping or having their ranches burned and their animals killed. Another goal was suppressing the Communist Party, the political arm of the FARC, and leftist social movements and base community interested in democratic land reforms gathered under the Patriotic Union – party that emerged in 1985 as part of the Amnesty process and sadly disappeared by 1993 when about three thousand persons affiliated to it, and its three presidential candidates had been already assassinated. This 'genocide', as it is called in the accusation presented by the representatives of the victims to Inter American Commission on Human Rights and against Colombian State, was part of a dirty war that involved part of the State apparatus, paramilitary and drug cartels (ii).

Notes:

(i) Jasmin Hristov, *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 65.

(ii) Andrei Gómez-Suárez, "La coyuntura geopolítica genocida de la destrucción de la Unión Patriótica (1985-2010)", *Estudios Políticos*, núm. 43, julio-diciembre (2013), 194.

[20] Daniel Pécaut , "Presente, pasado y futuro de la Violencia," análisis político No. 30 ene/abr (1997): 18

In 2005, anthropologist Elsa Blair complemented and partially corrected Uribe´s diagnosis by arguably indicating that the violence in 1990s was neither easy to be defined,[21] nor was merely a continuation of the violence studied by Uribe. Blair also proposed that facing this double difficulty required to underline the pertinence of Jean–Claude Chenais' idea that "violence in the strict sense, the only measurable and undeniable violence, is physical violence."[22] This 'return' to the body was meant to suggest the need of approaching violence by paying attention to body and embodiment *of* violence, instead of uncritically assuming theoretical conceptualizations and "abstract nominalism[s]" that would define beforehand the phenomena; for instance by assuming violence as manifestation of ideologies. The return to the body, as it is also affirmed in the present study, was meant for Blair to demand an understanding of violence in social and cultural terms. For this reason, Blair added that it would be also helpful to pay attention to Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language,"[23] so researchers studying violence, should attend not only to the actual uses they have given to the concept,[24] but also to the different practices of body violence. This approach would particularly serve to avoid "essentialist"[25] understandings of violence, and distance from ideas of an "inexorable course of our history" and of mere repetition or continuation of 'The Violence',[26] as sociologist Álvaro Camacho criticized.

These ideas and discussion among anthropologists, sociologists, and historians, help us to understand the challenges that at the time violence posited to social scientists in particular, and to all those who would intend to critically and conceptually address violence, artists included. In this regard, it is

[21] Elsa Blair Trujillo, "Aproximación teórica al concepto de violencia: avatares de una definición," *Política y Cultura*, No.32 otoño (2009): 13.
[22] Jean–Claude Chenais is quoted in: Elsa Blair Trujillo, "Aproximación teórica al concepto de violencia: avatares de una definición," *Política y Cultura*, No.32 otoño (2009): 13.
[23] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (trans.) G. E. M. Anscombe and P. M. S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte(West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., third edition 2009), 25e
[24] Blair, "Aproximación teórica", 32
[25] Pécaut, "Presente, pasado y futuro de la Violencia", 15.
[26] Álvaro Camacho Guizado, "El ayer y el hoy de la violencia en Colombia: continuidades y discontinuidades," *Análisis Político* 12 (1991): 33

worth underlying for our study, that those discussions emphasized, in the realm of art, the need of revisiting how 'The Violence' was traditionally and still problematically approached, how its 'iconography' and motifs were still 'used' in art and media, and how society at large, and art and media had assumed the myth of 'The Violence'.

M.V. Uribe's book coincided with an important moment in the politico-juridical history of Colombia. In 1988, a reform intended to combat administrative corruption and increase citizens' participation in politics had failed. Nonetheless, a group of students proposed a constituent assembly for the 1990 general elections. Meanwhile, the guerrilla group April 19 Movement, known as M-19, had demobilized and were actively supporting the new assembly. The Electoral Council did not recognize the official inclusion of that vote known as the 'Seventh ballot,' but nonetheless counted it. Surprisingly, the Supreme Court acknowledged and validated the ballot. Long story short, the assembly promulgated the new constitution in 1991, which emphasized participatory democracy, rule of law, and neoliberalism. The constitution not only put different interests in the same 'sack,' but also betrayed the ideology behind the social movements supporting it, namely: the idea that "democracy and peace were intimately related,"[27] and that the "chronic violence in Colombia" was caused by a unequal and undemocratic political system. However, by 1995, it had started to become evident that "despite the obvious and substantive democratization promoted" by the constitution, there was "a resurgence of violence in the aftermath of its promulgation."

Without intending to point out the actual or real causes of violence —which involved the extreme right's interest in rejecting and delegitimizing the participatory democratic supported by the constitution, and both the extreme left's and right's appropriation of some legal means for strengthening their political and military influences in the regions thanks to the decentralizing spirit of the new charter—, around 1997 it began to be evident that a critical and conceptual thematization of violence had the challenge of

[27] Francisco Gutiérrez-Sanín, "La constitución de 1991 como pacto de paz: discutiendo las anomalías", *Estudios Socio-Jurídicos*. 13(1), enero-junio (2011): 422

addressing not a political system, as happened in the 1970s,[28] but a cultural one. In this sense, one of the challenges artworks had was interrupting the mythic nature of 'The Violence' in order to both resignify cultural practices, imaginaries, and mechanisms of memory of violence and ideas of sacrifice, and problematize the tendency to resort to what we describe here as a "transhistorical trauma" and "structural trauma". It is in this direction and with this aim in mind that this dissertation moves.

In this study, we will adopt Dominick LaCapra's discussion on trauma. In his now canonical article "Trauma, Absence, Loss," published in 1999 and still regarded as an important and pertinent reference in the studies of trauma, he identified a set of differences that are important for our study; differences that are here assumed to be analytic. The first is the difference between absence and loss, which could be described and assumed as 'failures' happening at a "transhistorical" and "historical" level, respectively.[29] In this order of ideas, while absence, he said, does not suggest an event and does not imply "tenses (past, present, or future)," losses and lacks are rather to be understood historically, and more exactly as "historical past" and "historical present." Losses and lacks, he added, can be narrated and may "conceivably be reactivated, reconfigured, and transformed in the present or future," whereas absence seems to foreclosure their transformation. LaCapra arguably added that when "absence is converted into loss", that is to say, when one assumes loss or lack as enactments of a foregrounding absence, "one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or Utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community."[30] And when loss is "converted into (or encrypted in an indiscriminately generalized rhetoric of) absence, one faces the impasse of endless melancholy, impossible mourning, and interminable aporia in which any process of working through the past and its historical losses is foreclosed or

[28] Symptomatically, during the seventies, mutilations became less central in the representation, and more a motif for ideological denounce, as it is exemplified in Umberto Giangrandi's series of engravings produced during in the first years of the decade, or for apocalyptic representations of violence, as it is exemplified in Augusto Rendón's series during the second half of the 1970s.
[29] Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 25, No. 4. (Summer, 1999): 700
[30] Idem, 698.

prematurely aborted." The last case exactly resembles what Pécaut critically indicated in 1996: the myth had problematically become in Colombia the only apparent language of and for understanding 'The Violence.'[31]

LaCapra also offered a differentiation, partially inspired in Freud,[32] between working-through and acting-out that is helpful to consider in the present context. While working-through is the way of performing and enacting mourning, acting-out corresponds to melancholia.[33] And this differentiation is partially correlated with another, between "structural trauma" and "historical trauma". The first, according to LaCapra, is correlated with transhistorical absence, that is to say, absence of origin or absence located at the 'origin', exemplified by "the separation from the (m)other, the passage from nature to culture, the eruption of the pre-oedipal or presymbolic in the symbolic,"[34] and the Christian Fall —all cases that will be key for the present study.

Regarding "structural trauma", it is worth noticing that LaCapra problematically described it as "the condition of possibility that generates a potential for trauma." In this sense, he seemed to force a sort of ontological relation, according to which historical trauma would be grounded in structural trauma; deficiency identified by Paul Eisenstein.[35] However, it is also worth underlying that Eisenstein seems to assume that in LaCapra's proposal, any historical trauma would then be an instantiation of structural trauma, which is exactly a possibility LaCapra criticized as it implies the possibility of blocking mourning and holding up transformation of losses. In this order of ideas, we avoid the ontological understanding of structural trauma and rather emphasize its analytical character in LaCapra's proposal, which is to say, that the "structural trauma" actual names the idea and tendency of universalizing and de-historicizing the

[31] Pécaut , "Presente, pasado y futuro de la Violencia," 32
[32] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XIV (1914-1916): On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works* (London: Hogart Press, 1957), 237-258.
[33] LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss," 716.
[34] Idem, 722
[35] Paul Eisenstein, *Traumatic Encounters: Holocaust Representation and the Hegelian Subject* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2003), 57

forms of trauma, as it is discussed in the second part of this study. That tendency runs against the fact and recognition that historical trauma is "specific and not everyone is subject to it or entitled to the subject-position associated with it."[36] Of course, our interpretation of historical trauma in LaCapra's proposal, does not reject ethics and the possibility of empathy; no matter if at the same time, and echoing Anne Kaplan and La Capra, we cast doubt on the notion of vicarious trauma,[37] and the related but not equal idea of "identify[ing] with the victim to the point of making oneself a surrogate victim who has a right to the victim's voice or subject-position."[38]

Besides LaCapra's important distinctions and deontologized notion of "structural trauma," we also need to take into account the fact that a critical and conceptual thematization of violence has to address a culture, topoi, and motifs of transhistorical and structural trauma and violence. The way the artworks selected do this is key: they resort to parody and subversion of images, motifs, and practices that are related to a traumatized culture or have been apparently inherited from a violent past. In this regard, it is worth underlying that, as we indicated, 'The Violence' has not merely been the first figuration of violence in the history of Colombia. It has also come to represent, as it becomes evident in the first part of this study, a sort of myth of origin of trauma and violence, and has even become a sort of instantiation of ahistorical structural trauma that, as it will be suggested in the second part, has problematically and uncritically given sense to violence, colonial past and the long and unfinished process of 'construction' of Colombia as a nation.

In this regard, it is worth underlying that by following the artworks discussed, the present study recognizes that some practices and references of contemporary violence seem to go back to colonial times. Nonetheless, what we reject is the approach exemplified by Emilio Yuni's *Why are we the way we*

[36] LaCapra, *Trauma Absence Loss*, 722
[37] It is problematic to extrapolate the sort of vicarious trauma that psychologists have with some of their patients, to the social realm. Another criticism is proposed in terms of "empty empathy" in relation to film and news in: Anne Kaplan. *Trauma Culture: the politics of terror and loss in media and literature* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005) 87-100.
[38] LaCapra, *Trauma Absence Loss*, 722

*are?* (2003), where this famous geneticist not only explained the long history of violence in terms of genetic and cultural endogamy within regional and racial groups in Colombia.[39] In his book, as Eduardo Posada Carbó arguably indicated, Yuni also assumed "a discursive tradition full of absolutes, recognizing very little of our past, even less of the present, while carrying a large dose of self-defeat."[40]

The present study assumes a critical understanding of such sort of uncritical and self-defeating de-historicization of violence and trauma; this is the reason why we appropriate the notion of 'decolonial(ity)' and 'coloniality' as they have been articulated by Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel. Decoloniality does not mean decolonialization. The latter denotes a process generally associated with the anti-colonial struggles in the context of the independence of specific states, either in the early 19th century for most of countries in the American continent and the Caribbean, or in the second half of 20th century for most of African and part of Asian countries. For its part, decoloniality denotes a "resignification process" that addresses coloniality. That is to say, decoloniality thematizes racial, cultural, epistemological, genre-related and economical exclusions that have been internalized, and have continued since and after the end of colonial administration and emergence of the so-called 'Nation-States'.[41] In this order of ideas, decolonial qualifies in this study the process of resignification of the present in relation to what has been culturally 'inherited', internalized, rearticulated, and transformed.

No matter if we appropriate the notion of decoloniality and decolonial, we distance from Walter Mignolo's decolonial proposal, since it seems to us that his idea of a "colonial wound"[42] not only tends to assume historical loss as a sort of transhistorical absence. It also has become at times, as Grosfoguel has arguably indicated, a sort of "epistemic populism [according to which…] something is decolonial because

[39] Emilio Yunis, *¿Por qué somos así?* (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 2004), 40, 76, 83.
[40] Eduardo Posada Carbó, "Somos así", in *El Tiempo* 13 de agosto de 2004. http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-1582905
[41] Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel, *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global* (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007), 13.
[42] Walter Mignolo, *La idea de América Latina. La herida colonial y la opción decolonial* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2007).

it is stated from a non-western cosmogony,"[43] or from a former colonial territory that is now an independence nation. We decidedly distance from such idea of and tendency for self-otherization that are in the brink of foreclosing transculturation and interculturality (and conjoined "construction or creation"[44] with the other),[45] and may become obstacles for interesting ways of understanding beyond the traditional idea of assuming colonial art (and even contemporary art in the 1990s) as subservient art that just followed the Spanish (or Global) interests –This study briefly discuss this issue regarding baroque colonial art, in the second chapter and its annex.

In fact, briefly returning to the historical context of the production in the 1990s in Colombia, we should not ignore that the new constitution of 1991 also fostered what was known at the time as "economic aperture,"[46] which implied the explicit incorporation of Colombia into the global market and economy. The impact of such "aperture" in culture was relatively immediate in the first half of the decade, when, as a matter of fact, the 'Franco-Latino American Video Art Festival' was inaugurated in 1992 in Bogotá.[47] In addition, as it happened in Mexico as Olivier Debroise and Cuauhtémoc Medina

[43] Luís Martínez Andrade, "Ramón Grosfoguel: Hay Que tomarse en serio el pensamiento crítico de los colonizados en toda su complejidad. Entrevista a Ramón Grosfoguel," *Metapolítica* Año 17, núm. 83, octubre - diciembre de 2013, 45.

[44] Catherine Walsh, "Introducción," *Pensamiento crítico y matriz colonial*, ed. Catherine Walsh (Quito: UASB-Abya Yala, 2005),

[45] At stake is not only Paul Ricoeur's notion of "ipse-identity," to which we refer in the first chapter, but also his pertinent criticism to Emmanuel Levinas's conception of the self: "From a critical perspective, this work [i.e., Levinas'] is, in fact, directed against a conception of the identity of the Same, to which the otherness of the Other is diametrically opposed, but at a level of radicality where the distinction I propose between two sorts of identity, that of ipse and that of idem cannot be taken into account: to be sure, this is not the result of some phenomenological or hermeneutical negligence but because, in Levinas, the identity of the Same is bound up with an ontology of totality that my own investigation has never assumed or even come across. It results that the self, not distinguished from the I, is not taken in the sense of the self-designation of a subject of discourse, action, narrative, or ethical commitment. A pretension dwells within it, one more radical than that driving the Fichtean, then Husserlian ambition of universal constitution and radical self-grounding; this pretension expresses a will to closure, more precisely a state of separation, that makes otherness the equivalent of radical exteriority." Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1992), 335-336.

[46] This "aperture" was initially proposed by the previous government of President Virgilio Barco, but it was Gaviria's government the one that assumed it as central economic policy. Salomón Kalmanovitz , "Las teorías del desarrollo y la planeación," in *Nueva historia económica de Colombia* (ed.) Salomón Kalmanovitz (Bogotá: Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, 2010), 303

[47] The Franco Latin-American Video-Art Festival has as main goal gatjering, in one exhibition, videos from Colombia, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. The works compited for a one month scholarship in France, before an international jury in Bogota. Charalambos, *Historia del Video Arte en Colombia* (digital text).

have indicated,[48] by 1995 it was already clear that 'local art' could hardly or should not confine itself within the 'national' limits and references. In the particular case of artists interested in dealing with violence, there was the challenge of finding ways of articulating past and present, and finding languages and references that could 'translate' the experience of violence into less 'parochial' and more global terms, while regarding the fact the public and issues were also but not exclusively local.

In this direction, it is also key for the present study, the gesture, also found in Mexico at the time, of approaching colonial past and current experiences, and nurturing an effort for "meditat[ing] on the country's internal situation,"[49] by resorting to the baroque. We understand the baroque not in terms of style (which as such was initially identified and defined according to Italian standards),[50] but as a paradoxical culture. On the one hand, we understand the baroque as a culture that, paraphrasing Buci-Glucksmann's interpretation of Walter Benjamin, unfolds an appropriation and critique of the "dual classical and Romantic tradition"[51] that has deeply influenced the historical and philosophical discourses on art in the Western hemisphere. In this sense, the baroque affirms a practice of reversal not only of the representational totality implied by Kantian approaches to the aesthetics, but also a reversal unfolded by the allegory as both "indirect language" and "fragmentation of language." On the other hand, and recalling Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado's interpretation of Bolívar Echeverría's notion of baroque in Latin America, we understand the baroque not merely as "a critique [and fragmentation] of [self-enclosed]

[48] Olivier Debroise and Cuauhtémoc Medina, "Genealogy of an Exhibition," in *La Era de la Discrepancia / The Age of Discrepancies: arte y cultura visual en México / Art and visual culture in Mexico 1968 – 1997* (Ciudad de México D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México, 2006), 25

[49] Christopher Fulton, "Neobarroco Mexicano: The ins and outs," in *Baroque Tendencies in Contemporary Art* (ed.) Kelly A. Wacker (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 165

[50] John Rupert Martin already indicated in 1977 that in the European baroque there is no homegeinity of style, particularly when comparing Italia, French and Spanish 17th-century paintings. This is even more radical when comparing the marbel sculptures in France (which are still classical in a sense), with the polychromed wooden scultures in Spain. This nonhomogeneity is also true for the Latin American baroque, particularly when comparing paitings produced during the 17th century in Mexico, Peru, and Colombia. See: John Rupert Martin, *Baroque* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 26; Kelly Donahue-Wallace, *Art and Architecture of Viceregal Latin America, 1521-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), xvi.

[51] Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Sage, 1994), 70.

language, but also as a critique of modernity"[52] in and from historical, political, and geographical 'margins' of the 20th-century Western world and art.

In this order of ideas, in our study, the baroque not only implies a double movement from inside Western tradition out, and from outside in. It is also characterized by paradoxically affirming a universal language and even 'style', and at the same time fracturing them, as well as native cultural and artistic traditions it is meant to appropriate and critically revisit. Moreover, paraphrasing Jorge Luís Borges description of *barroco*[53] (who criticized Octavio Paz's idea of the baroque as "an authentic vehicle of […] misplaced neo-Romanticism"[54]), we particularly interpret the baroque, on the one hand, as a culture that subverts (or intends to subvert) what it adopts by means of exhausting the possibilities of what is adopted, and on the other, as a culture of parody that encourages and even demands from the reader/public's side, both consummation of an order and an attitude of *desengaño* (i.e., disillusionment). In both, the baroque is assumed as enacting and nurturing an intellectual and even humorous attitude.

Baroque serves therefore as a reference and mode of critical practice for dealing with coloniality and enforcing a decolonial critique, and for dealing with processes of resignification of trauma and current violence in relation to past and internalized violence. In addition, we appropriate the precedent notions of baroque, decoloniality, and coloniality not only to understand how the artworks address a historical violence that society at large and the art world in particular have interiorized by either transforming loss into absence, or by assuming trauma of 'The Violence' as if it were structural. We also

[52] Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado, "Reading Benjamin in Mexico: Bolívar Echeverría and the Tasks of Latin American Philosophy," *Discourse*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 2010), 57.
[53] "I would define the Baroque as that style that deliberately exhausts (or tries to exhaust) its own possibilities, and that borders on self-caricature. In vain did Andrew Lang attempt, in the eighteen-eighties, to imitate Pope's Odyssey; it was already a parody, and so defeated the parodist's attempt to exaggerate its tautness. «Baroco» was a term used for one of the modes of syllogistic reasoning; the eighteenth century applied it to certain abuses in seventeenth-century architecture and painting. I would venture to say that the Baroque is the final stage in all art, when art flaunts and squanders its resources. The Baroque is intellectual, and Bernard Shaw has said that all intellectual labor is humorous. This humor is unintentional in the works of Baltasar Gracián, but intentional, even indulged, in the works of John Donne." Jorge Luís Borges, *Collected Fictions* (trans.) Andrew Hurley (New York and London: Penguin, 1999), 4.
[54] Gregg Lambert, *On the (New) Baroque*, Rev. ed. (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, Publishers, 2008), xx.

want to understand how the "resignification process" of violence, proposed by these works, happens as a *decolonial redistribution of sensible*.

In this latter regard, we appropriate Jacques Rancière's idea of *partage du sensible*, which according to him can be understood as a distribution that reveals "who can have a share in what is common to the community,"[55] one's "ability or inability to take charge of what is common to the community," and "what is visible [and perceptible in general] or not in a common space." We also partially appropriate his "aesthetic regime" as a way of understanding politics in a close and intimate relation with art (rather than something external to the latter), and a way of a "relating to the past" in terms different to those already indicated of "contrast[ing] the old and the new."[56] In addition, we also share his ideas according to which the criteria of instructional uses/functions and classification of the arts are fractured, "the mimetic barrier that separated art from other ways of making and doing" is rather destroyed, and "the situations and forms of expression" appropriated for "the lowliness or loftiness of the subject matter" are distorted. We are also interested in the idea central to his "aesthetic regime" and closely related to actual and perhaps more interesting uses of video and photography in contemporary art, according to which "the borders between the logic of facts and the logic of fictions" are blurred, making possible a critical assessment of both historical violence and ways of assuming trauma.

However, the artworks studied make us distance from Rancière's proposal. As it will become evident in the second chapter in relation to Rancière's problematic interpretation of Alfredo Jaar's *The eyes of Gutete Emerita* (1996), a decolonial redistribution of sensible that we identify in these artworks, recognizes coloniality as place of decolonial enunciation and artistic practice. In this direction, we will underline the fact that, contrary to Rancière's romantic idea of "community," it is not always enough, for a critical understanding and enactment of an egalitarian redistribution of the sensible in conditions of

[55] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12-13
[56] Idem, 23-24.

coloniality, to assume that "the incapable are capable,"[57] and everyone is capable of "feeling with us,"[58] while uncritically and ahistorically entailing to the other such a capacity, as Rancière does. A decolonial redistribution, as it will be suggested in the first chapter, underlines that the "ability or inability to take charge of what is common to the community" are pierced by historical violence, and that the crisis of subject and community is the place of enunciation and being. In this sense, a decolonial redistribution of sensible will be at the heart of our understanding of how the artworks selected historically and critically address, interrupt, and rearticulate ways in which historical trauma and loss have been problematically assumed, and the way people and artists have taken charge of violence and trauma as what are somehow common to and shared by Colombian society at large.

Finally, this study has adopted the methodological idea of constellation, identified since Walter Benjamin, as a sort of tool in history that regards a set of elements (in this case a main set of four artworks) in terms of montage and the constellation's connecting power and potential to illuminate each element by means of contrast, similitudes, and resonances, without reducing one to the other.

All this said, let us briefly present the way this dissertation is organized. It has two parts, each containing a video-installation and a photographical series. This division is owed to our interpretation of thematic references that these works propose. On the one hand, we have two artworks that resort to botanic references to Linnaeus' taxonomy and exotic images of plants and plates produced by the Royal Botanic Expedition to New Granada. On the other hand, we have two artworks that use as reference the idea of consummation either in the rearticulation of the ritual of preparation of a typical plate known as *lechona*, or in a ritual of 'guilt' and 'consumption' in the 'Feast of Herod'. This division recalls two traditional references in the baroque: the floral ornament and the fragmented body, which in turn recall the exotic, the sublime, passion, mysticism, delights, and *desengaño*.

[57] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (trans.) Gregory Elliott (New York, NY: Verso, 2009), 48.
[58] Jacques Rancière, "Theather of Images," in *Jaar: La Politique des Images* (ed.) Nicole Schweizer (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2008), 75.

Partially inspired by Wittgenstein's idea of 'use as meaning', each chapter assumes a combination of art criticism and art history and resorts to philosophical approaches (at times in dialogue with Paul Ricoeur, Martin Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean-Luc Nancy) in order to grasp the particularity of the artworks' use and resignification of images, practices, and motifs for thematizing violence in connection to mutilations. The whole dissertation aims to identify and recognize how these artworks inaugurate in Colombia different ways for critically breaking from the traditional references and ways, most of the times mimetic, of addressing violence and trauma. In this direction, the dissertation identifies key elements in each chapter that serve, in the conclusions, to propose a diagram that, involving transhistorical and structural trauma as well as parody and subversion, systematizes the results of the present study, and may serve as heuristic chart for future approaches to and studies of these and other artworks dealing with trauma and violence particularly but not exclusively in Colombia.

# I. FLORAL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

FIRST PART

*[… ] plants intervene in the moral and political history of mankind: if it is certain that history of natural objects can only be thought of as a description of nature,*
*then it is no less certain that, according to a remark by a profound thinker,*
*natural changes acquire a legitimately historical character,*
*if they exert influence over human events.*

Alexander von Humboldt and Alexandre Bonpland, *Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen*, 1803.[59]

*[…] However, the brain admirably fulfilled its powers.*
*I pondered: Was it a hallucination? Impossible! Were symptoms of catalepsy another dream? No.*
*I spoke and spoke, and I heard my voice and it was heard, but I was planted in the ground,*
*and through my swollen, flabby, and misshapen leg, like the roots of certain palms,*
*rose stood a hot, petrifying sap. I wanted to move, but the earth would not let me go.*
*A cry of terror! I faltered! I fell! Leaning hastily toward me, Ramiro exclaimed:*

*- Let yourself bleed!*

*- Hemiplegia! Hemiplegia – I desperately repeated.*

*- No! The first attack of Beri Beri!*

José Eustasio Rivera, *The Vortex (La Vorágine)*, 1924.[60]

[59] Alexander von Humboldt and Alexandre Bonpland, *Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen nebst einem Naturgemëlde der Tropenländer* (Tübingen; Paris: Bey F.G. Cotta; Bey F. Schoell, 1807), 24.
[60] José Eustasio Rivera, *La Vorágine* (Bogotá: Editorial A B C, 1946), 312-313

In his essay, written after traveling to tropical areas in the so-called 'New World,' Humboldt wondered how the aspect of the vegetation could influence "the tastes and phantasy of people,"[61] and how it could impress and affect "the soul of those who contemplate it." While he suggested that his *Ideas for a Geography of plants* should be initially considered as a description (*graphia*) and observations of nature and a catalogue of several species of plants in tropical territories (*geo*), he also pointed to a sort of romantic impulse that nurtured his reflections and offered to his *Ideas* a plausible horizon and vantage point of interpretation of natural history. Interestingly, in the passage quoted, Humboldt referred to F. W. J. von Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, where this "deep thinker" wanted to include humans within nature and as part of an interrelated whole distributed in ascending series of 'potentials.'[62] 80 years before Hippolyte Taine's pseudo-Hegelian interpretation of art history and 'moral climate' –according to which historicism "was grounded on a naturalism" which in turn had physiology (and ethnology) as its core–,[63] Humboldt's *Ideas* not only suggested a bond between nature and humans. Almost in a Kantian move, his *Ideas for a geography* also suggested the possibility of a hermeneutical *graphia* intended to grasp the Land as condition of possibility of people's character as well as moral and political history. Moreover, if we were to follow Humboldt's idea of `language as "activity (*energeia*)",[64] which "true definition may therefore only be genetic" and denotes "the continual intellectual effort to make the articulated sound capable of expressing thought", we could even suspect if such (geo)*graphia* would be, for him, an

[61] Humboldt and Bonpland, *Ideen zu einer Geographie,* 24.
[62] Andrew Bowie, "Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schelling/>
[63] Fabien Capeilleres, "To Reach for Metaphysics: Emile Boutroux's Philosophy of Science", in Neo-kantianism in contemporary philosophy (eds.) Rudolf a. Makkreel and Sebastian Luft. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 201.
[64] In his posthumous *On the Diversity of the Structure of Human Language and its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind*, Humboldt stated: "Properly conceived of, language is something persistent and in every instant transitory. Even its maintenance by writing is only an incomplete, mummified preservation, necessary if one is again to render perceptible the living speech concerned. In itself language is not work (*ergon*) but an activity (*energeia*). Its true definition may therefore only be genetic. It is after all the continual intellectual effort to make the articulated sound capable of expressing thought. In a rigorous sense, this is the definition of speech in each given case. Essentially, however, only the totality of this speaking can be regarded as language." Quoted in: Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter Hertz (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc. 1971), 117

"intellectual effort" for articulating and expressing the (History of?) Spirit through (the History of?) Nature.

Of course, this is not the place to study the actual intentions and goals of Humboldt's *Ideas*. On our part, we use these suggestion as a reference against which initially attending to the invitation and request made by the two artworks discussed in this first part: *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut*. These artworks, which have as titles names given, respectively, by Carl Linnaeus and peasants to a species of plantain and a mutilation, demand us to critically and historically address the 'naturalization' of violence and its relation to our being-in-the-world. The artworks particularly invite to do so at two interrelated levels, namely, the practice of naming as human activity of language (which is not just meant to label and classify things, animals, and species), and the problematization of the "very old mystification", according to which nature (no matter if seen as physiology, ethnology or botany) is placed "at the bottom of history."[65] In this direction, language and myth come together in this first part, in what can be regarded as two complementary tasks concerning a reinterpretation and re-articulation of natural forms: the parody of mystification as well as the subversion of naturalizations of historical violence and trauma. This double task particularly requires overcoming the calling to exoticization of violence as well as hypostatization of trauma, which have tended to obliterate several types of politics, among them, a politics of visuality and a politics of memory important for many critical contemporary artworks.

In this direction, the '…however' opening the quote taken from Rivera's *The Vortex*, is telling. It is true that this novel's treatment of the rainforest "updat[ed] the cliché [of anthropomorphism with romantic-modernist roots, and …] rescue[d] and recontextualize[d] threads of an exhausted convention".[66] Nonetheless, it also true that beyond describing an incredibly rich biodiversity and the appalling

[65] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Selected and translated from the French by Annette Lavers (New York, NY: The Noonday Press 1991[c 1972]), 101.
[66] "[…] in its treatment of the rainforest Rivera *updates* the *cliché* [of the anthropomorphism with romantic-modernist roots, and…] rescues threads of an exhausted convention and recontextualizes it." Sylvia Molloy, "Contagio Narrativo y Gesticulación Retorica en La Vorágine," *Revista Iberoamericana* Vol. LIII, no. 141 (Octubre-Diciembre 1987): 757

conditions of life of workers in the rubber factories, *The Vortex* subverted and parodied at times the romantic dreams or hallucinations of phantasmal and mythic bounds between human being, nature, and violence. In this regard, we should not forget that this novel, published in 1924, is the text that opened the cycle of violence in Colombian narrative,[67] and was the seminal work of Latin American literary modernism,[68] which includes Oswald de Andrade's *Anthropophagic Manifesto* published four years later.

The very gesture of quoting from *The Vortex* not only points to tensions within modernism as well as a modern account of experience of violence. It also invites to consider how the artworks discussed assume, rearticulate, and distance from such modernist approach to violence, and configure a relation other with modernity and historical violence. In this direction, it is worth underlying that *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* avoided the cliché of denunciation of State and structural violence common in 1960-80s (and affirmed for instance by different schools of interpretation of Marx's legacy, Liberation Theology[69] among these, and echoed by Brazilian Artists Antonio Manuel[70] and Helio Oiticica,[71] Argentinian art collective CADA,[72] Colombian collective Taller Cuatro Rojo,[73] and Peruvian

[67] Alejandro González Segura, "Introducción," *La Vorágine*. (Madrid, España: Alianza Editorial, 2009), 413
[68] Cedomil Goić, *Historia y crítica de la literatura hispanoamericana: Del romanticismo al modernismo. II* (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 1988), 584
[69] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Liberation Theology, History, Politics, and Salvation*, ed. and trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (New York, NY: Orbis Books, c1988, 1973)
[70] *Image of Violence* (1968), *Repression is again - Here the Consequence* (1968), and *Body-work* (1970). See: Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship. Antonio Manuel, Arthur Barrio, and Çildo Meireles* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).
[71] In a rather romantic approach according to which the bandit would represent the excluded and poor, with his artworks *B33 Box Bolide 18, Box Poem 02 – Homage to Horse Face* (1966) and *Be Outlaw, Be a Hero* (1968), Oiticica paid tribute to his friend Cara de Cavalo (Horse Face), one of the most wanted man at the time for many assaults and for murdering a police officer. Idem, 94.
[72] Founded in 1979 by Juan Castillo, Lotty Rosenfeld, Fernando Balcells, Diamela Eltit and Raúl Zurita, CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte/Actions of Art Collective) was interested in problematizing the relation between art, politics, and the city, questioning the conditions of life in Chile under the dictatorship. Exampled of its works are *Not to starve to death in Art* (1979), *Ay, Sudamerica* (1981), and *No +* (1983-88). See: Robert Neustadt, *CADA DIA: la creación de un arte social* (Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2001), 1-6
[73] In 1972 Diego Arango, Jorge Mora, Umberto Giangrandi, Nirma Zárate, Carlos Granada and Fabio Rodríguez founded this collective, closely related to communist party and interested in graphic design. The collective lasted only two years and produced series of banners and cartels for specific contexts and social problems. The pieces are mostly untitled and have disappeared as they were pasted on walls and poles as a way of intervening the urban space, making difficult the curatorial work for the exhibition 'Rojo y más Rojo', recently held in Bogotá in 2014, and the first dedicated to the collective. In fact, after years of being forgotten, the collective is starting to become subject of discussion and to be regarded as precursor of some contemporary artistic expressions. See: Alejandro

Herbert Rodríguez[74]), and transformed the cliché of non-humanist surrealism and poststructuralist discourses and practices in 1970s-80s (echoed for instance by Brazilian artists Arthur Barrio[75]). Moreover, both artworks rescued forgotten or excluded elements from main-stream art history regarding representation of the other and of nature, recalled botanic plates, taxonomy, myth, and travel and scientific literature, and recontextualized them in order to inaugurate a contemporary critical reflection on and effort for naming as activity and new or different ´genesis´ of our understanding of violence in Colombia.

Gamboa, *El Taller 4 Rojo: entre la práctica artística y la lucha social* (Bogotá: Instituto Distrital de Cultura de Bogotá, 2011)

[74] In his photo montage and collage "Structural Violence" (1989), for instance, Rodríguez wanted to state that the main cause of violence was poverty. Interview with the artists. Issela Ccoyllo, "Herbert Rodríguez: «Aquí vivimos la locura de seudoiluminados»" 2013-11-25 https://limaenescena.lamula.pe/2013/11/25/herbert-rodriguez-aqui-vivimos-la-locura-de-seudoiluminados/rosanalopezcubas/

[75] For instance, in his *Situation…ORHHHH….* (1969) and *Situation ….. T/T1* (1970) along with his work *Bloodied Boundles (B.B.),* and as Barrio recognizes, in correspondence held with Claudia Calirman, he was interested in the notion of the abject, rotten and wasted and read Georges Bataille's ideas about abjection as the form of the miserable. Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship*, 89 and 176 n17.

# 1. MUSA PARADISIACA: THE INTERRUPTION OF THE REAL

FIRST CHAPTER

José Alejandro Restrepo (1959), born in Paris, is currently regarded one of the most important and celebrated artists in Colombia (of generations born in the 1950s and 1960s). He originally studied medicine the Universidad Nacional de Bogotá, but later, in 1980, switched to the School of Arts at the same institution. Given his increasing interest in engraving, and the fact that the great graphic arts production period of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Colombia had already passed, he decided to go and study at the École des Beaux Arts in France. It was there where he discovered video art. In 1985 he returned to Colombia, and presented his first video in an exhibition organized by the Fundación para las Artes Avanzadas – ARTER, in Bogotá. According to Gilles Charalambos, this was the first time an exhibition in Colombia had ever included Colombian video artists.[76] Since 1987, Restrepo has been producing video-installations and video-performances, and he is currently regarded as the principal reference for video in Colombia. His work has been presented in Europe, Latin America, and the USA.[77] He was awarded the Luís Caballero Prize, in 2013, the most important award in the Colombian art world.

[76] Gilles Charalambos, *Historia del Video Arte en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia: [s.n.], 2000). [Online] URL: http://bitio.net/vac/contenido/historia/index.html

[77] Selected solo exhibitions: Teofanías, Museo de Antioquia, Medellín (2008); TransHistorias: Mito y Memoria en la Obra de José Alejandro Restrepo, Biblioteca Luís Ángel Arango, Bogotá (2001); Musa Paradisíaca, Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá (1997); Anaconda, Aphone in Geneva, Switzerland (1993); and Terebra in the Museo de la Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá (1988). Selected group exhibitions: Arte y Violencia en Colombia, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (1999); The Sense of Place, Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (1998); Tempo in the Museum of Modern Art Queens, New York (2002); Botánica Política, Santa Montcada, Fundación la Caixa in Barcelona (2004) and Cantos/Cuentos Colombianos: Contemporary Colombian Art in the Daros-Latinamerica, Zurich (2004). He has participated in several international art events, such as the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007), Havana Biennal (1994, 2000), 23rd Sao Paolo Biennial (1996). In 1995 he was also awarded the VII Salón Regional de Artistas, Corferias, Zona 7, Bogota

## Devouring the exotic: parody as counter-performance[78]

*Musa Paradisiaca* was produced between 1993 and 1996. It was first exhibited in 1996 in the 23rd São Paulo International Biennale, and later shown at the Museum of Modern Art, in Bogotá, in 1997. It is a complex video-sculpture-installation that among the works selected for this study, has been the most commented.[79] However, it seems to us that those commentaries have not discussed important elements and implications of and in this work. It is a remarkable fact that comments practically ignore the polyptych marking the entrance to the installation. It is also significant that those commentators do not give account of how this original and interesting piece critically addresses the imaginary of violence and the centrality of trauma in a representation of violence in Colombia. In this direction, we will distance ourselves from the main four commentaries of this work. The first is Natalia Gutierrez´s monograph,[80] published in 2000. This study, guided by Jacques Baudrillard's notion of seduction, even if superficial is nonetheless still considered a canonical reference that inaugurated the studies on Restrepo's work in 1990s. We also take distance from art historian and curator Santiago Rueda and his interpretation originally presented in an essay in 2004, and then ratified in a paper published later.[81] He correctly criticized that in essays on Restrepo's oeuvre and interviews with the artist, including Gutierrez's monograph, the "European view ha[d] prevailed over the American, as both artists and authors who have

[78] Parody (*parōidía*, παρῳδία) derives from Greek prefix *pará* (παρά, beside) and root *ōidḗ* (ᾠδή, song) and means here a performance or discourse that imitates another performance or discourse, and stands alongside critically countering it.

[79] Hans-Michael Herzog, "Interviews with the artist", *Cantos Cuentos Colombianos. Arte contemporáneo colombiano*. exh. Cat. (Rio de Janeiro: Cobogó, 2013), José Roca and Sylvia Suárez, Transpolítico. *Arte en Colombia 1992-2012 = Transpolitical art in Colombia 1992-2012* (Barcelona: Lunwerg, 2012), Diego Garzón, *De lo que somos. 110 obras para acercarse al arte contemporáneo colombiano* (Barcelona: Lunwerg, 2011), María Iovino, *Contratextos. Fernell Franco, Oscar Muñoz, José Alejandro Restrepo, Miguel Angel Rojas* exh. Cat. (Bogotá, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2007), Carlos Arturo Fernández Uribe, *Arte en Colombia 1981-2006* (Medellín: Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 2007), Regula Malin, *Cantos Cuentos Colombianos* (Zürich: Daros Art Education, 2004), José Roca, Carlos Basualdo and Paulo Herkenhoff, *Trans Historias. Historia y mito en la obra de José Alejandro Restrepo* exh. Cat. (Bogotá, Banco de la República, 2001), Iris Lenz and Monika Winkler, *Cultura vita natura mors* exh. Cat. (Stuttgart, ifa Institut für Aulsandsbeziehungen, 1996), and Karin Stempel and Carolina Ponce de León, *A propósito de Colombia. Beziehungsweise Kolumbien* exh. Cat. (Cologne, Kulturhaus Lateinamerika e.V., 1995).

[80] Natalia Gutiérrez, *Cruces: arte: artista: José Alejandro Restrepo* (Bogotá: La Silueta editores, 2000)

[81] Santiago Rueda, "Historia de los historiadores, gramática surrealista y tiempo transhistórico. Una reflexión sobre la obra de José Alejandro Restrepo," *Ensayos. Historia y teoría del arte* No. 11 (Diciembre 2006): 89-108.

studied him, link his work with the dominant discourses."[82] Paradoxically, Rueda himself supported the idea that Restrepo´s work was basically to be understood both in terms of a tradition Rosalind Krauss described as "dissident surrealism", and in terms of the "vernacular tradition" of 'magical realism.' In this sense, Rueda´s monograph wanted to unveil the "presence and crosslinking of both traditions," but also showing how *Musa Paradisiaca* was at the same time still attached to and refused to overcome magical realism.[83] We will problematize the centrality and pertinence of focusing on those two traditions for understanding the critcal aspect of the artwork in question in relation to the issues of violence and trauma.

Interestingly, whereas Gutiérrez intended to link Restrepo's work with a larger and non-local postmodern context beyond local context and acknowledged Restrepo's interest in anthopology, and whereas Rueda intended to bring it back to the Latin American context of anti-neocolonialism struggle, a third commentator, art critic Efrén Giraldo,[84] rejected both interdisciplinary dialogues with social sciences and the idea of linking the work with Latin-Americanism. In his analysis, published in 2010, E. Giraldo opted instead for a formal and material analysis. His insight recovered some interesting elements offered by *Musa Paradisiaca*, but unfortunately ignored important dialogues that this work builds with others locally and globally, missing the conceptual density of *Musa Paradisiaca*. Finally, in 2012, Colombian-Uruguayan art historian Ivonne Pini offered a short but compelling interpretation since she pointed to the transcultural character of the images appropriated by the artwork, and the need of overcoming a Latin Americanist perspective of analysis while retaining the political and historical context fo the artwork. Nonetheless, we think, her interpretation fails to address the conceptual density and originality with which this artwork deals with violence and trauma. As the other commentators have done, she missed the parody we want to demonstrate is central to how this piece critically and historically address and rearticulates

[82] Rueda, "Narrativas históricas e imágenes políticas en la obra de José Alejandro Restrepo," January 1st, 2004, 5. http://www.banrepcultural.org/node/95172
[83] Rueda, "Narrativas históricas…," 70
[84] Efrén Giraldo, "José Alejandro Restrepo, mirada y etnografía", *Los límites del índice Imagen fotográfica y arte contemporáneo en Colombia* (Medellín: La Carreta Editores and Alcaldía de Medellín –Secretaría de Cultura Ciudadana, 2010), 89-110

some referential art works, and enriches a decolonial approach to violence and trauma. This said, let us start to describe and analyse *Musa Paradisiaca*.

Figure 1. Restrepo, Musa Paradisciaca (polyptych), 1993-1996

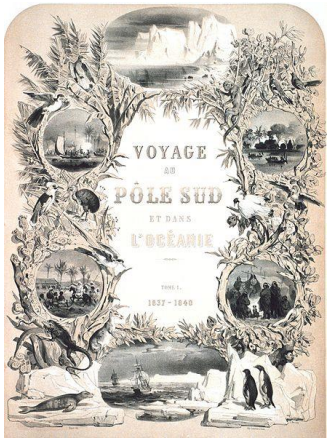


Figure 2. Frontispice to "Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie…," written by Dumont D'Urville, 1842

The polyptych, in its first and most of its later versions, is made up of 16 photos arranged in two bands and flanked by four photos, which are actually a vertically and horizontally reversed photograph of a banana or plantain cluster and flower. These elements on either end emulate ornamented and floral frames marking an entrance, and also engraved frontispieces like, for instance, the one in D'Urville's 19th-century travel book "Voyage au pole sud et dans l'Oceanie" (1842). In such frontispieces flora is depicted and arranged as an architectural frame, through which the reader is offered an idea of the scenes or themes found in the book. At the same time, the strict symmetry reminds us of the representation, usually found on entrance gates, of the two-faced Janus, the mythical figure that also marks beginnings and ends. The polyptych is usually placed on a wall accompanied by clippings from newspapers and books collected between 1993 and 1996. These

clips include news about negotiations on the price of bananas, disputes related to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), massacres committed in banana plantation regions of Colombia, and also exoticizing colonial imagery.

Figure 3. Alphonse de Neuville (after a draft by Charles Saffray), Musa Paradisíaca, 1869

The artist himself[85] has recognized that *Musa Paradisiaca* emerged from his unexpected encounter with a print published in "Voyage a la Nouvelle Grenade"; in which the author, the physician and botanist Charles Saffray, described his observations of the fauna, flora, and customs of Republic of New Granada in 1861.[86] This account of territories that are currently part of Colombia was published in the then famous magazine *Le Tour du Monde* in 1870, one of the first magazines of ethnographic tourism in Modern Europe. The print, which was originally an engraving made by Alphonse de Neuville (former student of Eugène Delacroix,[87] and illustrator of Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*)[88] is titled 'musa paradisiaca.' It depicts a plantain plant with large leaves covering the upper half of the image, a cluster hanging right in the center, and a woman taking shelter from the tropical sun. She wears a collar and a long dress with a neckline that reveals most of her breasts. Apparently unaware of being observed, she looks to her right and poses like a desired,

[85] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces: arte: artista*, 97.
[86] The Republic of New Granada was a centralist republic, stablished in 1831, and consisting of present-day Colombia and Panama, including part of the modern republics of Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and Brasil. Charles Saffray, "Voyage à la Nouvelle Grenade" *Le Tour du Monde* (1870): 81-144
[87] [No author specified,] "Alphonse de Neuville," *The Art Amateur* Vol. 13, No. 2 (Jul., 1885), p. 23
[88] Arthur B. Evans, "The Illustrators of Jules Verne's "Voyages Extraordinaires," *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Jul., 1998): 252-53.

exoticized female from an imagined and paradisiacal Harem (thus the outdoors setting) as Fatima Mernissi would rightly recognize.[89]

Restrepo initially assumed that this print was just an exoticized representation of the tropics[90] where the woman, perhaps a mulatto, lies directly in the shadow of the cluster, as if the sexualized imaginary of exotic fruit were projected on her, therefore suggesting she is also an exotic fruit and the flower of a tropical paradise. Nonetheless, Restrepo later realized that 'musa paradisiaca', the title given to the print and supposedly to the woman, was actually the name that botanist and grammarian Carl Linnaeus gave to the plantain in his *Species Plantarum* (1753) –species currently recognized as a hybrid between 'musa acuminata' and 'musa balbisiana'.[91]

The image of the woman presented here suggests the sexualized and exotic form of the plant and its title merges two references that convert this into a transcultural print. On the one hand, Linnaeus, the botanist, apparentlye adopted what seem to be an ancient Christian tradition echoed in the Surah Al-Wāqi`ah (or The Inevitable), in the Quran, and named the plantain plant as ´musa paradisiaca´ or 'Tree of Paradise', and the banana as 'musa sapientum' or 'Tree of knowledge'.[92] On the other hand, Linnaeus, the grammarian, played upon the phonetic similarity between the Latin term *musa* (or muse) which recalls the Greek *mousa*, and the Arabic *mauz* or *mōz*, this being the Persian name for the fruit as recorded in Avicena or Ibn Sina' *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb*, in 1025.[93] This does not seem to be accidental. It is quite possible that Linnaeus, and also conceivable that Saffray and Neuville were aware, via Avicena, that in

[89] This interesting book proposes a non-European and 'non-white' feminist interpretation of Western desires and misunderstanding of the 'oriental' harem. Fatima Mernissi, *Scheherazade goes west: different cultures, different harems*, (New York, NY: Pocket books, 2001), 17-25

[90] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 97.

[91] R.Govaerts and Häkkinen, (2015) *World Checklist of Musaceae.* Facilitated by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Published on the Internet; http://apps.kew.org/wcsp/ Retrieved April 12, 2013.

[92] In his *Species Plantarum* (1753) the Swedish botanist classified the plantain plant as the "Tree knowledge of Good and Evil," and the banana plant as the "Tree of Paradise." Interestignly, in the Surah Al-Wāqi`ah the banana plant and its protecting shade are mentioned in the sacred garden, and where the archaic Arabic word *talh*, which usually translates as "tree of paradise," is sometimes interpreted as 'banana tree.' See Dan Koeppel, *Banana: the fate of the fruit that changed the world* (London: Hudson Street Press, 2008), 6.

[93] Ibn Sina, *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* (Book II, On Specific Drugs). Accessed December 10th, 2013, http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/saab/avicenna/640/html/S1_213.html

the Qu'ran, and more exactly in the Surah Al-Wāqi`ah (The Inevitable), the banana plant and its protecting shade are mentioned in the sacred garden,[94] where the archaic Arabic word *talh*, which usually translates as "tree of paradise," is sometimes interpreted as 'banana tree'.[95] Remarkably, Avicena presented the banana as the fruit of happiness and wellbeing, and Linnaeus was not only the first in getting a banana plant to flower and fruit in Holland, but also came up with several beneficial uses for the fruit such as, for instance, boiling bananas with sugar to cure anger, and using bananas to treat strangury.[96]

In this sense, this print not only merged botanic species but also religions, colonialism, medicine, and sexual imagery believed to be proper of the exuberant vegetation and exoticized sexuality of the so called 'West Indies;'[97] territory imagined as the 'Garden of Eden' watered by four American rivers,[98] and on which were projected, as Edward Said would say, European and Christian religious and "political

[94] "In the Gardens of Pleasure, a [large] company of the former peoples, and a few of the later peoples, on thrones woven [with ornament], reclining on them, facing each other. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring - No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated - And fruit of what they select and the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire. And [for them are] fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes, the likenesses of pearls well-protected, as reward for what they used to do. They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin - Only a saying: "Peace, peace." The companions of the right - what are the companions of the right? [They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed and [banana] trees layered [with fruit], and shade extended, and water poured out, and fruit, abundant [and varied], neither limited [to season] nor forbidden, and [upon] beds raised high." *Quran*, 53:16-34

[95] Dan Koeppel, *Banana: the fate of the fruit that changed the world* (London: Hudson Street Press, 2008), 6.

[96] Andrew Brown's reviewed a biography of Linnaeus. Andrew Brown, "Adam and Eve and a banana," in *Andrew Brow's blog,* November 13th, 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/andrewbrown/

[97] Linnaeus was the first in getting a banana plant to flower and fruit in Holland and came up with several beneficial uses for the fruit, for instance, boiling bananas with sugar to cure anger, and using banana for strangury. He also stressed that this fruit and plant would fit some practical issues regarding the myth of the Eden. For instance, he pointed out that the fruit grows at the right height so one reaches it out with longing as one does for knowledge, and underlined that when cut across, one would find in the fruit a tiny cross, sing of the sacrifice and salvation. This is how he linked the plantain to the notion of the True Cross. Linnaeus also linked the word 'plantain,' derived from the Greek term *platanos* (πλατανος, where πλατος means plane and wide), to the wide, large and 'decorously' covering leaves, in case the need arose for covering nakedness, would make it much easier and practical than fig leaves. This information was obtained thanks Andrew Brown's review of a biography of Linnaeus. Andrew Brown, "Adam and Eve and a banana," in *Andrew Brow's blog,* November 13th, 2009, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/andrewbrown/

[98] Rosa Pellice, "Continens Paradisi: El Libro Segundo De El Paraíso En El Nuevo Mundo De Antonio De León Pinelo," América sin nombre, nos 13-14 (2009): 33.

doctrine[s] willed over the Orient."[99] The print is also an interesting transcultural archive that somehow adopts but also alters traditional representations of paradise and knowledge. In fact, despite the importance of the plantain and the banana for scientists and pseudo-scientists, these species are not depicted as the 'forbidden' fruits in the European 'major arts.' In this sense, while the apple (including the Pineapple), fig, and citrus are practically omnipresent in European art and its inherited iconography, and part of a conscious history of art and celebration of European (agri-) culture (Figure 4), the banana and its flower offered a way, for Restrepo, to conceive of the possibility of subverting and parodying the myth by approaching it though use of a kind of 'repressed' sexual form the Western history of art.

Figure 4. Anonymous, 'Musa Sapientum' [probably a fig tree], published in Der Gart Der Gesundheit, woodcut, 1492. (The actual source of this image is The Illustrated Bartsch. Vol. 90, ca. 1500)

A first moment of this parody is suggested by the fact that the photo of the print included in the polyptych, is not only a detail that underlines the relationship between woman and cluster, but is also its 'inverted' reproduction, that is to say, it has been flipped horizontally. Whereas this could be initially interpreted as intended to render the original engraved plate, the fact that it is a cropped detail and a photograph seems rather to emphasize the intention of a process of reproduction that 'imitates' but also stands alongside oe besides (*para*) countering the 'original' reproduction. In this regard, one should not ignore that on the board, next to the polyptych, is a complete, non-inverted reproduction of the print.

A second moment of parody seems to correspond to the arrangement of the photos in the polyptych. In fact, the first thing one notices when approaching the polyptych is that the coloration given to the photos suggests a pairing, for instance between the woman lying on the ground and a plantain flower, between a cluster hanging from the plant and a man holding a cluster of Liberation cut bananas. In this regard, the arrangement of the flanking clusters, and the pairing of clusters with human figures recall

[99] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Representations of the Orient* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 204.

photos published in the magazines *Documents*, and echo Roger Caillois' ideas that natural forms possess the "objective capability to operate directly on affectivity," and myth is defined in relation to sexual and botanic forms. [100] It also seems to recall, as Santiago Rueda suggests,[101] Rosalind Krauss's idea that photos could 'index' "the unconscious production of sexual imagery throughout all aspects of culture." [102] In addition to these four photos, we find even more evident pairings among eight photos of a naked couple showing a man and a woman together in different positions in front of a plantain plant, spontaneously embracing, at times with their backs towards the viewer while the woman raises an arm reaching for the fruit. The interior 'panels' of the polyptych are clearly a rendition of two non-white Adams and Eves, and the polyptych itself seems to recall the Christian-European myth of genesis. In a sense, when compared to polyptychs in the Christian tradition, it is as if each 'panel' or photo were to be understood as instantiation of key iconic moments in the development and consolidation of that myth.

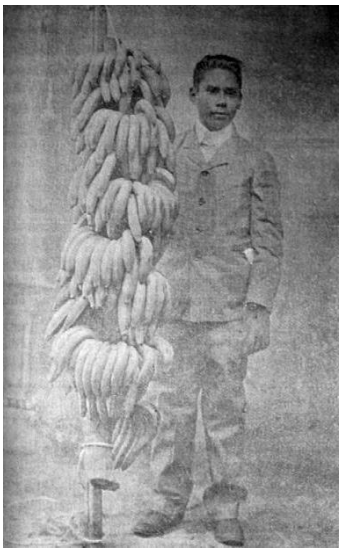

Figure 5. Restrepo, Musa Paradisciaca (detail), 1993-1996

However, Restrepo 'turned things up a notch'. Notably, the cluster hangs so high that the naked couple cannot reach it and, therefore, cannot sin. There is a clear interruption of a myth of guilt, the foundational myth of the Christian community (that involves Europeans and those later converted) since without original sin there is no need of Christ, nor sacrifice. We arrive here at the third moment of parody, where the pairing is also interrupted. We have paired the hanging cluster and the man, wearing a suit and holding the Liberation banana cut. Yet, this pairing has been forced, imposed: while the other pairs are made of elements that share

[100] Caillois' "phenomenology of imagination" not only affirms that a myth is grounded or emerges from the relationship of forms and actions of a natural specimen like the praying mantis, but also neglects that that reaction is actually is a projection of a prejudice , for instance, about a "wild" and "primitive" woman.
See Rosa Eidelpes, "Roger Caillois' Biology of Myth and the Myth of Biology," *Anthropology & Materialism* 2 [Online], 2, 2014, connection on 29 October 2014. URL : http://am.revues.org/84
[101] Santiago Rueda, "Narrativas históricas e imágenes políticas en la obra de José Alejandro Restrepo," January 1st, 2004, 8. http://www.banrepcultural.org/node/95172
[102] Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," 115

exactly the same coloration, this time it is not exactly the case: the hanging cluster more closely resembles the greenish-yellowish coloration of the other panels, whereas the photo of the man is the only one in B&W. Moreover, he is the only figure that seems to be looking at the viewer.

Who is this this zambo or mulatto man standing in a frontal and confident position, looking at us with a sidelong glance? Is he meant to me ´immediately´and unquestionably paired with the hanging cluster, and therefore are we to uncritically proyect on him the cluster and identify him with the phallus? Is his a sort of dressed Adam who should be paired with the dresses mulatto Eve, taking shelter from the tropical sun? Is this couple, including a man holding a large Liberation banana cut, to be uncritically undifferentiated from the maked couple who cannot reach the cluster? Is this man, who someone could patronizingly describe as dressed á lÉuropéenne, mimicking the "attitudes" of the white man, as Frantz Fanon's criticism would suggest?[103]Is this man standing for Restrepo himself, who confessed to be in love with the ´musa paradisiaca´ ("The love of my life", Restrepo once said)[104]?

We do not know who this man is, but added to the interruption of the sin, this register clearly disrupts the polyptych and problematize the exoticizing representation of the woman and nature. The polyptych interrupts both a history of guilt and a history of colonization which, paraphrasing Roland Barthes, rest "on a very old mystification, which always consists of placing nature at the bottom of history."[105] These histories are in fact present in Saffray's description of New Granada, where with an air reminiscent of Hippolyte Taine's laws of production of art,[106] he suggested, as Pini states, that "having such a benevolent climate, such tropical exuberance and facility for obtaining food, generated people who were not willing to work and delayed the possibilities of progress, [and paradoxically] justifying therefore

[103] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (trans.) Richard Philcox (New York. NY: Grove Press, c2008, 1952), xvi-xviii.
[104] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 97
[105] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Selected and translated from the French by Annette Lavers (New York, NY: The Noonday Press 1991[c 1972]), 101.
[106] Hyppolite Tain, *The Philosophy of Art,* (trans.) John Durand (New York, NY: Holt & Williams, 1878), 95-104

[Western] colonialism."[107] The task of fracturing a history of guilt and colonization problematizes not only the aforementioned idea of mimicking, but also the even more suspicious distance between the self-conscious public and the 'subjugated' sitter and naked couple who, in the commentators' accounts (Pini's included), seem to merely be figures of the European "myth of the lost paradise."[108] In other words, we must be carefull not mimicking the colonizer while doing what Fanon criticized in Sartre's "the Other".[109] It is here where the portraits present in the polyptych, and particularly the portrait of the zambo or mulatto man, revels themselves as very complex.

## De-colonial inter-ruption

In that direction, let us allow an apparent digression involving two artworks. The first points to interesting practices of attestation that not only took place centuries before, but also must be taken into account in order to enrich our interpretation of contemporary artists´s work, who works in constant and increasing dialogue with colonial history. The artwork we are referring to is the first known portrait produced in the American continent: Adrián Sánchez Galque's *Mulattos of Emeralds* (1559), a life-size half-length portrait commissioned by a colonial official as a gift to Philip II, King of Spain (Figure 6). The painting depicts Don Francisco de Arobe with Don Pedro and Don Domingo, apparently Don Francisco's sons. Don Francisco was actually governor of an autonomous and rebellious region and community of fugitive

[107] Ivonne Pini, "Transculturación en el arte colombiano" *Traducir la imagen: El arte colombiano en la esfera transcultural* (ed.) Maria Clara Bernal and Ivonne Pini (Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2012), 79
[108] Idem.
[109] "Though Sartre's speculations on the existence of «the Other» remain correct (insofar as, we may recall, *Being and Nothingness* describes an alienated consciousness), their application to a black consciousness proves fallacious because the white man is not only «the Other» [of himself], but also the master, whether real or imaginary." Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 117 fn. 24.

African slaves and Amerindians that fought the Spanish Empire and forced it to negotiate.[110] In this sense, this portrait was meant to introduce to the King, the new associates of the Spanish empire.


Figure 6. Adrián Sánchez Galque, Mulattos of Emeralds, 1559 (92 cm x 175 cm)

The men wear their traditional gold nose and lip piercings and tubes, as well as finely bordered ponchos and capes of brocaded Chinese silk apparently given to them just for the portrait.[111] The clothing was arguably intended for (re)presenting them as noble figures, so the King would not feel upset for being

[110] Identified as an "Indian" painter and member of the Quito School, Mestizo Adrián Sánchez Galque painted this canvas in Quito (Ecuador). The painting commemorates Don Francisco's trip to Quito to sign a peace treaty for the region. Even if they have removed their hats in homage to the king, they stand regally with great dignity and authority, and retain a fierce and aristocratic semi-independence. The Emeralds community of free and rebellious Zambos was not a unique case. "Almost from the time that Spaniards began importing Africans to work the Cauca River gold diggings in Colombia, blacks managed to escape; a few sought refuge among the Manabí and Mantux Indian tribes of the tropical coast of what is now known as northwestern Ecuador and southwest Colombia. The Zambo descendants of these blacks and Indians became tribal leaders and created a major Pacific-coast headquarters known as El Portete […] This particular settlement acted as a kind of beacon, attracting other bondmen who chose to flee rather than accept a living death panning the streams of southern Colombia for gold dust. It also attracted the attention of the Spaniards, not only because it was a haven for fugitive slaves but also because it was an ideal base for ships sailing between Panama and Peru. Occasionally Spanish vessels in trouble attempted to land at El Portete but where driven away by the attacks of the Zambo-led tribesmen. In 1556, therefore, Gil Ramírez Dávalos, governor of the Audiencia of Quito, began sending troops to smash the troublesome Afro-Indians and seize the town. He succeeded in capturing the settlement, but the rebels reverted to guerrilla tactics. The troops holding El Portete fell victim to malaria and other tropical diseases at an alarming rate and eventually evacuated the area. […] Subsequent efforts to subdue the Afro-Indians failed, and Francisco Arias de Herrera broke the stalemate in 1598 by drawing up a compact with the Zambo leaders in which the latter agreed to accept the nominal suzerainty of the king of Spain. For all practical purposes, however, they remained autonomous." Leslie B. Rout, Jr. *The African Experience in Spanish America: 1502 to the Present Day*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976, pp. 116-117.

[111] Letter accompanying the painting, found in Archivo General de Indias (Seville), 1600, IV-2r. The letter is quoted in Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City* (Burham and London: Duke University Press, 2012), 37.

forced to negotiate with men who in reality suited the European imagery of the barbarian. Not by chance, in the group portrait, they are given the nobiliary title 'Don' (*De origen noble* i.e., of noble origin), which appropriates and at the same time outflanks a tradition of using the tile only for native Indian aristocracy; which evidently was not exactly the case in this portrait at the time.[112] Yet, it is remarkable that this portrait not only situates the sitters halfway between being independent and being coopted by the Spanish Crown but also situates them halfway between 'being-zambo' (i.e., 'offspring' of black and native American) and 'being-white'. In fact, the title describes them as 'mulatto' (i.e., 'offspring' of black and white), while they were actually zambo.

Nevertheless, this paiting adquires further and more complex character when we recognized that we what have just described is the visible side of a portrait that places these men in a cultural and social space between Esmeraldas and Spain. In fact, he portrait also 'hides' a self-portrait. As Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins have underlined,[113] Sánchez was actually a mulatto baptized with a Christian name. This man, who made the zambos appear as mulattoes (noticeably, these titles in the Spanish empire should not be understood literally in terms of ethnicity of the sitters, but in terms of the socially-attested and defined notion of *raza* that can hardly be defined in terms of race)[114] was also the Spanish King's eyewitness and a free man who shared space and freedom with the sitters. At stake is not just a sort of

[112] The title 'Don' was historically used to address members of the nobility and the secular clergy in Spain. Nonetheless, it was mostly reserved for persons who could prove they had high or ancient aristocratic birth, not only in relation to the Spanish royalty, but also to the 'West Indian' aristocracy. This evidently excluded blacks. For instance, even in the 18th century, the title *Don* was still used for Inca aristocracy and particularly in their portraits. Caroline Dean, "Inka Nobles, Portraiture and Paradox in Colonial Peru," *Exploring New World Imagery* (ed.) Donna Pierce (Denver: Denver Art Museum, 2005), 79-103.

[113] Rappaport and Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City*, 37.

[114] The unprecedented increase of black population on the Pacific coasts of Ecuador and Colombia, and the miscegenation with natives in those regions, not only affected the mental map 16th-century Europeans had of the races and continents (white Europe, copper America, black Africa, and yellow Asia), but also reinforced and reshaped Spanish notions of *raza*, *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) and *calidad* (quality). The latter notions were social rather than physical, that is to say: they did not exactly regard someone's color of skin, but involved a rather complex process of testimony that attests the social status of a person. It should not be forgotten that the rather strict rules of the process followed in Spain, tended to be circumvented if not fractured at times in the colonies. The famous 'casta paintings' produced two centuries later, will attest the complexity of those aforementioned notions. Carolina González Undurraga, "'De la casta a la raza' el concepto de raza: un singular colectivo de la modernidad. México, 1750-1850," *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (239), pp. 1491-1525; Magali Maria Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

negotiation or just a description of facts, but also and mostly the artist's experience and consciousness of being caught in and his intention of interrupting the representation, breaking (*rupere*) into (*inter)* it, and placing himself in-between, which in Latin is also called *inter*.

While the previous artwork reminds us of some experiences of a painter in the Spanish colonial era, the second art work, a contemporary one, reveals a historical dynamic in which *Musa Paradisiaca* must also be regarded. The second work is James Luna's photographical triptych and self-portrait *Half Indian / Half Mexican* (1990). This triptych is a compelling artwork that, like Luna's highly parodist performance piece *Shame–man* (1991),[115] critically distances from the ideas of a "golden past" of Native Indians affirmed by celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the so-called "discovery of the New World". On the contrary, Luna is interested in a decolonial stance that criticizes historical processes of racial, cultural, epistemological, and economic segregation that has continued beyond the end of colonial administration and emergence of Nation-States in either center and 'periphery'.

Remarkably, this piece shares this position with an exhibition very influential in the Colombian art world, titled 'Ante America'. It was curated by Carolina Ponce, Gerardo Mosquera, and Rachel Weis, produced in Bogotá in 1992, and held at the Queens Museum in 1993, the Center for the Arts in San Francisco in 1994, and other venues.[116] The exhibition successfully distanced itself from the problematic

[115] For this performance piece, Luna dressed up as a Shaman who used magic tools and sang ancient prayers. At first sight the tools and cloths seem to look like those one would expect from a 'real' shaman that has not 'westernized.' Yet, upon close inspection of the objects, cloths, movements, and songs, it becomes evident that Luna created them (comically, the warrior jumpers includes small figures of Spiderman), and that the Shaman is rather 'fake' and 'impure' as a shaman who sells magic services in shops, drives a car, and is an alcoholic would be. The title shame-man is neither exactly directed at Luna, nor at the actual shaman who sells those services and loves drinking. The idea of the shame-man is rather related to Silvan Tompkins' idea that guilt is a sister of shame: the feeling of guilt of a public that thinks that 'it is a shame' that a Native Indian would not dress and behave like those depicted in Westerns, and would not be 'pure'. See: Linda Weintraub, *Art on the edge and over: searching for art's meaning in contemporary society, 1970s-1990s*, (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights, Inc., 1996), 100-101; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Adam Frank, and Irving E. Alexander (ed.), *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995): 142-145.

[116] Museo Alejandro Otero, Caracas, March, 1993; Queens Museum, New York, July 15 to September 26, 1993; Centro Cultural de la Raza, San Diego, October 16 to November 21, 1993; Yerbabuena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, January 30, 1994; Spencer Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, March to May 15, 1994; Museo de Arte y Diseño Contemporáneo, San José, August 24 to October 30, 1994.

idea of Latin America, as well from the notion of "postmodernism", "postcolonialism"[117] and offered a critical 'counter balance' to celebrations of the 'Discovery of the New World' in Europe and USA.[118] It also countered the still exoticizing practices and imaginary central to exhibitions like Art d'Amérique Latine 1911-1968 held in 1992 at the Georges Pompidou Center, in Paris, and Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century, held in 1993 at MOMA, in New York' exhibition; all of the preceded by highly criticized exhibition Art of the Fantastic: Latin America 1920-1987, held at Indianapolis Museum, in 1987.[119]

Figure 7. James Luna, "Half Indian / Half Mexican", 1991.

[117] Gerardo Mosquera, Carolina Ponce, and Rachel Weiss. "Ante América" in *Ante america*, Exh. cat. (Bogotá, Colombia : Departamento editorial del Banco de la República, 1992), 10 10-11

[118] "Although the initial organization [of the series of exhibitions organized under the tile 'Ante America', planned and presented in Bogotá, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Lawrence, San José (de Costa Rica)] takes advantage of the celebrations of the fifth centenary of the Spanish arrival, it controversially claims a Latin American perspective and intends to go beyond that circumstance, by considering a critical understanding of art in the continent and the art's responses to a complex situation, of which categories [like] postcolonial and postmodern defined narrowly. The goal is achieving a problematizing reflection on today's America, its culture and its plastic [arts], from the insights and understandings arising from the artistic experience." Gerardo Mosquera, Carolina Ponce, and Rachel Weiss, "Ante América", *Ante América*, Exh. Cat (Bogotá, Colombia: Departamento editorial del Banco de la República, 1992), 10.

[119] The exhibition was organized by the Indianapolis Museum in 1987 for the celebration of the Tenth Pan-American Games, which in turn had as opening ceremony a performance produced by The Walt Disney Company that was the largest ever outdoor live entertainment show in USA at the time. The exoticizing notion of the fantastic pervaded the catalogue and program where Latin America was presented as a land of the 'unconscious.' Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Beyond the fantastic: Framing identity in US exhibitions of Latin American Art," *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America* (ed.) Gerardo Mosquera (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996)

In his simple but forceful photographical piece *Half Indian / Half Mexican*, Luna (who describes himself as Luiseño, son of a Mexican father and a Native American mother)[120] is neither inviting us to confirm his mixed ethnicity, nor affirming identitarian ideologies in multiculturalism.[121] He rather suggests, on the one hand, his experience of being 'caught' between standards and clichés of what a 'Mexican' or a 'Native Indian' look like, and on the other, underlying what Giorgio Agamben described few years later in this terms: "the face is the *simultas*, the being-together of the manifold visages constituting it, in which none of the visages is truer than any of the others."[122] In this triptych, Luna proposes a double movement from right to left and left to right, in order to show those standards and clichés as obstacles to struggle with and against, nurture from, and 'eat' as if in a kind of 'anthropophagy' that constructs, delineates, and insistently keeps on transforming, rearticulating, and re-experiencing what, paraphrasing Paul Ricoeur, we could call Luna's "ipse-identity."[123] In the same direction of his *Shame-man*, this piece is less a denunciation of a reality of segregation, and more a (self-) parody that not only suggests the multiple voices and alternatives to the 'either to be an Indian or to act like an Indian,' but also acknowledges and 'embodies' the very fact that the alternatives are on the same side: being also

[120] Weintraub, *Art on the edge and over*, 103.
[121] Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, Robert Bernasconi, and Delfín Grueso have well criticized those ideologies inherent to multiculturalist policies and practices in USA, Europe and Colombia, and have also stressed 'fusioning' cultural practices, and the idea that cultures are not an homogenous and foreclosed symbolic universe, but rather porous. Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, "Fronteras culturales," *Culturas, estados, ciudadanos. Una aproximación al multiculturalismo en Europa*, ed. Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1995), 17; Delfín Grueso, "Multiculturalismo, Interculturalidad y Reconocimiento", *Memorias del XII Congreso Internacional de Filosofía Latinoamericana*, digital edition (Bogotá: Universidad Santo Tomás, 2007), 1; Robert Bernasconi, "Stuck inside of the mobile," *Theorizing Multiculturalism. A guide to current database*, ed. Cynthia Willet (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 289.
[122] Giorgio Agamben, "The Face", in *Means wihtou ends: notes on politics*, (trans.) Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minessota Press, 2000), 99.
[123] Using the Latin terms *ipse* and *idem*, Ricoeur addresses the problematic notion of personal and narrative identity, and contrasts ipse-identity with idem-identity in such a way that *ipse* captures the *who* of the self, while *idem* captures the *what* of a being: "Identity in the sense of *idem* unfolds an entire hierarchy of significations […] In this hierarchy, permanence in time constitutes the highest order, to which will be opposed that which differs, in the sense of changing or variable. Our thesis throughout will be that identity in the sense of *ipse* implies no assertion concerning some unchanging core of the personality." Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1992), 2.

means acting like, and acting is a way of being.[124] Wouldn´it t happen somethign similar in Restrepo´s polyptych, namely, a manifold visages constituting what means to and is to be the colonized?

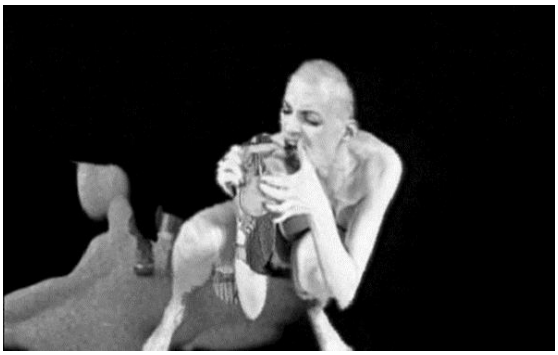

Figure 8. Minnette Vári, Oracle (Video-still), 1999

It should be stressed that the decolonial interpretation of the anthropophagy we proposed, does not affirm a post-modernist appropriation, mixture, and hybridization. Nor does that interpretation reduce the experience and action of 'anthropophagy' to the postcolonial interpretation found in Minnette Vári's video-performance *Oracle* (1999). In this work, this well-known South African artist filmed herself naked eating what seems to be flesh, but what "one soon discovers, is made up of changing news clips that spill out in a pool behind her."[125] Her gestures and the actual distortion of the figures in the video successfully presented her as a "maniacal golem"[126] that, in a "fit of hunger," intended to cram into her mouth "all the conflict stories of present-day Africa" and "every fragment of information in her hybrid body". She then affirmed that "as in Oswald de Andrade's Cannibalist Manifesto this figure becomes a metaphor for postcolonial identity", and later in her comment to the piece, art historian Liese van der Watt added that Vári was like "the cannibal in Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade," a cannibal who eats "disparate elements into a hybrid self."

Without intending to ignore the importance of *Oracle* in the context of contemporary art in South Africa, we can say that Vári and van der Watt seem to approach de Andrade's anthropophagus via the cannibal imagined by Shakespeare and Montaigne;[127] which in turn was configured in a way reminiscent

[124] Juan Carlos Guerrero-Hernández, "Pensar la interculturalidad: crisis y confesión," *Estética: Miradas Contemporáneas* 3, ed. Carlos Sanabria (Bogotá: Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano): 49-74
[125] Liese Van der Watt, "Witnessing trauma in Post-Aparthaid South Africa, The question of generational responsibility," *African Arts* (Autumn 2005), 33
[126] Minnette Vari, "Artist statement." http://www.minnettevari.com/M_Vari_Oracle_1999.pdf
[127] Cannibalism and New World are strongly related as product of European imagery of innocence and naïve goodness. Montaigne imagined the cannibals as those who lived the way Nature wanted them to live, and therefore were free from 'sin' i.e., the worries of the European man, and rather lived like in Arcadia. Of course, "Montaigne

of what Karla Bilang called counter-image" when discussing "primitive art" in early 20th century in Europe: the counter image is an image in which the Europeans otherize themselves by mourning innocence and criticizing modernity.[128] It is not casual that Vári recognized that "unlike Saturn (or Chronos), the god of time who, in an attempt to evade his fate, devoured his children, the figure in *Oracle* wants desperately to hasten her fate, to bite into, over and beyond time."[129] Vári's figure resembles a fallen angel that, when intending to ingest *all* the conflicts, seems to mourn not only what Grosfoguel calls the «view of God's eye» (i.e., the gaze that sees everything, and at the same time hides its local and particular perspective behind abstract universalism base of judgment),[130] but also mourns self-redemption. And for this reason the naked figure recalls more the romantic idea of a cannibal that could devour her postcolonial guilt. It is a cannibal closer to Cummins' interpretation[131] of de Andrade's *anthropophagous*, interpretation that seems to uncritically echoe the Black leyend. On the contrary, Andrade's *anthropophagous* can be regarded as a less redemptory and more humoristic figure that in fact parodies the romantic cannibal (i.e, the colonized man of the New World), included the devilish cannibal of the Black leyend (i.e, the Spanis colonizer). It is not by chance that in his *Anthropophagite Manifesto* (1928),

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was writing for a European audience and the economy [and practice] of cannibalism was a means to critique the political and social economy of Europe" (Thomas B. F. Cummins, "Pre-Columbian Art, Western Discourses of Idolatry, and Cannibalism," RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics, No. 42 (Autumn, 2002), 112 n7. Evidently inspired in the biblical story of Abel and Cain, Shakespeare introduced Ariel and Caliban in *The Tempest*, as figures representing Cannibals who had Prospero as prosperous father and master. For Shakespeare the cannibal, when exposed to the European arts, must be civilized and would inevitably become like Europeans. See Philippe Desan, *Montaigne: les Cannibales et les Conquistadores* (Paris: Libarie A.-G. Nizet, 1994), and Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, trans. R. Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[128] For Bilang, the counter image allows the European to affirm both a redemtepry unity and a transgression of tradition, since makes of the "primitive artist" one who "makes no distintion between the visible and the invisible, between the real and the unreal," while "is originated in the mythological unit of the Universe." Karla Bilang, *Bild und Gegenbild: Das Ursprungliche in der Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1990), 203.

[129] Minnette Vari, "Artist statement." http://www.minnettevari.com/M_Vari_Oracle_1999.pdf

[130] Ramón Grosfoguel, "La descolonización de la economía política y los estudios postcoloniales. Transmodernidad, pensamiento fronterizo y colonialidad global." *Tabula Rasa* (4): 23.

[131] In this sense, I do not agree with Cummins' very superficial understanding of the anthropophagus in de Andrade's Manifesto. According to Cummins, the difference between cannibal and anthropophagus is just that the latter was made in America. He even says that de Andrade "and the other artists and intellectuals continued to identify with the classical traditions of Europe as above and against the cannibalism of the Americas." (Cummins, "Pre-Columbian Art…," 117 n19.) Cummins unexplainably ignores that de Andrade draws a neither non-innocent, nor guilty anthropophagus, but rather plays with the European imaginary in order to present a man that has its own art of devouring and appropriating the best.

de Andrade suggested that the anthropophagous only eats what he or she needs and thinks is best, [132] but of course not necessarily what is actually best for her or his victims, and this anthropophagy may even lead to 'indigestion'.[133]

In this sense, the way of dealing and the place and experience from wich dealing with trauma and guilt in both Luna's pieces and *Musa Paradisiaca* is different. It is exactly the reason why we want initially to resort to what has been hypothesized as the Proto-Indo-European root of the word crisis: 'krey' (which is said to mean to move, to shake, to fly around, and to separate and to divide),[134] in order to suggest that being-in-the-inter means: being fractured as well as being in a place of transformation, transculturation, and transvaluation of our being, within imposed and self-imposed conditions of "coloniality of power" and colonializing cultural systems, which had produced and still produce "a series of 'social segregations' that functioned as 'intersubjective relations' [and have been] assumed as natural phenomena and not as part of history of power."[135] In this order of ideas, the *inter* is the place of crisis and being, a place of self-relating as complex and contradictorial simultaneity, a place where we critically assume the experience of being and feeling both at ease and upset with who, how and what we have been, behaved and become. In this sense, we must underline that parodic interruption of the myth of guilt and the colonial paradise problematizes the fact that, as 19th- and 20th- century Latin America clearly shows, such guilt and the imaginary of unproblematic "paradisiac" land have been "internalized" and reaffirmed when intending to "participate of the colonial power",[136] and when defining the imagery of national and regional self-identity while experiencing violence, in the case of Colombia, as mark of a unfinished

[132] Oswald de Andrade, "Anthropophagyc Manifesto," *Revista de Antropofagia,* n.1, year 1, May 1928, São Paulo. See also, Carlos Jáuregui, "Antropophagy," *Dictionary of Latin American Cultural Studies* Robert McKee Irwin and Mónica Szurmuk (eds.) Gainesville: The University Press of Florida (2012):22-28.
[133] "Following the metaphor of anthropophagy, it is necessary to stress the digestive battle that it implies: sometimes the consequences are addiction, or worse, diarrhea." Gerardo Mosquera, "Desde aquí: Arte contemporáneo, cultura e internacionalización," *Moderno/Contemporáneo: un debate de horizontes* (eds.) Javier Domínguez Hernández, Carlos Arturo Fernández Uribe, Efrén Giraldo Quintero, and Daniel Jerónimo Tobón Giraldo (Medellín: La carreta editores, 2008), 117.
[134] See database: George Starostin and Phil Krylov, *The Tower babel*, http://starling.rinet.ru/
[135] Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad y modernidad-racionalidad," 438.
[136] Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad y modernidad-racionalidad," *Los conquistados. 1492 y la población indígena de las Américas* (ed). Heraclio Bonilla (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1992), 439

project of nation?[137] Instead of merely affirming that the "myth of paradise lost and daily violence share the same stage,"[138] the polyptych, and particularly the 'sitter' holding the banana, suggest more interesting possibilities for a critical self-relatedness and relationship with violence.

## Double inter-ruption

Contrary to the other commentators, we think the polyptych is not a secondary element, and must rather be taken seriously into account for the interpretation of whole work. Yet, before stepping into the installation, we have to recognize that the proscenium is even more complex.

As indicated, on the right side of the polyptych is a sort of Duchampian mosaic made of clippings that include news related to the negotiation and disputing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a post-war multilateral agreement that not only regulated the international prices of banana and plantain, but was a scenario for US neo-colonialism on the American continent. Since the clippings also record massacres committed in banana plantation regions in Colombia, it easily brings to mind (not only for Colombians) 'The Massacre at the Banana Plantations.' This massacre of United Fruit Company workers, committed on December 6th, 1928, was carried out by the Colombian army under apparent pressure from the US government given the 'communist threat' that, according to the Company a month-long strike of about 25,000 unionized workers represented.[139] The culprits were not prosecuted, and the Colombian government only recognized a dozen deaths. Among the declassified cables, which have not been translated or printed in Spanish yet, is one sent on January 16th, 1929, by the US Ambassador in

[137] William Ospina, *Colombia: El proyecto nacional y la franja amarilla* (Bogotá: Editorial Norma, 1999).
[138] Pini, "Transculturación en el arte colombiano", 99
[139] In a cable sent on December 6th, 1928, the US Ambassador stated: "Feeling against the Government by the proletariat which is shared by some of the soldiers is high and it is doubtful if we can depend upon the Colombian Government for protection. May I respectfully suggest that my request for the presence within calling distance of an American war ship be granted" This is the URL where the document was originally found: http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/caffery5dec1928.jpg

Bogotá. He informed the US president that the Fruit Company secretly recognized more than one thousand deaths.[140]

It is worth noticing that this massacre has a mythical status, made evident by the common use of the definite article when mentioning it, despite the more than one hundred massacres that took place in the same regions; most of them related to banana production and economical as well as military interests. It is mythical not in the sense of the foundational fiction as we interpreted the myth of the original sin, but rather, paraphrasing Jean-Luc Nancy, as founding a community by means of fictionalizing an event.[141] The oral stories that had passed from one generation secured the mythical status of 'The Massacre at the Banana Plantations' with Gabriel García Márquez's celebrated account, written in his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967); narration that reached a global audience beyond the national borders.

Having said this, it is important noticing that we have two different myths on each side at the entrance of the installation. The myth of the original sin and the myth of the Massacres at the Banana plantations. Symptomatically, Pini reads the whole proscenium (and in this she followed the implicit interpretation offered by the other three commentators) in terms of a contrast between a European view of paradise and a local experience of violence.[142] This contrast, which defines for her the frame of interpretation of the whole piece, even if it works for pointing to 19th-century colonialism on the left side of the proscenium, and 20th-century neocolonialism on the right, nevertheless forces an opposition and misses more complex and interesting interconnections. For instance, it misses the fact that the apparently random but actually careful selection of newspaper clippings, not only contrasts with Vári's disparate selection, but also involves active (neo)colonized subjects: it included news of the negotiation and

[140] The web page that has suspiciously been taken down after Wolf won part of a case against Chiquita Brand, in 2012, accusing the company of having financed rightist paramilitary forces in Urabá. In the cable the US Ambassador reported from Bogota: "I have the honor to report that the Bogotá representative of the United Fruit Company told me yesterday that the total number of strikers killed by the Colombian military exceeded one thousand." This is the URL where the document can be found now: https://archive.today/3OGg , and this is where it was originally: http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/colombia/caffery16jan1929.jpg,

[141] Jan-Luc Nancy, "Myth Interrupted," *The Inoperative Community* (ed.) Peter Connor, (trans). Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 56.

[142] Pini, "Transculturación…", 79.

disputes between the governments of Colombia and Costa Rica, or between the former and local businesses, and includes news like: "the members of the popular music band «Bananas» were still «singing» after having been apprehended by DAS and Police accused of drug trafficking". [143] The newspaper plays with words: singing also means confessing. When you stand before the clippings and read the news of atrocious actions and then you happen upon this clipping, you laugh and realize that the connection between the news of violence and the myth is evidently and ironically interrupted, and your involvement with the images in the whole proscenium and what is said in the texts becomes ambiguous, demanding a less pity oriented and denunciatory attitude, and demanding a non-obvious (self-) relatedness with and in the images and texts. In fact, as Avitall Ronells stated, "the rush of interference that produces gaps [may be considered to be…] a force that weighs in performatively and must be read. The interruptive moment of interference itself calls for a reading."[144] In this order of ideas, instead of understanding this interruption in terms of magic realism (as will be discussed later regarding Rueda´s interpretation), we think Restrepo sets a very particular but also ambiguous mood for entering the actual space of the installation made of video-sculptures.

Large clusters of green bananas hang from the ceiling. At the end of some clusters are also suspended small monochrome cathode-ray-tubes (some accompanied by small speakers) that seem to be the flowers of those clusters. The monitors (and speakers) hang very close to the floor, on which small circular mirrors reflect the images reproduced. The public is forced to crouch in order to both listen to the audio and watch the images reflected on mirrors. Two video tapes are reproduced. On a group of monitors plays a silent monochromatic recreation of the 'paradise': the naked couple already identified in the polyptych appear as if unsuccessfully trying to obtain food while 'on their way' as they pass a banana plant. On other group of monitors are reproduced monochromatic and monophonic excerpts from TV

[143] In the catalogue of the exhibition, Restrepo included most of the clips used. The interruption experienced in the installation is also experienced when reading the catalogue. José Alejandro Restrepo, *Musa paradisíaca: una video-instalación 1997* Exh. cat., (Bogotá: Instituto colombiano de cultura, 1997), 19.
[144] Avital Ronell, *Stupidity* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 101.

news, depicting bodies of unionized workers killed during the late 1980s and early 1990s in repetitive massacres in Banana plantations located in the region known as Urabá, also known as the 'Banana Zone.'[145] These massacres committed by leftist guerrillas, rightist paramilitary groups and State forces, prefigured the strategy that was later put into practice in many other regions during 1990s.

Figure 9. José Alejandro Restrepo, Musa Paradisíaca (1993-1996), mixed media. (1997)

The TV excerpts were selected and edited in such a way that it looks as if the cameraman wanted to scan the group of dead bodies lying on the ground, rather than registering them somehow precisely (Figure 11, right). Yet, we are still able to see these bodies in the middle of a banana plantation in the tropical rainforest. We also see relatives, friends, and soldiers looking at them, and some people bearing witness (Figure 11, right). We hear the journalist describing the massacre using words and expressions charged with the ideological connotations proper of an indiscriminate or rather simplified 'search of culprits.'[146] The installation puts the two interrupting myth reenactments on a par but also contrasts them,

[145] According to official data gathered by the Colombian government and the United Nations Development Program, just from 1993 to 1995 more than one thousand people were killed in massacres in the region of Urabá. See the report on violations of human rights in the Urabá region, issued by the United Nations High Comissioner for Refugees (ACNUR, acronym in Spanish): *Algunos indicadores sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en la Región del Urabá Antioqueño*, August 2004., accessed December 20th 2013 http://www.acnur.org/t3/uploads/media/COI_675.pdf

[146] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 99.

and interrupts the reproduction of the journalistic records of massacres. The use of monophonic and monochromic video (Figure 11), and static, suggest not only a homogenization and an impoverishment of our perception. It also reminds us that "the ethical possibilities in communication do not ultimately lie in its successful completion [or the register of violence that shocks or, when repeated contantly, makes the public indifferent end even 'immunies' it from violence], but rather in [the] interruption"[147] of communication.

Figure 10. José Alejandro Restrepo, Musa Paradisíaca (1993-1996), mixed media. (2002)

Figure 11. Restrepo, Musa Paradisíaca (video-stills) (1993-1996), mixed media

[147] Amit Pinchevski, *By Way of Interruption: Levinas and the Ethics of Communication*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 7

The use of low tech monitors seems to share some characteristics of the production of 'new media' art in Latin America. As Rodrigo Alonzo and Claire Taylor have correctly and independently pointed out, artists' "permanent recourse to low tech systems, to the appropriation and elemental distortion of the media, and to working with trash and technical malformations,"[148] is not just due to the limitations in access to new technology. It is also part of a conceptualist proposal in which, in many cases, artists have used low tech in order to highlight issues of political and aesthetic resistance and criticism of both centers and systems of capitalist production, and discourses about technology and art production.[149] Nonetheless, we agree with Giraldo and believe that the use of low tech system in Restrepo's work, should not be understood in these terms.[150] What is at stake is rather the awareness that artists avoid using alluring high-end technology in order to have a captive audience. On the contrary, when the public understands the work technologically, then other kinds of experiences and conceptual issues can be highlighted which are not necessarily of resistance to cultural 'centers'.

In Restrepo's case in particular, we can describe his manipulation and understanding of technology by appropriating and coining, respectively, the terms *arrière-garde* and *arrière-pensée*. Our interpretation of the term *arrière-garde* must be clarified since it departs from the meaning recently used to it when describing an important lacuna in French art history,[151] between 1900 and 1960 (Nonetheless, William Marx has proposed to go beyond said period by differentiating an *arrière-garde* and a neo-*arrière-garde*).[152] Originally included under the term's umbrella were artists working in the first half of

[148] Rodrigo Alonzo, "On technological Tactics" http://www.roalonso.net/en/videoarte/tacticas.php
[149] Claire Taylor, *Place and Politics in Latin America Digital Culture: Location and Latin American Net Art* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).
[150] Giraldo, "José Alejandro Restrepo, mirada y etnografía,"105.
[151] An interesting example in this scholarship is: Natalie Adamson and Toby Norris (eds.) *Academics, Pompiers, Official Artists and the Arrière-garde: Defining Modern and Traditional in France, 1900–1960 (*Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 2-4.
[152] Marx identifies two types of *arrièe-garde*: first, "a qualified *arriere-garde* or a "post" *arriere-garde*, that is to say, a group which finds itself de facto – and without having explicitly conceptualized its tardiness – entrenched in a dated aesthetic movement, behind the avant-garde of the moment.", and second, "an absolute *arrière-garde* or "neo" *arrière-garde*, in other words, those having made the deliberate choice to look back to literary and art history's past: among them would be all the "neos" who claim to be such (for instance, the neoclassicists in the years between 1907 and 1914). From a sociological point of view, a "neo" arrière-garde is very similar to an avantgarde. Nothing

the 20th century, who instead of continuing the 'forward' movement of the avant-garde artists of late 19th and early 20th centuries, brought up and defended the achievements of previous artists, in what can be considered as sort of nationalist celebration of a French tradition.[153] We use here the term *arrière-garde* not to point to a 'garde' that goes behind the avant-gardes and defended the latter's achievements. We rather affirm the idea of revisiting those achievements and transforming them neither in terms of progressive (neo-'avant-gardism') or defensive attitude, but in terms of a sort of anachronism that, distorting the bellicose military metaphor, regards social forces.

This points to Restrepo's idea of the video like an engraving of 525 lines per image and 30 images per second.[154] With it, Restrepo not only suggests that the video, as Gutiérrez and Pini have uncritically stated,[155] could be regarded in terms of pointillist appearance and low definition image, and a succession of points if light that "only exists in time," as it happens in music. Noteworthy, these characteristics indicated by both commentators, can more pertinently be identified in the videos produced by Gilles Charalambos (for instance, *Video Manual* (1992), produced with Gonzalo Chacón), where the treatment and production of the image resembles the engraving and follows the early experimentations with the material conditions of the medium. In this sense, we should not ignore that in the video-performance titled *Computaction* (1991), produced by Charalambos, performer María Teresa Hincapié, and Restrepo, and one of the first Fluxus-like action in Colombia (and interested in interrupting the Computer Fair called COMPUEXPO), the roles were clearly defined[156]: Hincapié was focused on

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resembles a group of youths who proclaim themselves to be in opposition to present realities more than another group of youths who boast an analogous claim, even if the first group is looking forward and the second is looking backwards. After all, a protest is defined more by the fact that it opposes something than by its actual direction." William Marx, "The 20th Century: Century of the Arrière-Gardes?" *European Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies* Vol. 1 (ed.) Sascha Bru and Peter Nicholls (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2009), 64.

[153] Romy Golam, [Book Review] *CAA Reviews* April 25, 2013 http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/2038

[154] See, for instance: Natalia Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 71 and 85, and José Hernán Aguilar, "Palmas Nacionales," *El Tiempo*, 28 June, 1992. El Tiempo's digital archive (recovered: September 20th, 2014). http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento-2013/MAM-146813

[155] Gutiérrez, *Cruces*…, 71; Pini, "Trasscultración…", 66

[156] Happily, there is a video register of action. Gilles Charalambos uploaded them to his youtube channel. https://www.youtube.com/user/GillesCharalambos

performance, and Restrepo on recording performance and body on video, while Charalambos was in charge of using the computer as "medium for video experimentation."[157]

Figure 12. Gilles Charalambos and Gonzalo Chacón, Video Manual [video-stills] (1992), video, color, 10'34

In this order of ideas, we should interpret Restrepo's statement about video image as more metaphorical description of the times and production of the image than actual as a mere description of materiality. At stake, and contrary to Charalambos' work, is the idea of video as an already anachronistic medium –of experimentation– that has been left behind (*à l'arrière*), and as a way of approaching social memory. This is, in fact, what he does in many of his other works, for instance in his *The passage of Quindio* (1992) and *The passage of Quindio II* (1996-1999), which will be briefly discussed later. As Gutierrez correctly indicated, and as has already been suggested by *Musa Paradisiaca*, Restrepo was deeply interested during the 1990s in revisiting the engravings as products of a 'minor' art that new media had apparently left behind, and as images that, like those produced in the 19th century, were archives. Paraphrasing Walter Benjamin's *Thesis on The Philosophy of History*, the engravings could help Restrepo to both "brush history against the grain",[158] and address hidden story of social and cultural imaginaries.

[157] With a fellowship from Colombian Ministry of Culture, Guille Charalambos wrote (and published on the web) with Nasly Boude Figueredo the first (and to date the only) history of Video Art in Colombia. The quote was taken from the description of the piece found in Guille Charalambos, "Historia del Videoarte en Colombia," 2000, URL: http://www.bitio.net/vac

[158] Walter Benjamin, "Thesis on The Philosophy of History", *Illuminations* (ed.) Hannah Arendt, (tran.) Harry Zohn (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1968), 257.

Figure 13. Nan June Paik, TV Garden, 1974. TV monitors, plants, system of reproduction of video

This sense of anachronism and *arrière-garde* in *Musa Paradisiaca* is also related to Restrepo's appropriation and rereading of the so-called neo-avant-garde's experimentation exemplified by the confluence of Fluxus (seen as a Neo-Dada movement)[159] and video art in Nam June Paik's work; especially in his famous and playful video-installation *TV Garden* (1974) exhibited in Colombia in 1976.[160] Strikingly, and somehow symptomatic of the rather denunciatory tone in previous commentators of *Musa Paradisiaca*, is the fact that nobody has explicitly suggested links between both pieces where 'nature' and TV monitors are placed together. In the first version of *TV Garden*, at Documenta 6 in Kassel, Paik played a video record of his work-performance *Global Groove*. There are interesting coincidences that serve us also to underline the originality of Restrepo's installation. Both artists use TV records and sound in rather dark rooms in order to give the video image a sort of phantasmal presence, and emphasize the video image and its perception which, in fact, they also interrupt via flashes or static in such a way as to appear accidental.

However, the way they entwine nature and 'technology' is different. *TV Garden* suggests a sort of ironic symbiosis between technology and 'nature', by creating an artificial forest of pot plants and TV monitors. Restrepo created interesting hybrid video sculptures by means of a double 'cutting': one of clusters cut down from Linnaeus' 'tree', and another of cathode-ray-tubes disassembled from TV monitors that, at the time, could still be found in domestic intimacy. In addition, if we allow ourselves to use botanic and surgical terms, the cathode-ray-tubes are like scions or grafts spliced upon the Liberation banana cut. In a sense, we could say that, in *Musa Paradisiaca*, *TV Garden* suffered a violent

[159] Günter Berghause, "NeoDada Performance Art", *Neo-Avant Garde* (ed.) David Hopkins (New York, NY: Rodopi, 2006), 87-88.
[160] Charalambos, *Historia del Video.*

transformation into a piece that not only presents the video images reproduced in the cathode-ray-tubes as if they were inflorescences of the Liberation banana cut, but also presents these sculptures as both phantasmagoric embodiments of violence, and hybrid and conceptualist tools of perception.

By conceptualist, it is worth clarifying, we do not mean Mari Carmen Ramírez's famous and groundbreaking idea of "Latin American [ideological] Conceptualism."[161], with which "she provide[d] a unitary legibility to radical experiences [in 1970s in Latin America] that had until then been in large part unrelated."[162] This idea was inspired in Simon Marchán Fiz's notion of "ideological conceptualism,"[163] according to which, conceptual art in Spain and Argentina, was ideologically committed, contrary to the 'apolitical' conceptualism in USA and UK. Besides the fact that Fiz's and Ramírez's interpretations of the latter were actually misleading and restricted,[164] her notion of ideological conceptualist art hardly fitted the development of art in Colombian in the seventies. Noteworthy, the notion of conceptualism at the time in Colombia has been arguably put into question.[165] The term conceptualist, as we use it in this study, echoes Luís Camnitzer's idea of "conceptualist strategies,"[166] which we read here depriving it of Camnitzer's militarizing and avant-gardist references to Tupamaros and Tucumán Arde, both famous references of guerrilla activity and radical understading of political and committed art. Instead, the terms

[161] Ramírez used as key reference Marchan Fiz's comparison of Spanish and Argentinian conceptual artists's work with works produced by North American artists like Robert Barry, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, and the British group Art & Language. Ramírez regarded Marchan Fiz's ideas in terms of an expansion of the critique of the institutions and practices of art to an analysis of political and social issues. In this sense, she proposed a set of four poles: while Latin American ideological conceptualism was characterized by contextualization, referentiality, activism, and mediation, the counterparts were drawn in terms of self-reflexivity, tautology, passivity, and immediacy. Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blue print circuits: conceptual art and politics in Latin America," *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century* (exh. cat.), Waldo Rasmussen, Fatima Bercht and Elizabeth Ferrer (ed.) (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1993), 156-157, 168.

[162] Miguel A. López and Josephine Watson, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?" *A Journal of Art, Context, and Enquiry*, Issue 23 (Spring 2010), 10.

[163] Simon Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto: Las artes plásticas desde 1960* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1972).

[164] An example of the new Reading ate the time is: Alexander Alberro, "Reconsidering Conceptual Art, 1966–1977", *Conceptual Art: a critical anthology* (eds.) Alberto Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), xvi- xxxvii

[165] The first and only text ever published discussing this: María Mercedes Herrera, *La emergencia del arte conceptual en Colombia: 1968-1982* (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2011)

[166] Luís Camnitzer, *Conceptualisms in Latin America Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 2

'conceptualist tools' denotes in this study, perceptual practices used to reveal, thematize, criticize, or just comment upon cultural, social, or political contexts or systems that are larger than the art world and its institutions.

It is exactly here where the notion of *arrière-pensée* is important, particularly because it affirms an attitude of withdrawal, of taking time and distance to meditate on something, and denotes, in *Musa Paradisiaca* as well as in the three works studied here the next chapters, a "relationship with time that adheres to it through a disjunction and an anachronism."[167] In fact, the use of circular mirrors does not seem to be accidental, as they evoke the old notion of the photo as a 'mirror with memory,' which Sigmund Freud appropriated in terms of an image that could be received involuntarily by our mind, [168] and could work as a metaphor of the unconscious and the impression of trauma. This seems to be the sort of reference that Rosalind Krauss had in mind when interpreting the indexicality of surrealist photography, in which the photo may be assumed as the presentation of –trauma as gap of a– coded reality.[169] Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that *Musa Paradisiaca* not only forces us to involuntary watch video records, but has already prepared us to do so. We not only watch a parodic colonial paradise and a performance that interrupts the traumatic myth of an original and ahistorical guilt. We also watch *interrupted* images of massacres the public is already familiar with, and therefore become distanced from 'The Massacre.' And it is the case that, if the interruptions in the proscenium and here were not enough for distancing us from both myths, it is the case that the very way in which the mirrors are placed and the viewer forced to crouch are key in order to understand how Restrepo, makes us distance critically from 'The Massacre' as a myth of violence.

[167] Giorgo Agamben, "What is the contemporary?", in *What is an Aparatus? and other essays* (trans.) David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009) 41
[168] Mary Bergstein, *Mirrors of Memory: Freud, Photography, and the History of Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 9 and 15
[169] Rosalind E. Krauss, "Protographic conditions of Surrealism", *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* ([No data]: MIT Press, 1986), 113

Figure 14. Alejandro Obregón, The Violence, 1962. Oil on canvas (200 x 170 cm.)

In order to clarify this and understand its importance in the local context, we have to put this work in dialogue with the other artwork still considered as the paradigmatic representation of 'The Violence' in modern art in Colombia. [170] We are talking about Alejandro Obregón's *The Violence* (1962). The painting shows what seems to be a pregnant but dead woman, who covers half of the canvas, fuses with the horizon, becoming one with it. One breast and her pregnant abdomen rise like mountains, defining a silent but painful landscape. According to polish art critic Casimiro Eiger, the natural motif in this and many of Obregón's paintings is "transformed into an idea that, after debugging all what is contingent, detailed, superfluous, suddenly acquires the quality of myth."[171] In her commentary to this painting, Marta Traba, who was the leading art critic in Colombia from 1954 to 1969, not only celebrated that Obregón avoided the strategies used by red chronicles and "bad and [so-called] socially-committed painters."[172] She also echoed Eiger´s commentary in order to explain the iconicity of Obregóns *The Violence* in this terms: the artist had virtuously transformed "geography into a myth" of silent violence, as if Colombia, presumably represented in the figure of the woman, were a mythical landscape where "man is absent", but when he "appears, he is always calling in [a stunning] death" that destroys innocence and the promise of new life.

[170] This is a short list of the texts and authors who place this painting among the exemplars of modern paintings in Colombia: Marta Traba and Hernán Díaz, *Seis artistas contemporáneos colombianos* (Bogotá: Alberto Barco Editor, 1964); Fausto Panesso, *Alejandro Obregón ¡... a la visconversa!: conversaciones junto al mar* (Bogotá: Ediciones Gamma, 1989); Álvaro Medina, "Violencia: Alejandro Obregón," *Credencial Historia* No 111 (March 1999). Digital versión http://www.banrepcultural.org/node/32742; Carmen María Jaramillo, *Alejandro Obregón, el mago del Caribe* (Bogotá: Museo Nacional de Colombia, 2001); Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda, Mis pintores (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2002).

[171] Casimiro Eiger, "Alejandro Obregón o la inflación pictórica." *Crónicas de arte Colombiano 1946-1963*, ed. Mario Jursich Durán. Bogotá, Banco de la República, 1995.

[172] Marta Traba, "El Arte Latinoamericano: Un Falso Apocalipsis," *Modernidad y Postmodernidad: Espacios y Tiempos dentro del Arte Latinoamericano*, (Caracas, Venezuela: Museo Alejandro Otero, 2000), 28-29. This controversial article was originally published in *Papel Literario*, a cultural supplement of Venezuelan newspaper *El Nacional*, in Caracas, May 2nd, 1965. The book *Modernidad y Postmodernidad* gathers this article and the replies and counter-replies of a discussion that took over the pages of "Papel Literario" for about three months.

We must notice that the iconicism of this painting is also owed to a fruitful coincidence. In 1962 people, artists included, could finally read a book they had been waiting for: *The Violence in Colombia*. It was the first text *ever* in the republican history of Colombia, to offer an account of violence. Nonetheless, the account offered was confusing. It not only included too many different stories and contradictory testimonies along with photographs of several types of mutilations, but also lacked analysis. As was pointed out at the time, one of the few ideas clearly stated was the relationship between the level of violence and the harvest of some crops in the Quindio and Tolima regions, which Obregón confessed is intentionally represented on the canvas,[173] emphasizing therefore a connection between violence and land.[174] In this sense, it is arguable that Obregón's ability to give to a natural and geographic motif the character of myth, offered a single, impressive rendition of the violence at the time.

Figure 15. Germán Martínez, Altered Landscape, 1992. 218x391.5cms

The iconicism of Obregón's canvas and the tradition of using landscape as key reference when addressing violence is betrayed by Germán Martínez's *Altered Landscape* (1992). It is a series of framed printed picture taken from the front page of sensationalist newspapers, and pasted on punctured and teared cardboard paper; in a way slightly reminiscent of Andy Warhol's manipulation of the photographical series *Disasters*. Nonetheless, while Warhol 'distressed' the 'picture', Martínez did so to the 'landscape'. He placed the person, first within a small 'landscape' frame, and then placed this set within a 'portrait'

[173] Juan Gustavo Borda recalls a conversation "And the other aspect, which is very interesting and Obregón mentioned, is that if I cover the face of the woman, what emerges and what he makes us realize is a landscape of Quindío, a landscape of Tolima, zones where the partisan violence has reached its more dramatic peaks'. "El otro punto que es muy interesante y que él lo mencionaba es que si yo tapo el rostro de la mujer, aquí lo que está surgiendo y lo que él nos hacía caer en cuenta es un paisaje del Quindío, un paisaje del Tolima, zonas donde la violencia partidista del momento había alcanzado una de sus cuotas más dramáticamente altas." Transcription of a talk given by Juan Gustavo Cobo in 2001. Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda, "La Violencia" URL: http://www.mcarts.com/obregon/cobo/violencia/index.html

[174] Miguel Ángel González, S.J., "Análisis de un libro", *Revista Policía Nacional de Colombia*, No. 95, Bogotá, Guadalupe, sept- oct. (1962), 507.

frame, if we were to stick old rules of paiting genres. In this sense, the dead person was part of a desolated and dry landscape visually and metaphorically, at the same time the framing intended to detach the corpse from morbid curiosity. While Obregon proposed a myth that takes over the landscape and the horizon so that wherever you look and whenever you 'step' into the pictorial space you feel complicit with the violence, and while Martínez's series intends to transform our relationship with the victim intending to foster and ethical distance, *Musa Paradisiaca* displaces the images of myths from the horizon or the central role, to the space reflected in the mirrors, therefore forcing a distance between the viewer and the spectacular images of violence and trauma present both in the news on TV and in the collective memory.

Instead of being merely metaphors of the unconscious and its indexicality, the mirrors are actually part of the video sculptures *qua* conceptualist tools of perception, and part of a plastic strategy that transforms our field vision in a way that dialogues beautifully with a 'scene' in Bill Viola's *Hatsu-yume* (1981).In the later, what initially appears to be a sublime landscape of a giant rock covering almost the whole horizon, gradually becomes a sculptable rock, the size of a child. While the video sculptures appear to emulate a photographic experience transformed into a forced cinematographic experience in the small mirrors, the video in *Hatsu-yume* emulates a pictorial experience transformed into a forced sculptural experience on the large screen.

In this direction, *Musa Paradisiaca* opens up a space for critically assessing myth and historical events, instead of following the problematical tendency of fusing history and myth, violence and landscape, and instead of merely seeing each massacre as a repetition of a mythical massacre — as becomes evident in Nicolás Pernett's research on collective memory of the actual events signaled as 'The Massacre'.[175]

[175] "[…] we can say that the Massacre of the Banana plantation in 1928 was not just an isolated episode in the political and economic history of the country, but the realization of a «business model» that is still active to this day. Few years ago I went to the region of [production of] banana in order to do some research on the strike of 1928. And I remember that when I was asking commoners for The Massacre in order to know their "collective memory" of the event, their answers were of this kind: «Yes, they told me that in the 1980s many people was killed in banana

Figure 16. Bill Viola, Hatsu-yume (video-stills), 1981. Single-channel Videotape, color, stereo sound (56 mins.), video projected on screen

Figure 17. Germán Londoño, Colombian phantoms sailing, 1998. Oil on canvas (160 x 209 cm)

Restrepo takes distance from and even fractures nature's rather pathetic or compassionate role given in Obregon's canvas, and from the ethereal and too literal landscape in Germán Londoño's *Colombian phantoms sailing* (1998). Of course, *Musa Paradisiaca* is not interested in a total rejection of myth. On the contrary, as seems to happen in other works of his produced between 1993 and 1999 where myth plays an important role,[176] in *Musa Paradisiaca* the interrupted myth becomes something like a (not the) vision device,[177] or more precisely, a tool that helps us to see, under a different light or from a different point of view, the complex events of violence. This said, the double interruption defines a space

plantations" or "Yes, that [massacre] was on a farm in Riofrío, about two years ago." Nicolás Pernett, "La recurrente masacre de las bananeras," *Razón Pública*. 02 Diciembre 2013 05:01 http://www.razonpublica.com/index.php/econom-y-sociedad-temas-29/7218-la-recurrente-masacre-de-las-bananeras.html

[176] Myth is central in his video and video-installations like: *Anaconda* (1993), Atrium and Nave (1996) and *Canto de Muerte* (1999), and also suggested in *Amazonas Trytych* (1994).

[177] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 89.

of (self-) critical acknowledgment and experience of an interrupted mythical Christian fate, and an interrupted myth of (neo)colonial violence.

In this regard, it is worth recalling Restrepo's idea that myth is an "alternative for history." Alternative, in *Musa Paradisiaca*, does not point to the idea of exclusion of 'either myth or history,' but rather to the idea of interrupting myth and interrupting 'history' (since he interrupts the threat of news in the proscenium and the TV records in the video sculpture) in such a way that they become like two confronting and alternating currents creating a whirlpool. It is in this sense that *Musa Paradisiaca* affirms the possibility of a 'genesis' different to our understanding and experience of the myth and the events of violence; a genesis that is not related to a colonial paradise or a sin, a mythical or ahistorical guilt. This 'genesis' is not a thing, is not a primeval—historical or mythical— source or *Ur-sprung*. It is rather a 'function,'[178] or better, paraphrasing Walter Benjamin, it is a whirlpool of meanings that, located in the present, "engulfs, destroys, and tears the flux of the material"[179] of the history of visual and literary representation (i.e., symbols, metaphors, allegories, metonymies, etc.) of violence.

In this direction, the reenactment/reproduction and interruption/fracture of myths and violent events works as a kind of "offspring (*Entspringendes*) of coming-to-be and going-away,"[180] a closing and final verse or cata-strophe that "destabilizes the power of a single interpretation"[181] of history and myth, and of images *qua* representations of either or both. This 'genesis' is the function of a new and critical understanding and naming of violence. Contrary to Rueda's interpretation, we recognize *Musa*

[178] Paraphrasing Derrida, the genesis is rather something like a function, and names a closing and opening. Yet, I distance myself from Derrida's interpretation, according to which if *différance* is meant to be thought of as an event, then it is affirmatively something like the creation of the world by God. That would be like resorting again to myth. Peter Bürger, "Avant-garde and neo avant-garde", (trans.) Bettina Brandt and Daniel Purdy, *New Literary History* 41(2010): 709.
[179] Lucía Wegelin, "Rastros de Goethe en el Ursprung Benjamiano," paper presented in Third International Seminary Politics of Memory - Remembering Water Benjamin. Justice, History, Truth (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 4. Accessed September 2nd, 2012 http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2010/10/mesa-30/wegelin_mesa_30.pdf
[180] Elizabeth Stewa, *Catastrophe and Survival: Walter Benjamin and Psychoanalysis* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2010), 14.
[181] Natalia Gutiérrez. *Cruces : Arte : Artista : José Alejandro Restrepo* (Bogotá: Alcaldía Mayor de Bogotá - IDCT, 2000), 57.

*Paradisiaca* as one of the first artworks in Colombia that successfully deals with myth, violence, and exoticism, and manages to free itself from the 'dictatorship' of 'mythical violence, while critically distancing from 'magical realism' as way of (self)-exotization of Colombia and Latin America as a whole —Examples are the images of the region and the country as large Banana Republic, the exhibition *Art of the Fantastic: Latin America, 1920-1987* in 1987, and the publicity on the walls of NYC metro stations in late 2014, where the Colombian Landscape became a fantastic one.[182]

## Seduction and interruption

Figure 18. Alexander von Humboldt, The Passage of Quindio (detail), 1810. Print

In her monograph, Gutiérrez opened her interpretation of *Musa Paradisiaca* by recalling Jean Baudrillard's notion of seduction.[183] She interpreted this notion as an ironic and alternative strategy of displacement, and as reference for understanding how Restrepo uses the myth of Diana and Actaeon in his video-installation *Atrium and Nave* (1996).[184] She then moved from her analysis of *Atrium and Nave*, a work produced in 1996, to her brief commentary on *Musa Paradisiaca*, via her comment on *The Passage of Quindío* (1992). In the latter, Restrepo revisited the descriptions and representations of a mythical passage explored by scientists (for instance Humboldt),[185] engravers and painters in the

[182] This campaign was commissioned by PROEXPORT (governmental agency in charge of promoting Colombian non-traditional exports). In a sort of self-indulgency, Maria Claudia Lacouture, president of PROEXPORT stated: "Things that might be normal for us, such as the seven tones of the waters of San Andres; the five colors of the Caño Cristales river bed; the green carpet of the Coffee Cultural Landscape; the inspiring streets of Cartagena de Indias; the Sierra Nevada on the Caribbean shore, for a tourist, are a magical image, a revealing moment, an unforgettable experience." Accessed September 20th, 2013 http://www.proexport.com.co/en/news/colombia-magical-realism

[183] "seduction becomes 'the informal form of politics, the scaled-down framework for an elusive politics devoted to the endless reproduction of a form without content." Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction* (trans.) Brian Singer (New York, NY: New World Perspectives, 1990), 180.

[184] Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 81.

[185] Apart from Alexander Von Humboldt who crossed the Pass in 1801, Theodore Gaspard Mollien did it in 1823, and the British Colonel J. P. Hamilton one year later. Álvaro Acevedo Tarazona and Sebastián Martínez Botero, "El camino Quindío en el centro occidente de Colombia: la ruta, la retórica del paisaje y los proyectos de poblamiento", *Estudios Humanísticos. Historia* 4 (2005):23-27.

19th century. Camera in hand, Restrepo went to the region and explored the passage. Once there, he contacted Avelino, one of the most knowledgeable carriers. While recording him carrying a person, Restrepo realized that those romantic depictions of the carriers were wrongly identified as images of a mythical master-slave relationship.[186]

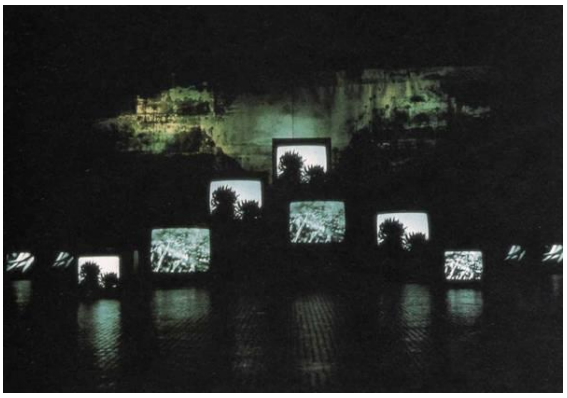

Figure 19. Restrepo, The Passage of Quindío (1992). Installation, mixed media

The carrier was actually in control of the situation, and when scaling cliffs the person carried had to rely on the carrier. In other words, the images we had traditionally identified as depictions of a dominated and slaved carrier, were actually representing something else, and what we have imagined was not faithful to the actual dynamics of power.[187] Quite correctly, Gutiérrez suggested that *The Passage of Quindío* did not thematize these dynamics and issues of power. She also stated that Restrepo's video images of the carrier climbing the mountain could not be regarded as example of costumbrism.[188] Nonetheless, she added that we can argue they are costumbrist if we accept that, "well

[186] The video installation involved more than 10 monitors installed so as to resemble the profile of a mountain, and had a large print of some of the video records of the exuberant vegetation as background. The monitors reproduced views of the passage and video records of the old but strong, large Avelino, carrying people and walking through the tropical forest with the help of a staff. When producing the video, Restrepo was strikingly surprised by the fact that those carriers like Avelino, who he initially identified in the visual representations as servile and enslaved dark-skinned persons carrying light-skinned people, were actually very independent. Restrepo realized then that the mythical image of a master-slave relationship was far from obvious. Interview with the artist. Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 104-05.

[187] As indicated in an interview with Gutiérrez, the person "who has the power believes that he/she has it, but it is finally a problem of perspective": Avelino, the carrier, was not only independent and well paid (Humboldt himself recognized this in the 19th century), but also walked "on the brink of high cliffs carrying a person who, sat on a chair on his back, was totally helpless […].You realize that you may not have great economic power, but you may have it if suddenly you decide to throw the carried off the cliff. You have all the power over that life." Interview with the artist. Idem.

[188] Traditionally, costumbrism has been related to satiric and even moralizing pictorial and literary depictions of local customs, or quaint and folkloric representations that often have a romanticizing aspect. José Escobar, "Costumbrismo entre el Romanticismo y Realismo," *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes* (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2000) http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/

understood, [costumbrism] had also the value of making art by crossing references that are outside the individual, but move him or her."[189]

It is somehow problematic that the artist and commentator did not thematize the relationship between costumbrism and the depictions by European travelers which actually inspired the artwork, and which was presented as due to be revisited. In this sense, there is truth in José Hernán Aguilar's precise criticism, published in 1992. He stated that *The Passage of Quindío*, perhaps because of the palm trees painted in the canvas placed on the background of the video installation, seduced or induced the public to "move 'inwards,' like in a sort of introspective romanticism,"[190] in which, we add, Restrepo almost ended up mimicking the romantic scientist, being on the brink of impersonating the cultural interpreter of a myth that is not problematized anywhere in the video-installation. This installation hardly offers the parodic stance we have identified in *Musa Paradisiaca*.

In the case of Gutiérrez's this point is importatnt since she began to discuss *Musa Paradisiaca* by extending onto it, her interpretation of *The Passage of Quindío,* guided by Baudrillard's notions of seduction.[191] In doing this, she neglected important differences between *Musa Paradisiaca* and the two aforementioned works, and left aside the fact that seduction not only belongs to the order of artifice, ritual, and sign,[192] but also works as control mechanism.[193] Moreover, in *Musa Paradisiaca*, interruption evidently fractures seduction, as the former not only displaces images (of the myth and the TV newsreels), but also redirects us critically as to our perception of them.

This clarification reveals the importance of *Musa Paradisiaca* within Restrepo's oeuvre in the 1990s and for his future production, and also serves to add another important characteristic by how tactile interaction is worked in this video-installation. Let us start by remembering that according to

[189] Gutiérrez, *Cruces*…, 74.
[190] Aguilar, "Palmas Nacionales."
[191] Gutiérrez, Cruces…, 68-70, 72, 75.
[192] Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, 2.
[193] Santiago Castro-Gómez, "Althusser, los estudios culturales y el concepto de ideología" *OEI – Sala de lectura* URL: http://www.oei.es/salactsi/castro3.htm

Baudrillard's pessimistic and somehow conservative understanding of video images, "unlike photography, cinema, and painting, the video image and the computer screen induce a kind of immersion, a kind of umbilical connection and «tactile» interaction."[194] According to him, whose position is currently regarded as outdated but was still important in the 1990s, we live in a world of seducing images that have the privilege of "no[t] arriving to «the truth»."[195] It is a world where the desire for reality is fundamentally a desire for images, and a desire that ends up being a desire for desire. At the center of such desirous way of 'being-in-the-world,' is the willingness of being immersed in illusion and 'falsity,' a willingness to be immersed in a playful and seductive game (*lusio*) of images like in a *mise en abyme*. On the contrary, *Musa Paradisiaca* confronts the seductive image of spectacle and exoticism. Much in the vein of Victor Stoichita's interpretation of Ovid's recount of the story of Pygmalion,[196] the video-installation suggests that touch not only means 'to perceive', but also 'to give life,' and affirms that the perceiver may not only be deceived, but may also test and question representation and perception, like the doubtful Saint Thomas did. How is this critical possibility of touch achieved in this video-installation?

The 'tactile' appears firstly in the use of low-tech TV monitors and the introduction of static into the audio and video, altering the image and sound, forcing us to perceive while giving a sense of materiality to the artwork. The tactile also appears in a more important sense: the smell. Unfortunately, it has hardly been analyzed, and Giraldo described it as means by which Restrepo affirmed "the subsistence Western scopic regime and the persistence of myth."[197] Restrepo used Liberation cut bananas that he selected from a banana plantation where contemporary massacres had happened. He also put them in containers, and asked for them to be sent to Bogotá as if for exportation[198] (significantly, this gesture pointed to the fact that, in terms of consumption, Bogotá seems to be closer to other world capitals, than

[194] Jean Baudrillard, *The intelligence of Evil*, translated by ChrisTurner (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 58.
[195] Natalia Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 72.
[196] Victor I. Stoichita, *Simulacros. El efecto Pigmalión: de Ovidio a Hitchcock* (Madrid: Editorial Siruela, 2006), 78.
[197] Giraldo, "José Alejandro Restrepo, mirada y etnografía,"105.
[198] Natalia Gutiérrez, *Cruces…*, 98.

to the places where the violent conditions of production actually take place). The sweet smell of the exotic fruits invaded the whole space and invited public to enter in it, and to inadvertently become clothed Adams and Eves wandering through a 'banana plantation', approaching the cluster 'musa sapietum', and having to crouch in order to perceive or grasp the 'fruits' the clusters offer. We, Adams and Eves are invited to crouch and see and hear the interrupted records and reenactments of the myth, and to perform another, different 'genesis'. Restrepo also lets the exotic fruits mature and start to rot, so a repellent odor gradually fills the space –without letting the bananas become totally repulsive. As the exotic fruits decay fracturing the actual seduction and stressing the difficulty and challenge of paying attention to the video records and what is recorded, the odor also interrupts the strolling of the Adam and Eves.

## The tangibility of the real

The video sculptures can be considered to be elaborated conceptualist tools of visual and tactile perception. As such, they enable audience to have a relationship –with violence– that we can call a sort of 'hospitality of the real'. This evidently points in a different direction to the one proposed by Hal Foster in his famous paper "The return of the real," published in a homonymous book in 1996. Let us dwell upon this before closing this chapter.

Foster interpreted Jacques Lacan's notion of the "real" by means of a double triangle of gaze and vision, as a way of grasping and explaining how some artworks and artists in the late 1980s and early 1990s, overcame an opposition between two traditions. He defined these traditions from the early 20th century in terms of two sides of the scholarly discussion about Warhol's photography-based artworks, and particularly the series *Death in America*: on the one hand, a realist venture, on the other a superrealist escape.[199] Instead of thinking in terms of logical opposites, Foster cunningly proposed a Lacanian structure of visuality that brought them together in terms of the traumatic. With it, Foster affirmed a

[199] Hal Foster, "The Return of the real", *The Return of the real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1996), 128, 130, 142.

traumatic vision/gaze and established 'the traumatic' as horizon of interpretation and as a hinge that articulates both sides now understood as the side of "traumatic realism" and the side of "traumatic illusionism."[200]

This move was not gratuitous. Foster intended to rebut Peter Bürger's conservative declaration of the failure of the neo-avant-garde (1960s), which Bürger identified in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984) in terms of an empty recycling of forms and strategies (exemplifies by Bürger is his attack on Andy Warhol's work, by suggesting it as a mere montage). For Bürger, no neo-avant-garde movement could "legitimately claim to be historically more advanced than any other [avant-garde movement]"[201] Foster also wanted to support the thesis that postmodernism in the 1980s had not yet ended, but was still 'alive' in the first half of 1990s. This sort of 'extended postmodernism' was presented by Foster in terms of a movement, not in the sense of 'isms', but in the sense of Freud's concept of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action (read through Lacan's notions of repetition or *Wiederkehr*);[202] a tendency to return to what Foster believed was repressed by the avant-gardes. In this sense, Foster astutely proposed that the neo-avant-garde movements are what can actually illuminate the past and make it legible, even involving a critique of the post-WWII culture;[203] idea that we also follow in the sense that we read the four works here studied in a tone of criticism with regards to the 'trauma culture' commonly found in the critical comments about these works, as well as the possibility that these works propose to illuminate both the present and the past in Colombia, not only in the realm of the arts.

Nonetheless, we must also take into account that he proposed the traumatic as a theoretical connection between the art produced in first half and the one produced during second half of the 20th century. And this has evidently historical consequences, since Foster is basically confusing the possibility

[200] Idem, 130-153.
[201] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Trans.) Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1984), 71.
[202] Hal Foster, "Who's afraid of the neo-avant-garde?", *The Return of the real* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1996), 29.
[203] Andrea Giunta, *¿Cuándo empieza el arte contemporáneo? - When Does Contemporary Art Begin?* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Fundación arteBA, 2014), 18, 118.

of using deferred action as a general category of reflection —and more specifically for describing a critical turn towards the past as happens with the *arrière-pensée* here proposed—, with the actual idea of imposing an (a-historically supported) trans-historical model that defines the return in terms of an "unconscious, compulsive repetition."[204] In this direction, it appears to us that Foster imposed a "trauma discourse" in which "the subject is evacuated and elevated at once,"[205] leaving (practically) no room, in this sort of sublimation, for historical subjects to consciously relate to and problematize the past and the present, and to relate differently, in historical terms, to the traumatic-real.

In this regard, we cannot help noticing that in his analysis of such repetition. Foster only mentioned main-stream artists.[206] His list seems to us very restrictive, and can hardly include other kinds of works common in non-main-stream art which are close to decolonial stances. Even worse, Foster missed a larger tradition of photography that should not be tailored to the ever-celebrated work of the "heroic" Warhol, in which he has been mostly interested. Finally, he also limited his interpretation to the idea of a traumatic vision adopted from Lacan, hypostatizing an approach to violence.

The last two points are strongly interrelated, and are important in this study. In his interpretation of photography, Foster considered it an indexical and rather neutral work and technique, culturally and historically speaking. He clearly ignored that the two accounts he gave of photography are preceded by at least two tracks of colonialist and exoticizing photography suggested by James Luna's works *Take a photo with a real Indian* (1993) and *Shame-man* (1991):[207] the ethnographical document, and the

[204] In this regard, we agree with Bürger's criticism to Foster Peter, and the former's call for distinguishing "between an unconscious, compulsive repetition and a conscious resumption," and the idea that the notion of constellation may be more pertinent. Peter Bürger, "Avant-Garde and Neo-Avant-Garde: An Attempt to Answer Certain Critics of Theory of the Avant-Garde", *New Literary History* 41 (2010): 711.
[205] Foster, "The Return of the real," 168.
[206] For the hyperrealist, he listed Malcolm Morley, Audrey Flack, Don Eddy, and Richard Estes. For the post-(hiper)-realists he mentioned Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine, Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, Duan Hanson, John de Andrea, Charles Ray, Robert Gober, Matthew Barney, Mike Kelley, Kiki Smith, Sue Williams, Larry Clar, Nan Goldin, Jack Pierson, Andres Serrano, Maureen Connor, Rona Pondick, Mona Hayt, Mike Kelley, John Miller, Paul McCarthy, Nayland Blake, Hugo Ball, Claes Oldenburg, Bruce Nauman. Idem.
[207] This installation consists of three dummies with life-size photos of Luna. The first recorded him as he dressed every day. The second photo, in the center, recorded him bare chested and wearing part of a traditional native dress

phantasmagoric register of the exotic. An interesting example in North American photography where both tracks combined, crossed, and mixed is Holland Day's pictorial, evidently homoerotic, [208] and "manufactured images of «Nubians» and «Ethiopians»,"[209] as well as in his self-portraits like an exotic Arab man (following stablished cannons of dress and self-representation among the elite in the USA, who adopted imagery from the French Empire),[210] reaffirming part of the cultural consumption of imagery already present in painting at the time.

For this very reason we should not only avoid the idea of making of Warhol a "heroic originating Fine Artist,"[211] but also remember that, as Douglas Crimp's criticism proposed, Warhol's artworks are imbued in cultural if not political processes of production and reception.[212] We should also take into account that things differ significantly in Luna's *Half Mex /Half Indian*, where there is a conscious return that exceeds the realm of art history and mimesis as Foster defined it. In short, Foster's interpretation of Lacan missed politics of visuality and memory addressed by Luna and Restrepo, and studied in Nicholas Mirzoeff's *The Right to Look* (2011).[213]

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and a pendant. In the third photo he wore complete 'native Indian attire' with a Chief feather headdress. Each person in the public was asked to stand by the dummy she or he considered was the real Indian. It is not difficult to imagine which dummy was most selected and recognized to be more proper of a 'real Indian'. Weintraub, *Art on the edge and over…*, 98.

[208] Shawn Michelle Smith, *At the Edge of Sight: Photography and the Unseen* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 53-55.

[209] Olu Oguibe, "Photography and the Substance of the Image," *The Culture Game* (Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota, 2004): 74.

[210] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 17, 120.

[211] Simon Watney, "The Warhol Effect," *The Work of Andy Warhol*, ed. Gary Garrels (Seattle: Bay Press, 1989): 118.

[212] Douglas Crimp, "Getting the Warhol We Deserve: Cultural Studies and Queer Culture," *In[ ]visible culture. An electronic Journal for Visual Studies* 1 (Winter 1998). www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture

[213] Mirzoeff's book is an interesting and timely work that invites us to read Lacan's real (through Slavoj Žižek) as an excess in *historical* rather than transhistorical terms (i). Unfortunately, the idea of the Lacanian gaze is still central here and this informs part of the limitations of the book when read with a decolonial approach. For instance, Mirzoeff criticizes the vantage point of the plantation owner, and is interested in the voice of the slave. However, he discusses few testimonies given by the slaves themselves. Unexplainably for a 'counterhistory of visuality' that is not merely focused on images, he does not address the more valuable documents for popular tradition: music, dance, rituals and fiestas like the *calendas*, attended by the fugitive and revolutionary leader François Makandal, and important venues for coopting slaves for the revolutionary movement (ii). In addition, of the few documents Mirzoeff discusses, he underlines the testimony of Makandal's wife, a testimony presumably recorded by French

Figure 20. Sesshū Tōyō, [untitled] ca.1413 Ink on paper (43.9 × 29.84 in)

On the other hand, and this is quite ironic, in a book titled *Vision and Visuality*, edited in 1988 by Foster himself, Norman Bryson resorted to a Japanese 15th century painting made by celebrated Sesshū Tōyō, in order to suggest some dangers implicit in the idea of adopting Lacan for interpreting art. Regarding the Japanese landscape, which is actually an interpretation of Chinese Ch'an landscape (and as such, an interesting transcultural image), Bryson indicated that "Something [i.e., the ink] cuts across the field of vision, and invades it from the outside. Vision is traversed by something wholly ungovernable by the subject, something that harbors within it the force of everything outside the visual dyad" vision-gaze described by Lacan.[214]

officials. He interprets her statement "may the good god give eyes to those who ask for eyes," as an example of a second sight, which is never really explained and would require documents he left aside (iii). More importantly, Mirzoeff still thinks of and reads her testimony literally and from the view point of the European, and does not take account of the double rhetoric at stake. On the one hand, the French could underline the slaves' testimonies as a testimony of magic and as an opportunity for apparently pointing to an evil power that had to be reduced, thus justifying violence against the revolutionaries. On the other hand, and more important is the fact that in Voodoo, *Bondye* (i.e., the good God) is unreachable, except through mediation of a 'saint' or priest. This means that her statement should be read carefully and we should suspect of any sort of literal interpretation. In this sense, it must be recognized that the slaves, when witnessing, could also use rhetoric and parody in order to cause fear, or to say what the French wanted to hear, while loading the language with symbols, and houses of the colonizer and keeping in secret the actual rituals and revolutionary practices involved –among them, poisoning the whites in their houses, as they did. Another example that shows how literally Mirzoeff reads things and misses the twists and parodies characteristic of aesthetic tactics of survival or resistance, is his interpretation of *casta paintings*. He reads them as if they were mere documentations of French or Anglophone notions of racial hierarchy, not in terms of the Spanish tradition here indicated when briefly discussing Sánchez Galque' painting (iv).

Notes:

(i). Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of visuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 9-10.

(ii). Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tenesee, 1990).

(iii). Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 68.

(iv). Idem, 64.

[214] Norman Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field," *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, WA: Dia Art Foundation, 1988), 104.

What interrupts decenters the subject, but is hardly a menacing gaze, nor is it meant to discredit representation or vision as Lacan or even Althusser did.[215] It is neither controlled by the artist, nor is it a product or mark of automatic/autographic expression. What interrupts the vision-gaze in Sesshū Tōyō's painting is not the traumatic gaze of Medusa, but rather something like a flash that comes to the Ch'an devotee in moments of illumination.[216] It is an experience of *Śūnyatā* i.e., the radical emptiness that surrounds the dyad in such a way that the viewer becomes aware of a whole world in which object and subject are immersed.[217] Bryson closed his intervention by indicating that the risk of assuming a "paranoid", if not "terrorizing" gaze, even if at times nuanced, is that "think[ing] of a terror intrinsic to sight makes it harder to think what makes Sight terroristic, or otherwise. It *naturalizes* terror, and that is of course what is terrifying."[218] Against this idea, most of this study moves.

At stake in *Musa Paradisiaca*, is not the flash and the experience of *Śūnyatā*, but something we will try to briefly describe with the term *Manigua*. This is a Taino word that has been translated as 'lack or order,' 'being entangled,' or 'impenetrable jungle;'[219] definitions that describe, in rather dismissive terms, the experience of those living and inhabiting in a tropical forest. We rather appropriate *manigua* in order to name what can be described, somehow phenomenologically, as the experience of being immersed in a dense atmosphere that permeates everything, and imbues perception with a sort of thickness which, at the same time, makes us aware of both our perception's permeability, and the porosity of the dyad vision-gaze. We do not mean that such atmosphere is Foster's real, but we mean that this experience describes a different relation (not merely visual, for instance) to the traumatic; a relation that problematizes the actual "mystification" of trauma in Foster's account, as well as the rather romantic tone and imaginary of

[215] Martin Jay's comments to Bryson's paper. Idem, 112
[216] Chinese Ch'an is a school of Mahāyāna Buddhism known for its emphasis on Dharma practice and meditation, and precursor of Zen Buddhism. In painting, it is a school that followed the idea of Ch'an and frequently interested in expression and using broad surfaces of ink monochrome that suggest a sudden, intuitive, and even individual awareness that comes in moments of illumination. H. A. van Oor, *The Iconography of Chinese Buddhism in Traditional China: Han to Liao*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 2
[217] Bryson, "The Gaze…", 106.
[218] Idem, 107-108. Emphasis added.
[219] See entry *Manigua* in *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*. 23rd edition, 2014. http:/www.rae.es

violence in José Eustasio Rivera's *The Vortex*. In other words, and paraphrasing Barthes, instead of assuming uncritically the idea of a mystification or naturalization of trauma placed "at the bottom of history,"[220] the decolonizing posture identified in *Musa Paradisiaca* intends to raise the possibility of decentering such discourse in order to historically think trauma as displaced, interrumpted, relative sort of vision device that is on the "same side" of life. Of course, this supposes a critical stance towards the practice of assuming trauma as a grounding wound of community, as Walter Mignolo seems to suggest at times, or as a strategy for grounding history, and particularly history of contemporary art.

In this sense, *manigua* serves to describe the experience of the public immersed in the very smelly and dense 'banana plantation' of *Musa Paradisiaca*. The smell increasingly permeates everything and everyone. In such immersion our perception of the video records (of the myth reenactment and events) and our wandering are interrupted by the materiality of the rotting banana. It is a materiality that the public does not master (as Freud wanted to do with trauma), nor does it master us by forcing us to leave the room as if expulsed. The materiality of *Musa Paradisiaca*, and our "being-touched'' make us aware of whole world of memories, myths and events of violence, and the permeability of our dense perception of violence. In this order of ideas, we can also stress that *Musa Paradisiaca* invites us to consider violence with tactile perception; which, contrary to Giraldo's vision-centered interpretation, does not merely affirm the 'subsistence of the Western scopic regime'. It rather problematizes such regime that has historically imagined and represented trauma by means of the mythical motif of Medusa's head and gaze. Moreover, the distance that Restrepo creates with the images, and the atmosphere in which we are immersed, invites us to pay attention to violence as if it were experienced in relation to Medusa's tangible, active, perceiving, and forgotten torso and touch instead. Bearing this in mind, we move to the next chapter.

[220] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Selected and translated from the French by Annette Lavers (New York, NY: The Noonday Press 1991[c 1972]), 101.

# 2. FLOWER VASE CUT: *DETALLE* AND MEDUSA'S TORSO

SECOND CHAPTER

Juan Manuel Echavarría Olano (1947), was born in Medellín, (Antioquia). He studied in the United States, lived in Greece, where he studied poetry and mythology, and currently lives in Bogotá and New York. He published two novels, *La Gran Catarata* (1981) and *Moros en la Costa* (1991), but around 1995 he felt frustrated with writing, and decided to switch to photography. Since then Echavarría has been a prolific artist. His first series *Portraits* (1996), was followed by *Flower Vase Cut* (1997-2007). He has produced over ten different photographical series and a film, and presented them in different parts of the world in both solo and group exhibitions.[221]

## Uncanny specimens

In this chapter we will discuss *Flower Vase Cut*, a series produced between 1996 and 1997. It is surprising that this series has received attention from many curators and participated in several exhibitions

[221] Among his solo exhibitions are: Silences, Universitée de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium (2015), The Gravedigger and the missed call, Sala de Exposiciónes ASAB, Bogotá, (2013), La "O", Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico D.F. (2012), Death and the River, Josee Bienvenu Gallery, New York (2008), Bocas de Ceniza, Americas Society, New York, and Rencontre International Paris/Berlin, Musée Jeau de Paume, French Cinémathèque (2006), Guerra y Pa, Erich Maria Remarque Peace Center, Osnabrück, Germany (2003). Among his group exhibitions are: Les Rencontres Internationales, at Gaîté Lyrique and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and 43 Salon (inter)Nacional de Artistas, Museo de Antioquia, Medellín (2014), SMusée Contemporain du Val-de-Marne, France. (2013), Centre for Contemporary Culture Strozzina, Florence, Italy, and MOLAA, Museum Of Latin American Art, Long Beach (2011), North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks, ND, US, Artists and War II (2012), Apetura Colombia, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, and Centro José Guerrero-Diputación de Granada, Spain (2008), Viology: Cultures of Violence / Violence of Culture, Galeria de La Raza, San Francisco (2002).

around the world, but has not been analyzed beyond the usual flattering commentaries in exhibition catalogues and briefly commented in articles.[222] In all this intances, even if some commentators have identified a certain complexity in the work, it seems to us, comments have even wandered around the problematic figure of exoticism of violence. Our task in this chapter is to weigh some of those commentaries, and address the dialogue with colonial imagery the series evidently suggests, in order to discuss how this series deals with violence and trauma in a local and global context.

Figure 21. . Echavarría, Flower Vase Cut, (1997, 2007) Installation in Santa Fe Art Institute, Santa Fe (NM) 2007.

The series was originally made of at least 36 different plates and by 2007 there were at least 5 more, which have been disposed in several formats. We assume as reference the one displayed in the

[222] Miguel González, "Monograph: Juan Manuel Echavarría", *ArtNexus* 56 - *Arte en Colombia* 102, Apr - Jun (2005) URL: http://www.artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=14745; Juan Carlos Guerrero-Hernández, "Emblemas, cuerpo y memoria colectiva", *Premio Nacional de Crítica: Ensayos sobre Arte Contemporáneo en Colombia, Quinta versión* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura y Universidad de los Andes, 2010), 111-135; Juan Fernando Herrán, "Historias, escenas e intervalos : fotografía y vídeo : artistas y obras en la exposición*" Proyecto Pentágono: Investigaciones sobre arte contemporáneo en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia : Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), 48-49; Ana María Reyes, "Rupturas a miradas sensacionalistas: reflexiones fotográficas de Juan Manuel Echavarría sobre la violencia en Colombia" *Bocas de ceniza*, exh. cat., (trans.) Ana María Ochoa (Bogotá: Colombia: Valenzuela y Klenner: arte contemporáneo, 1999) 1-8; Marta Rodríguez, "Group Show: Naturaleza muerta/Still Life", *ArtNexus* 53 - *Arte en Colombia* 99, Jul - Sep (2004) URL: http://www.artnexus.com/Notice_View.aspx?DocumentID=13782; Ana Tiscornia, "Juan Manuel Echavarría", *Juan Manuel Echavarría: Mouth of Ash* (trans.) Santiago Giraldo (Milan: Edizioni Charta Milan and North Dakota Museum of Art, 2005), 65-70.

exhibition at the Santa Fe Art Institute in 2007, since it shows the plates on a shelf attached to three walls, in no particular order, inviting the viewer to hold and inspect them closely.

Figure 22. Echavarría, Passiflora Sanguinea, 1997. Archival Pigment Print. 20x16in (50x40cm)

At first sight, the plates evoke botanic pen drawings of exotic flowers, accompanied by titles in script and plate numbers. The size also reminds us of the format known as 'Royal folio' characteristic of prestigious publications presented as gifts for monarchs and princes. As we hold one we notice that the colorfully lavish plates are replaced by monochromatic elements on a pure white background of a photo; which is perhaps an edited reproduction of either a pencil drawing or copies of a print. Arranged in the center of one of the plates, the public sees what could be regarded as an odd flower that reminds us of the schema usually drawn by children. Its corolla wide open, is made of four odd elements. A long and oblong peduncle guides our eyes towards two rounded things on the center left that may resemble exotic seeds or small fruits. The title says *Passiflora Sanguinea*. The use of cursive, Latin, and only two terms recalls Linnaeus's binary system that categorized any being by its genus and family or defining aspect. In this vein, *Passiflora* could mean a genus of mainly tropical South American vines, and *Sanguinea* could describe the defining aspect of this specimen, which in this case could correspond to scarlet petals. The 'flower' is depicted in an almost symmetrical balance: its petals show both radial and bilateral symmetry,[223] and the dissected parts, almost identical, are arranged one next to the other. Yet, for those already familiar to the *passiflora* genus, this plate departs from the actual species as it does not have the characteristic five petals and five sepals, for instance.

[223] Radial symmetry describes a "symmetrical arrangement of constituents, especially of radiating parts, about a central point," while bilateral symmetry denotes a "symmetrical arrangement, as of an organism or a body part, along a central axis, so that the body is divided into equivalent right and left halves by only one plane." See entries in *The American Heritage*. *Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition ©2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Figure 23. Echavarría, Orquis Lugubris, 1997

In a second plate we find a rather abnormal specimen described as *Orquis Lugubris* that clearly departs from what one tends to imagine as the beauty of the fragile orchid. This 'flower' pornographically open and withered reminds us of pressed herbariums. Interestingly, the petals or what we may perhaps identify as such, look like small branches coming out from a central, long, and apparently tubular structure. The title, if we again follow Linnaean logic, describes it as 'affectedly mournful'. Echavarría's plates not only deceive our expectation of beauty and attractiveness, but also put in tension our memories about the aspect of those species and the description, or more exactly, the taxonomy here employed.

Figure 24. Echavarría, Aloe Atrox, 1997

And a further deception takes place as we study the plates closer. For instance, when holding the plate titled *Aloe Atrox*, we notice the four repetitive figures at the center of the plate look bony, and actually remind us of vertebrae. The more attentively we look at them, the more familiar we become with these elements, and more certain we are of the fact that this 'flower' is made of bones. As we go back to the first plate, we recognize for instance the vertebrae assembled as petals. We notice then that Echavarría's plates are actually edited photos that intentionally flattened and altered the photographic record of the bones arranged as flowers. Unless we are physicians or anthropologists instructed to immediately identify individual bones, it takes some time to recognize that bones have interrupted into botanic representations, offering unusual specimens. How are we to understand this particular appropriation? What is stake with this uncanny simulacra of flowers?

In order to discuss this series, let us start by noting that the stage has already set the botanic plates as its formal, historical and even strategic reference. In this sense, the discussion of the *Flower Vase Cut* needs to involve the following issues. Botanic plates became an important tool for science and botanical

classification of nature, during the eighteenth century, and have usually been linked to the enlightened notions of science.[224] Plates were also used as *records* of specimens collected that would inevitably wither, or decay and lose some of the more important characteristics for their identification and classification before reaching the scientist's desk. In this sense, they anticipated the use of photography.[225] Botanic plates also were meant to follow scientific criteria and models for verisimilitude and betrayed ways of *seeing*, and *modelling* reality, and *constructing* knowledge. In addition, botanic plates suppose a work in situ, no matter that in most cases a sketch was made on location and later completed somewhere else. In this sense, they also involve *testimony*, that is to say, they involve a voice and authorship bearing witness to the specimen. At the same time, botanic plates involve a public that is not limited to the scientific community, for which offered representations and enjoyment of the *exotic*. Finally, the 19th century botanic plate is a product of a larger project that not only involves scientific journeys or voyages designed to explore the flora of a particular region, but also construction and enactment of *identity* and colonial *power*.[226]

The large amount of possibilities for reading and interpreting *Flower Vase Cut* becomes clear. Let us start by noticing that as we go through the plates, all of them share the flatness and sort of obsession with symmetry. This is actually a not very common feature in botanic plates, especially if we are to think of Royal folio size plates that show a strict order or composition, and recall the type of anatomical platesthat is to say, plates characterized by representing a dissection of a specimen. Nonetheless, there is actually a famous set of plates produced in the late 18th and early 19th centuries for the Royal Botanical Expedition to New Granada (1783-1816), and stands out for having such characteristics, reason for which has been uniquely labeled as a style: the so-called "Mutis style".

[224] Brian Ford, "Scientific illustrations in the eighteen century", *Eighteenth-Century Science* Vol. 4 (ed.) Roy Porter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 561-83
[225] Valerie Oxle, *Botanical Illustration* (Wilshire, UK: Crowood Press, 2008), 177-78
[226] Mauricio Nieto Olarte, *Orden natural y orden social. Ciencia y política en el Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada* (Bogotá: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales-Ceso; Uniandes, 2008), 148-155; Mauricio Nieto Olarte, *Remedios para el imperio. Historia natural y apropiación del Nuevo Mundo* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2000), 38-43.

## A new typo-graphy of and from a 'new world'

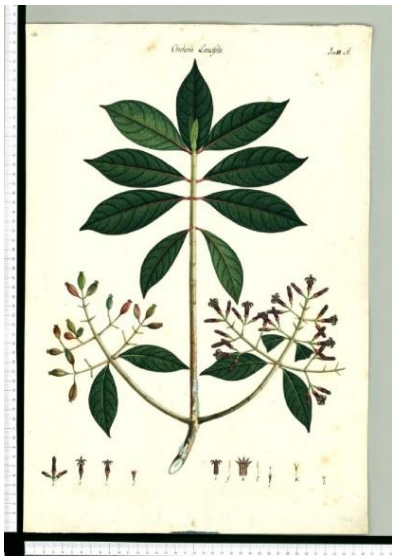

Figure 25. Anonymous, Cinchona lancifolia, ca. 1800. Tempera. Royal Folio. DIV. III A-2850 (Royal Botanic Garden, Madrid) © RJB-CSIC.

The plate here reproduced is a good example of "Mutis style" dissecting plates, where elements are mostly distributed around a central axis. The pronounced detail, symmetry and centrality of the main part also resembles heralds. In addition, the plates actually depicting dissections, the dissected parts are always located at the bottom, with very few exceptions at the top. These plates clearly contrast with those produced by the Scottish draftsman Sydney Parkinson, for James Cook's First Expedition to the Pacific (1768–71). Parkinson, who studied draughtsmanship under French Painter William de la Cour, was interested in producing plates that rendered the specimens aesthetically enjoyable in terms of classical the cannons of beauty (Figure 28). In fact, he depicted the specimens as if they followed a sort of sculptural *contraposto* (Interestingly, his depictions of racial features were limited given his interest in "dress and adornment").[227] Notably, a small percentage of his production were anatomical plates. Another contrasting case is offered by the anatomic renderings made by Hipólito Ruíz and José Antonio Pavón, for the Royal Botanical Expedition to the Viceroyalty of Perú (1777 - 1788), which Ruiz directed. These Spanish botanists and pharmacologists proposed a design that shows naturalism with a rather scientific bent (Figure 27), reason for which the Spanish first Professor and 'curator' of the Royal Botanical Garden collection, Casimiro Gómez de Ortega, "pronounced the drawings the most precious materials received and suggested to Minister José de Gálvez that they be presented to the king at court."[228]

[227] Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1992), 82

[228] Daniela Bleichmar, "Painting as Exploration:Visualizing Nature in Eighteenth-Century Colonial Science" (Durham: NC: Duke University Press, 2014) 65.

While Cook's and Ruiz and Pavón's plates were made by European hands, the plates produced in New Granada were all made by 30 local painters. Interestingly, Mutis rejected the only two Spanish painters the Spanish Botanic Garden in Madrid forced him to hire,[229] and followed only partially the strict and specific instructions given by Gómez de Ortega, who had demanded painters, or *ichniographos* if we use Linnaean terminology,[230] to copy nature without ornament or resorting to imagination, [231] in order to guarantee scientific representations.


Figure 26. Vicente Sánchez, Epidendrum, ca. 1800. Tempera.

Figure 28. Sydney Parkinson, Chiliotrichum diffusum (Australia), 1769. Watercolours on paper


Figure 27. Ruiz and Pavón, Cinchona grandiflora (coloured versions), in Ruiz and Pavón, Flora Peruviana, et Chilensis, Color Prints in book, (1798-1802).

[229] José Celestino Mutis is quoted in: Apolinar Federico Gredilla, *Biografía de José Celestino Mutis: con la Relación de su viaje y estudios practicados en el Nuevo reino de Granada* (Valladolid: Editorial MAXTOR, 2009), 186 fn.4

[230] "The Ichniographos are those authors who expressed the forms of the plants with drawings. The commentators were often mistaken in their inquiries of the species; and for this reason it was appropriate to paint and describe them, so that the names of those known were not confused with the unknown." Antonio Palau, *Explicación de la filosofía y fundamentos botánicos de* Linneo (Madrid, 1778). Palau is quoted in Miguel Ángel Puig-Samper, "Illustrators of the New World. The Image in the Spanish Scientific Expeditions of the Enlightenment," Culture & History Digital Journal. 1(2): m102. URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.3989/chdj.2012.m102

[231] Casimiro Gómez Ortega, "Instrucciones que deberán observar los dibujantes que pasan al Perú de orden de S.M para servir con el ejercicio de su profesión en la expedición botánica. Abril de 1977," in *Relación histórica del viaje de Hipólito Ruiz a los Reinos del Perú y Chile*, ed. Jaime Jaramillo Arango (Madrid: Real Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales de Madrid, 1952), 416.

Figure 29. Salvador Rizo (Attributed), Mutisia clematis, ca. 1800, tempera

In a sense, the so-called "Mutis style" found a point of compromise between Gómez's scientific demands, and the idea of producing works to be aesthetically enjoyed. The plates have a sort of 'baroque' obsession with detail. These characteristics are not accidental as Mutis had the intention of creating a new "iconism" [232] that assured that "any botanist in Europe [would] find represented" in the plates "coming from my hands," "the finest characters of fructification, which are the a-b-c of science —of botany in the Linnaean sense—without the need to come see them in their native ground." Unfortunately, the studies of this new iconism are still incipient. The only felicitous exception is Daniela Bleimar's recent book,[233] which is a very important step. For our part, we have obtained more findings that complement and correct some of Bleimar's findings about why and how this new iconism was meant to be reached. Nonetheless, in order to avoid any sort of an excursus that would break this chapter into two parts and probably confuse the reader, we have annexed some notes collecting those findings (see annex, at the end of the main document). Therefore, in this chapter we will only include the relevant information for interpreting *Flower Vase Cut*.

This being said, there are two important issues that reveal a felicitous convergence between the painters and the Spanish José Celestino Mutis (1732 –1808), director of the Expedition. Scholars usually explain flatness by blaming local artists' limited education in European art,[234] and more exactly, by

[232] José Celestino Mutis, *Archivo epistolar del sabio naturalista don José Celestino Mutis* Vol. 1(Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1968): 439-40.
[233] Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012)
[234] See for instance: Antonio González Bueno, *José Celestino Mutis (1732-1808) y la expedición botánica del Nuevo Reino de Granada* (Barcelona: Real Jardín Botánico C.S.I.C., c1992); Ma. del Pilar de San Pío Aladrén (comp.) *Mutis y la Real Expedición Botánica del Nuevo Reyno de Granada* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 1992); Marta Fajardo de Rueda, "La flora de la Real Expedición Botánica, primera Escuela de Arte en el Nuevo Reino de Granada," *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* No. 13/14 (1985-1986): 41-61; Germán Arciniegas et al. *Esta es Colombia: expedición botánica 200 años* (Bogotá: El Greco Impresores-Editores, 1983); Marta Fajardo de Rueda and Paula Maldonado Currea, *La Expedición Botánica y la ilustración* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de

pointing out the shallow pictorial space and the absence of naturalistic, nude, and anatomic studies.[235] A less Eurocentric approach points instead to the pictorial tradition Mutis found in New Granada: painters whose secular and religious works were part of a tradition that had already reached an idiosyncratic way of using the method known as *rompecabezas* (literally 'head breaker/tearer').[236] This method consisted of cutting out heads, hands, trunks, and feet of figures from several engravings and prints produced in Europe, reorganizing the cutoffs, transferring them to the canvas or wood panel to be later illuminated and varnished. Evidently, this was a very particular way of rearticulating and transforming European iconography,[237] and was undoubtedly helpful for transferring specimens presumably pressed on a sheet of paper and forced to fit a particular sort of idea of structure order. Those sketches were probably used as reference, copied, and then the copy was painted.

On the other hand, scholars, Bleichmar included, have regarded Mutis' botanic plates as defined by the incipient discipline of modern Botany. They have dismissed Mutis´ educational and professional background as physician and priest,[238] which undoubtedly invested him with a particular and crucial way of approaching visual representation in Botany. In the appendix we have suggested that it is very likely that 'Mutis style' was influenced by Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty's large, colorful, luxurious and impressive anatomic plates that departed from Vesalius' classicism and produced shallow pictorial spaces and images without using line- or dot-based techniques.[239] More importantly, Mutis' approach to medicine was very eclectic, much in the vein of Andrés Piquer.[240] He not only combined Hippocrates'

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Colombia, 2005); Beatriz González, "Los Pintores de la Expedición Botánica," *Revista Credencial Historia* No. 74 (Feb. 1996): 4- 5.

[235] Marta Fajardo de Rueda, *Los Pintores de la Flora de la Real Expedición Botánica: Exposición Intinerante*, (Bogotá: Cidar and Facultad de Artes, 1990) http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/

[236] Armando Montoya López, "Vásquez Ceballos y La Estética de la Contrarreforma," *Artes, La Revista* 8, Vol. 4 Julio-Diciembre (2004): 47.

[237] Cécile Michaud, *De Amberes Al Cusco: El Grabado Europeo Como Fuente del Arte Virreinal* [Catalog exhibition] (Lima, Perú: Centro Cultural of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2009).

[238] Edward O. Wilson and José M. Gómez Durán, *Kingdom of Ants: José Celestino Mutis and the Dawn of Natural History in the New World* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 1, 10

[239] Maria Rosa Vives Pique, "El Arte del Grabado Auxiliar y Testigo del Arte de Curar," *Materia* 6-7, (2008): 134.

[240] Antonio Jiménez, "Andrés Piquer y la filosofía española del siglo XVIII (A propósito de un libro del P. Mindón)," *Revista de Filosofo* 3a época. vol. V (1992). Núm. 8, 429- 439.

notion of balance, Herman Boerhaave's baroque medicine, and Boissier de Sauvages' taxonomy of diseases (a model inspired in Linnaeus' binomial nomenclature), but he was apparently disinterested in pathological anatomy,[241] which was at the time and is still considered the Enlightenment's area of development of medicine par excellence as it related illness to the organ, not to the body. In this order of ideas, we have argued that Mutis basically assumed medicine's purpose was to surgically restore the structural balance of the whole body. 'Surgically' (chirurgically) not only denotes cutting and reorganizing parts of the body by means of a scalpel. It also denotes the fine artistic work of a hand (*cheir-ourgos*) that, guided by the "botanic eye", grasps with precision and beauty each defining aspectual mark or *typos* of the structural balance of each plant, and more importantly reorganizes them according to what he called as the "botanic eye." The latter is the eye of the mind that not only meditates in the arcane balanced structure of plants, but also holds to the promise of healing, i.e., restoring the structural balance of the human body. In brief, we have finally argued that the plates of the Expedition were intended to render not just an idealized specimen, but a *type* specimen, in which the "botanic eye" not only names or baptizes the species, but which writes a new iconism and a new typo-graphy of plants. In this new typo-graphy the botanic eye could perhaps grasp part of the order of God's creation.

## *Un detalle,* a flower

"A speck of blue has more / intensity than all the sky". This is our free translation of the opening lines of *Un detalle*, poem written by Alfonso Cortés (1893 - 1969). Cortés is regarded as one of most important (postmodernist) poets in Nicaragua,[242] and who is revered therein like Ruben Darío (1867- 1916), the initiator of the literary movement *modernismo* (modernism)[243] in the Spanish speaking world. Cortés lost

[241] Emilio Quevedo and Camilo Duque Naranjo, *Historia de la cátedra de medicina en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario durante la colonia y la República, 1653-1865* (Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2002) 51-52, 120
[242] Roland Greene (ed.) *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 946
[243] Cathy L. Jrade, *Modernismo, Modernity and the Development of Spanish American Literature* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010) 1-8.

his mind in 1927, and spent much of his time chained to the window grillwork of his bedroom in Darío's house, as a result of his delirium growing violent.[244] That was the time when he started to write his poems on the margins of newspapers, in such minute script that a magnifying glass was needed to read them.[245] Remarkably, contrary to French and English, *detalle* in Spanish not only means detail and triviality. *Detalle* is also a little present, a courtesy or a gesture of being thoughtful, a gift. We can see this poem as *detalle* of gratitude to a trivial speck of blue that is regarded by the poet as a present and a powerful gesture. The strophe continues: "I feel therein lives, about to flower in happy ecstasy, my longing".

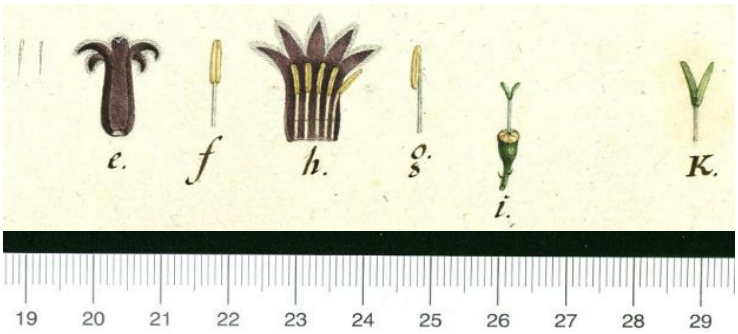


Figure 30. Anonymous, Cinchona lancifolia (detail). ca. 1800. Tempera. Royal Folio. Plate from theRoyal Botanical Expedition to New Granada. DIV. III A-2850, Royal Botanic Garden, Madrid © RJB-CSIC. Reference in centimeters

Contrary to a Botanic Expedition plates designed as a records of a specimens, Echavarría offers us a *detalle*, the feeblest element of a plant. At the same time, he offers a photographical register of the *detalle*, and in a sense, each plate is also a *detalle*. The series takes place and functions on different yet interrelated levels. Other levels correspond to: the plates are actually photographic records that not only intend to retain the flower's transience, but also to archive it and to be part of a set that may be an archive.

[244] Thomas Merton had profound respect for Cortés works. "In a brief essay introducing his translations of poems by Cortés, Merton recalls Ernesto Cardenal's account of seeing Cortés chained to a beam in Rubén Dario's house, where he is said to have gone insane on February 18, 1927". Christine Bochen "[Letter] to Alfonso Cortés", *Thomas Merton, The Courage for Truth: The Letters of Thomas Merton to Writers* (ed.) Christine Bochen (New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1993)176-177.

[245] Derek Petrey and Ileana Rodríguez, "Alfonso Cortés", *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures* Vol 1 (ed.) Daniel Balderston, Mike Gonzalez, and Ana M. Lopez (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 411.

Not by chance, Echavarría used archival pigments. So, we must ask why such a complex series of *detalles*? Why, what for, and for whom are *detalles* being archived?

In 1729, Linnaeus wrote in his thesis *Praeludia Sponsaliorum Plantarum* the following famous lines: the petals "serve as bridal beds which the Creator has so gloriously arranged, adorned with such noble bed curtains, and perfumed with so many soft scents that the bridegroom with his bride might there celebrate their nuptials with so much the greater solemnity. When now the bed is so prepared, it is time for the bridegroom to embrace his beloved bride and offer her his gifts"[246] Linnaeus thesis was not about plants' sexual reproduction, but about considering the flower as an ark where the secret reproduction of God's creation takes place. In other words, it is about understanding the flower as the very detail and chamber with which he built his system. It is worth noticing that this does not mean that Linnaeus blindly accepted what Alenka Zupančič correctly describes as "traditional ontologies and traditional cosmologies" strongly "reliant on sexual difference, taking it as their very founding, or structuring, principle."[247] Linnaeus was precisely trying to move away from what Lacan described as "primitive science [, which always] is a sort of sexual technique."[248] In this sense, while it is evident that Linnaeus's system was still influenced by the Scholastic *Summa*, in *Species Plantarum* (1753) there is an intention of configuring an ensemble for "the inner jointure of what is comprehensible itself, its founding development and ordering."[249] In this order of ideas, in the flower takes the place of the embrace and joining, not of sexes literally, but of reproduction (*Systema Sexuale*) of an order Linnaeus wanted to systematize.[250] —And this aim guided his idea of using the term (and category) *cryptogamae* for 'plants'

[246] Linnaeus is quoted in Londa Schiebinger, "The loves of the plants", *Scientific American* Vol 274 N. 2 (February, 1996), 110-115

[247] Alenka Zupančič, "Sexual Difference and Ontology", e-flux, URL: http://www.e-flux.com/journal/sexual-difference-and-ontology

[248] Jacques Lacan, T*he Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (trans.) Alan Sheridan, (ed.) Jacques-Alan Miller (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1987 [1979]), 151

[249] We follow here Martin Heidegger's initial reflections on the notion of system. Heidegger, Martin, 1889-1976. *Schelling's treatise on the essence of human freedom* (trans.) Joan Stambaugh (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1985), 28

[250] In his *systema sexuale* plants were organized regarding the 'ensemble' in terms like these: public marriages (i.e., flowers visible to everyone), 'In one Bed' (Husband and wife have the same bed), without affinity (Husbands not related to each other), etc. Carl Linnaeus, *Species Plantarum* Vol. 1 (Dorchester, UK: Yay Society, 2013).

like fungi, since he thought they had a hidden reproduction, a hidden embrace. For that very reason, Mutis also demanded his painters depict ideal specimens that showed all the different stages of development of the flowers, [251] as well as the minute and real-size visual dissection of Linnaeus' matrix. The latter is another of the idiosyncratic gestures found in "Mutis style".

Echavarría shows 'flowers' that are actually ensembles of bones. He goes to the great detail of Mutis's 'Linnaean' plates. Nonetheless, in the two plates we first described, he produced 'flowers' that appear pornographically open. His is not a dissection that respectfully opens and enters little by little, but rather an interruption of the nuptials, an empting entrance into the chamber. When compared to "Mutis style" plates, Echavarría's set looks like a group of dissembling ensembles. We are forced to see that in the symmetric and still beautiful ensemble imitating flowers, the myth of a balanced structure that grounded the "Mutis style" is actually hollow. What are we then left with?

Paraphrasing Roland Barthes' now classical notions of *studium* and *punctum*,[252] at first sight the very format, size, flatness and heraldic appearance of Echavarría's plates recalled botanic plates as the *studium* or key part of the *studium* of Echavarría's plates. That is to say, the series seem to point to, respectively, the colonial enterprise of the House of Bourbons (influenced by French Physiocrats),[253] and the neocolonial enterprise of a violence and exploitation of the land under local and global dynamics. In this order of ideas, botanic plates would be coded images that function, culturally speaking, as historical, political and aesthetic horizons. However, we later realize that the 'flowers' are made of bones. The opacity and coarseness of the bones (as they are recorded), and the uncanny ensembles puncture and hurt our perception. Nonetheless, as we get used to the detail of the ensembles, we start to regard them as

[251] In the plate depicting the *Cinchona lancifolia*, we see, on the bottom left, a group of three flowers with the label 'a'. This trio suggests that flower grow always in trios. Next then are three flowers depicted in what seems to be three consecutive stages of development (from 'older' to 'younger'), and consecutively labeled 'b', 'c', and 'd.' On the lower right side of the plate, and following the same direction left-right, are depicted a complete flower, and parts of flowers in what is suggested as a consecutive order of dissection: the corolla, a stamen as seen before opening the corolla, the wide-open corolla with the stamens inside, a stamen with an anthem ('head') more detailed, the female organ, the upper part of it (made of the stigma and the style), and the lower part of it (the ovary).
[252] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of photography*, (trans.) Richard Howard (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981) 42- 51.
[253] Nieto, *Remedios para el imperio…*, 38-43

*studium*: this vertebra stands here for a petal, that distal phalange stands for a seed, these groups of bones are meant to be the corolla, and a rib is meant to be the peduncle, and so on. And yet, the ensembles, as dissembling ensembles, puncture us, force us to go 'beyond' the plates as images of *studia*, and enact a closer inspection. Barthes would say that the *punctum* "is very often […] a «detail»" that disturbs, and forces us to think what cannot be named in the plate. Or can it be?

## The persistence of the exotic

In the catalogue for Echavarría's retrospective in 2004, titled "Juan Manuel Echavarría: Mouth of Ash," the director and curator of North Dakota Museum of Art, Laurel Reuter, stated:

> Each page [i.e., plate] is titled at the bottom in old-fashioned script. The artist gave every flower its scientific name plus a second name that describes his personal response to the violence represented by the bone flowers. For example, *Maxillaria Vorax* carries the scientific name in Latin for an orchid, *Maxillaria*, followed by *vorax*, Latin for voracious. Violence is voracious. Or, *Radix insatiabilis*. *Radis* is "root" in Latin; *insatiabilis* is insatiable in Latin. Violence is insatiable […] Echavarría uses beauty to seduce the viewer into his world. His definition of beauty, however, encompasses the knowledge that at the core of all beauty lies awkwardness, ugliness even. The deformity that underpins Echavarría's art is the violence that inhabits the heart of Colombia.[254]

The paragraph is an excellent example of the way this series has been interpreted, and how those interpretations resort to common places that make of Colombia the exotic 'land' of violence, the land where violence inhabits the innermost core (Lat. *cor*, heart) of its people. One should start to be suspicious of Reuter's comments when the adjectives she initially used for qualifying Echavarría's "personal response to the violence," actually become descriptions of violence itself. What sort of misunderstanding has taken place here that replaces the subject's feeling for the thing itself, and then the

[254] Laurel Reuter, "Requiem for a Country", *Juan Manuel Echavarría: Mouth of Ash* (Milan: Edizioni Charta Milan and North Dakota Museum of Art, 2005), 11

thing for the core of the subject's society? The curators may be partially dispensed of this criticism since the artists also played his part: in an interview with Calvin Reid and published in the magazine BOMB in late 2000, Echavarría threw a 'bomb' when saying that if we "were to go on a botanical expedition to Colombia right now, what we would find is dead bodies."[255] This exaggerated and ridiculously literal statement, whose idea would not require the artist to actually go to the detail of the botanic plates, seems to be caused by a moment of passion and self-exoticization, or be an exoticizing artwork-selling description for the art market of so-called 'political art' that Daros Latinamérica has been interested in collecting since 2000.[256]

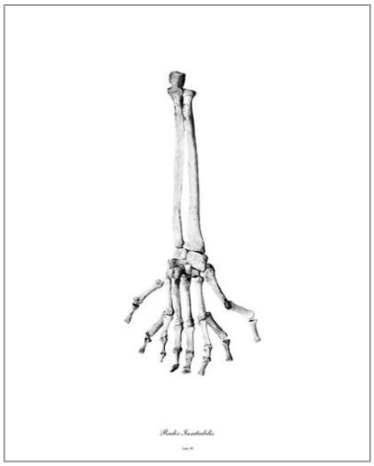

Figure 31. Echavarría, Radix Insatiabilis, from Series Flower Vase Cut, 1997

Is the series a cultural production or is it just part of a larger cultural market in which Michael Taussig's *Law in a Lawless Land* has also -been- inserted, for instance, when, in the back cover of the book, the reputed historian turned 'Colombianist' Eric Hobsbawm appears to recommend the book by saying "[I]f you want to know what it is like to live in a country where the state has disintegrated, this moving book by an anthropologist well known for his writings on murderous Colombia will tell you"?[257] Are we to consider Echavarría and Taussig to be the new José Celestino Mutis and Dante Alighieri, the new heroic explorers? We believe we are not left with the ethical and aesthetic experience of an exotic beauty of violence, and the series cannot be reduced to a travel book, or a *studium* full of impressive and punctuating moments that are still namable by the formula of the exotic.

[255] Calvin Reid, "Juan Manuel Echavarría", in *BOMB* No. 70, The Americas (Winter 2000), 26.
[256] Daros Latinamerica, domiciled in Zurich, was established in 2000 by Swiss art collector Ruth Schmidheiny. Hans-Michael Herzog is the curator and artistic director. In March 2013, the collection consisted of about 1,200 works by more than a hundred Latin American artists and a library of nearly seven thousand books. In 2013 the collection opened his 'house' in Rio de Janeiro in order to publicize the collection. *Daros Latinamerica* URL: http://www.daros-latinamerica.net/index_zh.php?i=1189
[257] Michael Taussig, *Law in a Lawless Land: Diary of a Limpieza in Colombia* (Chicago, IL: University Of Chicago Press, 2005), back cover.

At the end of the first part of his *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes recognized that the notions of *punctum* and *studium* were limited for discovering "the nature (the eidos) of photography",[258] and actually just helped him to learn "how [his] desire worked", and how pleasure becomes a mediator of what he called the task of recognizing "the universal". He suggested then to "descend" deeper into himself "to find the evidence of Photography [… that] distinguishes it in his eyes from any other image". He had to descend into his personal hell. For our part, we neither intend to find an *eidos* of photography, nor to distinguish it from other images. We want rather to attend to *Flower Vase Cut* as a series of *detalles*, as a series that actually says something, rather than just showing the fascinating beauty of a group of dissembling ensembles.

## Languages of flowers

In his interpretation of *Flower Vase Cut*, Taussig found himself with a difficulty for interpreting the titles of the dissembling ensembles:

> Although these names are in small, discreet letters, names are of consuming importance to this work […] I doubt whether an observer would get the point—as we say of a joke—without the name. All the observer would see would be a bloody morass of hacked-off limbs and a limbless trunk […] The mutilation would be incomplete, by which I mean it would lack the meaning that destroys meaning. I do not understand this.[259]

We agree. Titles are very important, they are not just added to the plates. On the contrary, they are part of it, they guide, hide and name. Nonetheless, it is curious and symptomatic that Taussig did not pay attention to the naming, did not make the effort to understand it. He was perhaps aware of the temptation into which Reuter fell: are the names really descriptions of violence? In her comment to the series, Ana María Reyes was aware of some difficulties and decided to just describe the titles in these

[258] Barthes, *Camera* Lucida, 60
[259] Michael Taussig, "The Language of Flowers," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 30, No. 1 (Autumn 2003): 100.

terms: “Echavarría added to the name of the scientific family of the flower, for example, *Anthurium*, a word that evokes terror like *mutilatum* or mutilated”.[260]

Naming is such a problematic enterprise. Andrea Giunta reminds us that in the “‘encounter of two worlds’ [i.e., Europe and America…] the European logos was forced to stretch itself to cope with a new and diverse reality” setting therefore a conflict that “affected, above all, language.”[261] She reminds us that Alejo Carpentier resorted to fantastic realism in order to “answer to his question: Are we to suffer the anguish of Hernán Cortés when he complained to Charles V of not being able to describe certain great things in America «because I do not know the words by which they are known»?” Contrary to Carpentier we are not interested in self-exoticism, even if this is a possibility for interpreting *Flower Vase Cut* as indicated.

A way the European logos avoided the conflict and stretched itself in order to circumvent it, is found in Linnaeus’ nomenclature, that is to say, a way of stablishing a universal language that was anticipated by Scholasticism (the famous expression *animal rationalis* is exemplary).[262] This sort of universal way of naming helped modern science to get rid of local and customary naming methods, while also “taking possession.”[263] In this sense, Santiago Gómez-Castro indicated that the new way of naming was a way of establishing a universal and unique truth, discrediting therefore the knowledge natives had built and administered before Mutis’ Expedition: Linnaeus “declared that all the names used before his system —in all the places and all the times— were illegitimate for classifying” the beings belonging to

[260] Ana María Reyes. “Rupturas a miradas sensacionalistas: reflexiones fotográficas de Juan Manuel Echavarría sobre la violencia en Colombia,” Bocas de ceniza, 1-8. Exh. cat. (Bogotá, Colombia: Valenzuela y Klenner: arte contemporáneo, 1999), 3
[261] Andrea Giunta, “Strategies of Modernity in Latin America”, *Beyond the Fantastic : Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, (ed.) Gerardo Mosquera (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 53.
[262] George Gaylord Simpson, *Principles of Animal Taxonomy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1961 c1990) 37-38
[263] Axel Gasquet, “De la ‘mirada imperial’ a la errancia moderna,” *Quimera* 176 (1999): 25.

the botanic kingdom.[264] This was a way, Castro-Gómez continues, of stablishing an "epistemological distance," almost a Cartesian one, from daily language.

Of course, we cannot forget that the pretentious and imposing universalism of modern European sciences was not such, and the 'epistemological distance' was also a way of disguising an exoticizing gaze, among other things. It may not just be a residue of Scholasticism that Linnaeus's *System Naturae* included legendary creatures such as the mandragora and the satyr classified into the category *Paradoxa*. Linnaeus even created a category called *Monstrosus* where placed "wild and monstrous humans, unknown groups, and more or less abnormal people"[265] who, you never know, may live in wild or magical places and territories on earth in Africa or the 'New World'. For this reason, José Alejandro Restrepo said, with his characteristic ironic humor, that "Linnaeus was another Chinese encyclopedist."[266] At the same time, we have to underline what Giunta indicated, and recall Jaime Peralta's finding concerning the naming of some species of animals, that Mutis had no other option than to follow the names given by natives. That is the case of the large species of bird known as *Chauna Chavaria*; 'chavaria' was the name the natives had for it.[267] Coincidentally, the name phonetically resembles that of the Echavarría.

Having said all this, how are we to approach the titles of and on the plates? Let us adopt the hypothesis that the titles follow the binomial nomenclature. If so, then Reuter's interpretation assumes that in all cases the genus is violence. *Anthurium* or *Dianoea* would stand for violence, and therefore *Anthurium Mutilatum* would mean a mutilating violence, instead of what it actually affirms, *Anthurium* ('violence'?) that looks mutilated. The terms in Latin seem to contradict her interpretation, at the same time that such contradiction, seen from another point of view, may provide interesting suggestions as to

[264] Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La Hybris del punto cero. Ciencia, raza e ilustración en la Nueva Granada (1750-1816)* (Bogotá: Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2005), 207.
[265] Swedish historian Gunnar Bruberg is quoted in Pamela R. Willoughby, *The Evolution of Modern Humans in Africa: A Comprehensive Guide* (Plymouth, PL: Rowman Altamira, 2007), 34
[266] José Alejandro Restrepo. *Musa paradisíaca: una video-instalación*. Exh. cat., (Bogotá: Colombia: Instituto colombiano de cultura,1997), 9
[267] Jaime Peralya, "De «delirios ignorantes» a «cultas reflexiones»: la Ilustración europea y la apropiación de los saberes de la periferia colonial", *Fronteras de la Historia* 19 No. 1 (enero-junio, (2014), 82.

how the series deals with violence. In the case of Reyes' interpretation, she stresses the second part of the title as terms used for describing the genus in each case. This said, one would understand *Aloe Atrox* as meaning a savage, fierce, wild, cruel, harsh, or severe *Aloe*. Yet, what does *Aloe* mean?

Greeks and Romans used the word *aloe* to refer to a genus of plants with spiky flowers and bitter juice, and used as a purgative drug.[268] Nonetheless, the word is an appropriation of the Dravidian world *alwe* (Sanskrit *agaru*),[269] apparently used in the bible as *ahalim* (in Hebrew),[270] from which the sound and image was borrowed. *Alwe* named a fragrant resin or heartwood[271] of an East Indian tree, which was later baptized, following the expansion of binomial nomenclature, as *Aquilaria malaccensis* (*Aquilaria* derives from Latin *aquila*, eagle). And again, ironically, the word *aloe* was later misapplied to the succulent 'agave plant' in the American continent which, in order to distinguish it from the bitter aloe, is also known as 'true aloe', while the genus *aloe vera* exists in Africa. Having said all this, and noticing that the flowers of the three different species mentioned have similar conic flowers, is the adjective *atrox* referring to a severing of the bitterness, a transformation exerted on succulent or sweet plants, or to an *atrox* truth, or all at the same time?

In fact, the notion of genus has problematic history from its very inception and its use for categorization: from genders or genera within a family —which is a way of replicating social orders into nature at a time when the nuclear family started to consolidate in some places in Europe and particularly in Sweden[272]—, to naturalization of gender when conflating it with the also problematic notion of sex — as exemplified by Judith Butler's criticism to the "heterosexual matrix"[273]—, or the use of genus (qua

[268] See entry *aloe*: Charlton T. Lewis and. Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*. *Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) Online.URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
[269] See entry 'aloe' in: *Oxford Dictionaries* http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/aloe; *Webster's New World College Dictionary* http://websters.yourdictionary.com/
[270] Psalms 45:8.
[271] See entry 'aloe': Merriam Webster Dictionary/aloe http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aloe
[272] David Popenoe, *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012 c1988), 90-92
[273]See third part of: Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990), 35-76

'kin') as a way of thinking both classifications compete within the 'human family', and affirming with this mutual implication a naturalization/biologization (revealed and mocked in *Casta paintings*) that at times enacts a "race blindness of imperial feminism,"[274] and at other times a "social classification."[275] Not even mentioning the problem biologists currently face. It is worth recalling that binomial nomenclature emerged not only or not mainly as a way creating a taxonomy, since the two terms are hardly able to describe the exact 'place' of a species in the tree (kingdom, order, class, phylum, family, genus, species). The binomial nomenclature was also intended, much in the guise of the *ars memoriae* —which Cicero and other rhetoricians traced back to Simonides of Ceos[276]— to help memorize the genera, which Linnaeus thought numbered in the hundreds not thousands as is the current situation.[277]

We should perhaps follow the complaint implicit in the colloquial expression in Colombia, *quedarse con el pecado y sin el género*, which can be literally translated as 'having been accused for committing the sin, but [having not been assigned] the genus [of the sin].' In other words: one has been accused of a fault, but the accuser does not care to discern the gravity or triviality of the fault, nor is it possible to recover from the 'sin'; which also implies the accuser is not interested in considering the manner of 'classifying' said faults.[278]

In this order of ideas, we should recognize that the plates are not adopting the scientific names and the natural forms of the species uncritically or unproblematically. And this is needed, not out of whim or to project rhetoric onto the plates, but to grasp what's going on with the plates and the titles,

[274] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without borders: decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003)
[275] Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social," *El giro decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global* (ed.) Santiago Castro-Gómez Ramón Grosfoguel (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007), 120.
[276] Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 20-22.
[277] Richard Dawkins, "Accumulating Small Change," Alex Rosenberg and Robert Arp, Philosophy of Biology: An Anthology (John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 266
[278] A rather half ironic, half supporting use of this expression was for instance used by a 'journalist' to defend the presidential candidate Ernesto Samper. "Samper has been forced to *quedarse con el pecado y sin el género*. With the sin of belonging to the affiliation of the current regime (which has been in power not four but eight years), and without the gender for politically benefitting or disagreeing with the regime, even if he thinks different from it –as he does- in many crucial issues." D'Artagnan, "Si Gana, Es Un Verraco" *El Tiempo* June19, 1994. URL: http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-153928

Figure 33. Echavarría, Laelia Perversa, from Flower Vase Cut, 1997

understood historically as they actually are. In fact, let us recognize the playful and morbid irony taking place in *Laelia Perversa*. The first part of the title not only recalls a very small genus (of 25 species) that is part of the orchid family.[279] It also recalls and comes from the name of one of the Vestal Virgins (according to Tacitus) who dies crushed by a building.[280] The second part of the title seems to point to the odd, exaggerated, protruding form that could be regarded as the flower's female organ, but which actually emerges from the calix like a phallus. Not by chance, Echavarría added elongated bones on the right side of the plate, recalling the sexual organs depicted in anatomic plates. Is *Laelia Perversa* actually a 'perverse' (hermaphrodite) flower? Is it one shaped by a 'perverse' artist who determined the way of seeing the species, introducing an interruption of desire and an experience of uncanniness like the anonymous sculptor of the Pergamum hermaphrodite?

Figure 32. Echavarría, Dracula Nosferatu, from Series Flower Vase Cut, 1997

A more interesting case betraying the displacement (*traduttore, tradittore*) of botanic classification, and how we relate to the dissembling ensembles, is the plate titled *Dracula Nosferatu* (Figure 32). There is clearly a sense of humor that could hardly be accidental. The shape of what we may assume to be the petals, seems to playfully accompany the title in a way that derails the botanic classification.Let us note first that both title and shape recall the German Expressionist film *Nosferatu, symphony of horror*, and the long, pointy, bat-like ears of its protagonist.

[279] Isobyl. F. La Croix , *The New Encyclopedia of Orchids: 1500 Species in Cultivation* (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2008), 238

[280] "An earthquake too demolished a large part of Pompeii, a populous town in Campania. And one of the vestal virgins, Lælia, died, and in her place was chosen Cornelia, of the family of the Cossi." Corneliius Tacitus, *Complete Works of Tacitus*. (ed.) Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb, and Sara Bryant (New York, NY: Random House, Inc. c1942), XV, 22

Remarkably, F. W. Murnau's film, produced in 1922, was an unauthorized adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*; adaptation which transformed 'Count Dracula' into 'Count Orlok,' and the term 'Vampire,' into 'Nosferatu,' both of dubious etymology.[281] The change of name was partially intended to hide the fact that Murnau's adaptation was unauthorized, and in this sense, a form of treason. In addition, in Stoker's gothic novel the terms 'vampire' and 'nosferatu' are assumed, respectively, as a 'being that sucks blood', and a description of 'something repugnant'. In the film, the director and scriptwriter "plucked out a term Stoker had found for the undead,"[282] and put it in the title. And while it is true that the film presents the story and the Count in terms of his horrific 'blood sucking action,' the horror the Count is meant to embody and provoke hardly suits the 'species' i.e., the appearance of the pointy-eared protagonist. In fact, critics condemned the film because Nosferatu was too corporeal and brightly lit to be truly scary and the horror promised by the title became something rather comical.[283] In this sense, there was another treason.

Figure 34. Dracula vampire, photo by Eric Hunt ©

In *Dracula Nosferatu* there is also a double treason. (People do not need to be aware of the existence in Colombia, of a genus of orchids that has been scientifically called *Dracula vampire* because it has two long spurs in the sepals. Notably, the 'flower' in our plate does not reflect the shape of the actual species). It is likely that the public may recognize a playful, comic renaming within the plate similar to that of the film, and that, apparently following the logic in Linnaeus's naming, it describes and represents on a very white, illuminated background a 'species' of the Dracula genus that looks like 'nosferatu.' It is remarkable that instead of a 'sexual' organ taken from the

[281] Katharina M. Wilson, "The History of the Word «Vampire»," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 46, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1985), 577.
[282] S.S. Prawer, *Nosferatu: Phantom Der Nacht* (London: British Film Institute, 2004 c), 11
[283] In a review titled "Nosferatu. Marmorsaal des Zoo", that is to say, Nosferatu, Marble Hall of the Zoo, an unidentified critic affirmed : "Das auch uns angehende Grauen lost sich erfahrungsgemäß eher von den Särgen als von den Toten los, und die Ahnung von einem verheerenden Nosferatu wäre unbestritten besser im dunkeln als im hellen Bild genährt worden." See: "Nosferatu. Marmorsaal des Zoo." *Film-Kurier* (Berlin) Vol, 4, no. 52, 06 Mar 1922, p. 2.

center of the 'flower', Echavarría preferred to 'dissect' the 'petal' thus clearly emphasizing the treason. This does not only mean that the plate strayed from the idea of depicting horror, but that it also intentionally breaks categories, and provokes a laugh, although perhaps one not as explosive as from Restrepo's mosaic of newspaper clippings, or as Foucault's upon reading Borges.[284]

It seems to us that Echavarría burst into Linnaeus's chamber of the engendering and 'procreating' embrace and into the exoticizing intercourse between the viewer and the plates. It also seems to problematize the supposed directness and assertiveness of binomial nomenclature and the scientific/exotic representation. In this latter regard, the plates appropriate the tone or air of scientific 'neutrality' by using a white background and a clean composition. The manipulation of the images also suggests the opacity of ensembles of bones for in-depth scientific (botanic and anatomic) study and use. Moreover, the series transforms the colorful, luxurious botanic plates into monochromatic plates that evoke prints —In this regard, we may wonder if Echavarría knew Mutis commissioned monochromatic copies of the luxurious plates to serve as models for the engravings illustrating the never written *Flora of The New Kingdom of Granada*.[285] Whatever the case, the glossy plates oscillate between 'being original' and 'being copies', as if they were actually photos taken from a (non-existent?) botanic publication. What sort of transference and translation is taking place here, where the actual ensembles also seem to have been separated from text and rhetoric, and may have become a *detalle* of another text? Notably, it may not be just the case of displacement from one context to another. It may also be a transference that is meant to write or suggest a new text that still needs to be written; in which case, the interrelation between names and photography, as a way of letting or making something appear, becomes less evident too. How do we read and baptize, how do we want to see and perceive these flowers? What are other languages are available for naming these flowers?

[284] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaelogy of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. xv.
[285] Antonio González Bueno, "La Naturaleza en imágenes. Los pintores de la Flora del Nuevo Reyno de Granada (1783-1816)," *José Celestino Mutis en el bicentenario de su fallecimiento (1808-2008)* (ed) B. Ribas Ozonas (Madrid: Monografías de la Real Academia de Farmacia, 2005): 211-238

## Testimonies 1

Figure 35. Luis Ángel Rengifo, "Violence as a monster", from La Violencia series, 1964.

Ivonne Pini reminds us that during the sixties and early seventies in Colombia, artists like Augusto Rendón, Pedro Alcántara, Carlos Granada, and Luis Ángel Rengifo, were interested in breaking away from painting and sculpture, these being considered part of the *status quo* of art and society.[286] They decided to work using exclusively the 'minor arts' related to graphic arts. Perhaps the most influential of these artists was Rengifo (1906-1986). Due to the poor development of graphic arts in Colombia (where the first newspaper was published in 1791,[287] and engraving appeared for the first time in newspapers only in 1881)[288] Rengifo was forced to go to Mexico in 1946 and join the famous *Taller de Gráfica Popular* ('People's Graphic Workshop'), which inspired and influenced many artists on the American continent.[289] The basic goals of this workshop were incorporating popular content into the graphic arts, broadening the scope of the arts, and transforming the graphic arts into a tool for raising social awareness and into a weapon for social and ideological combat and change.[290]

[286] Ivonne Pini, "Gráfica testimonial: mediados de los sesenta a comienzos de los setenta," *Arte en Colombia* (Bogotá, Colombia), no. 33 (May 1987), 60.
[287] In Peru and Mexico, the *Gazeta de Lima* and *Gazeta de México* were first published in 1715 and 1722, respectively. In Colombia, the *Papel Periódico de la Ciudad de Santafé* was published for first time on February 9, 1791. Gustavo Otero Muñoz, "Primeros periódicos Colombianos", *Senderos* Vol1 No. 1 (1934):31.
[288] Juanita Solano, "El grabado en el Papel Periódico Ilustrado. Su función como ilustración y la relación con la fotografía," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* (Abril, 2011): 147..
[289] Ivonne Pini, "Luis Angel Rengifo, grabador." *Escala/ I. I. E* (Bogotá, Colombia), (January, 1986), 2.
[290] Humberto Musacchio, *El Taller de Gráfica Popular* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007), 29, 49-50.

Rengifo returned to Colombia in 1949, and became the leading graphic arts figure. He had to confront a society that was reluctant to recognize the artistic status of graphic arts.[291] In 1963 and 1964, he produced the series *The Violence*, his most remembered work. Its 13 prints are, up to the present date, some of the most dramatic contestations of the period, and an unavoidable reference in the Colombian art world when discussing mutilations, "and exposing it to urban elites who felt alienated from conflict, despite being [evidently] involved."[292] It was inspired by photos published in newspapers and in the book *The Violence in Colombia*. Using etching and mostly aquatint, and employing drawing as the main working technique for this series, he created monsters, transformed mythical figures, rendered torn, decapitated and grotesque bodies, suggested epic stories and, appealing to expressionism and at times to *feísmo* (ugliness), intended to reveal and bear testimony of the crudeness and horrors of violence. Interesting is the fact that the series was arguably influenced by Goya's *Los Caprichos* and *The Disasters of War*, yet Rengifo renounced the Spanish master's humorous turns; turns that gave Goya's series a power of criticism and irony absent in Rengifo's.


Exterminada la Banda del "Capitán Ceniza"

Figure 36. Fernell Franco, photos published in the newspaper Diario de Occidente, 1963.

[291] Álvaro Medina, *Dibujantes y grabadores colombianos* Cat. Exh. (Bogotá: Museo de Arte moderno, 1975), 7 ; Pini, "Luís Ángel Rengifo," 5
[292] Reyes, "'Rupturas a miradas sensacionalistas", 1

Figure 37. Luis Ángel Rengifo, The Violence No. 6, 1963. Aquatint on paper (29 x 21 cm)

Figure 38. Luis Ángel Rengifo, The Violence No. 13 Aquatint on paper 1964 (38.4 x 57.6cm)

In a sense, Rengifo was not interested in creating images that would counter the explicitness of newspaper photos. On the contrary, it seems to us, he may have found it necessary to translate the pictures, of dead, motionless bodies like those registered by Fernell Franco at the time, into epic scenes, as if intending to insert the series and the forgotten bodies into a tradition of historical and narrative representation. In this direction, we can affirm that Rengifo's work is representative of the so-called *gráfica testimonial* ('testimonial graphic arts') in Colombia,[293] because this group of artists was interested in recording and attesting a reality, and in demonstrating their repudiation of that reality. For this very reason, the exaggeration of the marks and gestures of violence obeys not only the premise of using violence as means for breaking the social status quo, as Reyes suggested.[294] It also and paradoxically obeys the premise of using violence for heightening the absurdity of the status quo, and a rather phantasmagoric reality that, particularly in the case of Rengifo, was rendered in terms of "insects-symbols derived from Mayan legends."[295]

For these artists, who were close to revolutionary leftist movements, 'The Violence' was seen through the lens of the revolutionary agenda, quite likely to have been nurtured by Georges Sorel's idea

[293] Ivonne Pini, "Gráfica testimonial" 60
[294] Reyes, ""Rupturas a miradas sensacionalistas", 1
[295] Walter Engel, "13 grabados sobre la violencia", *El Tiempo* March 1, 1964. Engel is quoted in Ivonne Pini, "Luis Angel Rengifo..", 12

of violence as means for overcoming barbarism and of myths as "expressions of will to act,"[296] or perhaps by versions of Leninist ideas (very influential in Mexico and on the People's Graphic Workshop) of a revolutionary violence countering the violence supported by and benefiting the "rotten, outlived, moribund"[297] human institutions of the bourgeoisie.

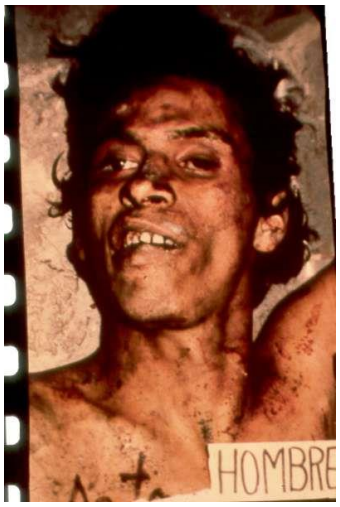


Figure 39. Becky Mayer, 'Man', from the series Thanatos, 1992 Transparencies, light boxes.

Echavarría's series evidently departs from Rengifo's and from testimonial graphic arts' works, as well as from the sort 'testimonial' photography found in Becky Mayer's series *Thanathos* (1992); a series of 8 explicit portraits (head and part of their torsos) of men and women who had been stabbed to death, and the artists found in the morgue.[298] *Flower Vase Cut* shares with Rengifo's series the need of dealing with mutilations, the ideas of both presenting images that look like printed drawings, and suggesting serialization of violence. Nonetheless, there is an important difference between Rengifo's and Echavarría's series, which is not fundamentally derived from the fact that, as Reyes suggests, Rengifo intended to represent to his contemporary violence, while Echavarría referenced mutilations produced during Rengifo's time or before. The difference is actually based on how each of them understands testimony. In this direction, *Flower Vase Cut* seems to come closer to Fernell Franco's work. Franco (1942?-2006),[299] is one of the best photographers and arguably the first to produce photographic essays in Colombia.[300]

[296] Jeremy Jennings, "Introduction", Georges Sorel, *Reflections on violence*, (ed.) Jeremy Jennings, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) ix- xiii.
[297] Lenin is quoted in Albert Parry, *Terrorism: From Robespierre to Arafat* (N.Y.: The Vanguard Press. 1976), 145
[298] Eduardo Serrano, *Historia de la Fotografía*, 91
[299] June 20, 1942, is his date of birth in official records. However, in conversation with her daughter, she recalled that his father confessed one time he lied about his age in the documents, saying he was older than he really was, in order to be able to work.
[300] Eduardo Serrano, "Historia de la fotografía en Colombia: 1950-2000" (Bogotá: editorial Planeta, 2006), 91

He worked as photojournalist in the sixties and seventies, which allowed him to be in close contact with violence and realize that the partisan war of the fifties and the promise of the social revolution of the early sixties (nurtured by the successful Cuban revolution), had gradually become what Gonzalo Sánchez later called the *bandolerización* of war, i.e., a transformation of certain armed groups into gangs and outlaws.[301] Franco grew skeptical of social movements and leftists ideas he considered was at times naïve [302] and ignorant of peasant's experience of violence; experience he had in his childhood and was well informed about in as photojournalist. He had already decided, in the early 1970s, as is exemplified in his beautiful series *Prostitutes* (1970-71), to propose a less expressive and less denunciatory approach to violence by pointing his camera at spaces of inhabitation. In need of finding a personal language and legitimizing photography as art in Colombia, and under the influence of Brassaï and René Magritte,[303] Franco tried to find a combination of both the manipulation of pictorialism in photography[304] and the sharp focus and detail of Alfred Stieglitz's straight photography.

Figure 40. Fernell Franco, from series Galerías, c.a 1985

Figure 41. Fernell Franco, from series Bounds, ca. 1992

[301] Gonzalo Sánchez G. *Guerra y política en la sociedad Colombiana* (Bogotá: Editorial Santillana), 59
[302] María Iovino, *Otro documento: catálogo. Edición de entrevistas realizadas al artista en su estudio por María A. Iovino M, 2001-2004* (Cali: Alianza Colombo Francesa, 2004), 10.
[303] Interview with the artist. Miguel González, "Un reportaje de Miguel González con Fernell Franco," La Vanguardia Dominical Octubre 7 (1979):9.
[304] Peter C. Bunnell, "Pictorial Photography," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* Vol. 51, No. 2 (1992), 10-12.

One of his best known series is *Bounds* (Sp. Amarrados). It was produced in the early in the nineties and finally gave him, and artistic photographic essay justly deserved recognition in Colombia. It materialized from a manipulation of photos of a short and unknown series called *Galerías* (i.e., popular market places), which he had been producing in the 1980s.[305] *Bounds* is arguably related to a childhood memory from when he lived in Versalles, a village that was one of the centers of para-police[306] violence in late forties and fifties.[307] The series gives the bundles (the covering clothes and tightened ropes) a leading role thanks to Franco's obsessive laboratory work, and use of light and *tenebrism* inspired by theater and Film Noir.[308] Light covers and permeates, hides and reveals things, letting them bear witness to patterns of repression i.e., a paradoxical violence in which something is protected by almost suffocating it. The bundles seem at times to cover a corpse or bed (Figure 41), and the photos recall the idea of the image/representation/register as corpse, not exactly in terms of Barthes' *noeme*,[309] but in the sense that each bundle could be understood as "a signified unmoored from its referent."[310] It is rather a matter of a "severance of meaning and materiality" and appearance of what is hidden, a severance that anticipates a "division engendered by death." Yet, the series also affirms a tension that retains life too. In fact, the series suggests (with the bundles) the capacity to resist degradation or what Aristotle called *hexis apatheias*, or power of no-suffering'[311] (translated by Thomas of Aquinas and Boecio as *habitus*),[312]

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[305] Interview with Vanessa Franco, daughter and director of Fundación Fernell Franco. September 12, 2008, Santiago de Cali (Colombia).

[306] This para-police, supported by the conservative party, was widely known as *Los Pájaros.* They were not peasants. "Common professions and trades of the "pájaros" were those of drivers, butchers, innkeepers, bartenders, saddlers, tailors, launderers, sacristans, homebuilders, laborers or lungos, slaughterers, police inspectors, policemen and employees of the mayor or the municipal court." Darío Betancourt and Martha García, *Matones y cuadrilleros: Origen y evolución de la violencia en el occidente colombiano* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo. 1990), 20, 112-113.

[307] In an interview with María Iovino, he recalled a Sunday, when he accompanied his father to the market place. Suddenly, he remembered, a group of horsemen appeared and started to fight. Franco heard sounds of machetes and guns, and saw people pushing and killing. Everything happened in a very short time. At the end blood (of the animal killed to be sold) covered the floor. The containers where it was kept had been accidentally tuned over, and in the midst of all it were just corpses and sacks with food. María Iovino, *Otro documento*, 32.

[308] Santiago Rueda Fajardo, *La Fotografía en Colombia …*, 209.

[309] The "essence" of photography as perceived image. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 78

[310] Isabelle Wallace, "Trauma as Representation: A Meditation on Monet and Johns," *Trauma and Visuality and Modernity* (ed.) Liza Saltzman and Eric Rosemberg (Lebanon. NH: Dartmouth Collegue Press, 2006), 19.

[311] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IX1046a 10-22. Quoted in Martin Heidegger, *Aristotle's Metaphysics IX 1-3*. (trans.) Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), 75

which can be understood here as an intermediation of memory between the act and its possibility, activity and passivity, exterior and interior.

Figure 42. Fernell Franco, from series Hanged cloths, c.a 1985. Photo of a photo intervened with color pencil on chemically manipulated photographic paper.

In a sense, Franco's *Bounds* was interested in what we can call a hidden and paradoxical resoluteness of either or both victim and perpetrator. This resoluteness is neither immediate, nor does it give the impression of being for near-future-(re)action but, rather, to resist while waiting for the possibility of release. Nonetheless, when the time of liberation comes, what may be manifested can be either destruction (as is evident in his series *Demolitions* of the interiors of houses destroyed by bombs), and/or love (as is evident in his series *Interiors* and his beautiful series *Hanged cloths*). In other words, *Bounds* seems to record (and suggest) that repressive violence, for Franco, can be better contemplated if addressed and thought of not in terms of its transgressive action and explicit mark on the body, but in terms of the silent and relentless resistance of physically inhabiting things and spaces.

Having identified two ways of relating the work to testimony in works by Colombian artists, it seems to us that *Flower Vase cut* proposes the idea of meditating (on violence) through the effects of the recurrent actions of violence (i.e., the mutilations), by means of (dissembling ensembles of) bones that 'bear witness' to a long history of relentless resistance. Here we are forced to bring the interpretation to a new level.

[312] Thomas Aquinas, *Super librum Boethii DeTrinitate: Super Boetium De Trinitate. Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadibus* (Rome: 1889) I q, 79 a. 2 co.

## Testimonies 2

María Victoria Uribe has arguably indicated that the first time the mutilation "Flower vase cut' was described, at least in extant documents, was in *The Violence in Colombia*. However, it is disconcerting that no other documents written in the fifties and sixties mention it,[313] even if this mutilation has been part of an oral tradition, particularly among peasants. The written and oral testimonies indicate, as M. V. Uribe stated, that this mutilation consisted of cutting off a person's head, arms, and legs, emptying out the trunk-abdomen, and lodging the limbs inside the cavity.[314] This reorganization is meant to transform the trunk-abdomen into a flower vase, and the limbs into flowers. Remarkably, testimonies do not mention the head, as if the testimony exerted a second butchery. Also important is the fact that, contrary to the mutilations and reorganization of body parts known as 'Flannel cut' and 'Necktie Cut' (more common during 'The Violence'), there are no photographic records or documentation of the 'Flower vase cut.' It is all the more ironic considering that, since its inception, photography has been the medium par excellence for "documenting", "visualizing", constructing imaginaries and memories of war, violence, and "bodies in pain."[315]

We have then two new important and interrelated issues for interpreting Echavarría's series. Let us start by addressing the testimonies. Elsewhere,[316] we have suggested that even if the 'Flower vase cut', may have truly been practiced on bodies, the disconcerting absence of formal registers also suggests we could view it as a 'mental image'. In other words, apart from being an actual mutilation, the 'Flower vase cut' also seems to be or to evoke a 'collective image' by means of which people have made sense of what they have seen or heard about the mutilations by word of mouth. To be precise, the 'Flower vase cut'

[313] María Victoria Uribe, *Antropología de la Inhumanidad. Un ensayo interpretativo sobre el Terror en Colombia* (Bogotá: Editorial Norma, 2004), 72
[314] María Victoria Uribe, *Matar, rematar y contramatar: las masacres de la Violencia en el Tolima 1849-1964* (Bogotá: Cinep, 1990), 175.
[315] Liam Kennedy and Caitlin Patric "Introduction: The Violence of the Image," *The Violence of the Image: Photography and International Conflict* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 1-2
[316] Juan Carlos Guerrero-Hernandez, "Cuerpos en dolor (I) imágenes emblemáticas del régimen ético de la violencia," *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 35 (2010): 123-137.

would be not one but several mental images, a family of images if we are to appropriate Linnaeus's classification once again (a family contains genera and their species).

This may suggest that we have two non-mutually-exclusive possibilities for interpreting the set of plates. The series may be regarded, on the one hand, as a set that emulates the actual popular 'classification' of mutilations and therefore we would have the mutilations as a genus. On the other hand, the series may be regarded as multiple versions of the 'Flower vase cut', in which case this mutilation would work as a family. In both cases there is the possibility that the amount of 'species' of the genus, or the family of genera may not only grow (in fact, in 2007 Echavarría added few plates), but will only be partially known (notably, the numbers of the plates are not consecutive: for instance *Anthurium Nefardum* is the plate number 94). This may be a way for us to understand the series when it evidently does not include skull bones, as if Echavarría deprived the series of the traditional referent of *memento mori*.


Figure 43. André Masson, Acéphale. Cover, first issue of Journal Acéphale, 1936

In 2003, Taussig published an article inspired by Echavarría's series in connection to Bataille's short essay "The language of flowers;" title the author adopted for his article. Taussig proposed that "Mutis style" plates evoke Karl Blossfeldt's photos, and poses the question of whether there is "an art in nature as well as an art of nature." And then, quite surprisingly, Taussig conflated the *Flower Vase Cut* and "Mutis style" plates. He did not discuss Echavarría's series. He rather resorted to Bataille's sinister *acéphale*, and the mandragora and projected his lucubration on the series. Nonetheless, there are some ideas worth recalling here. Bataille's *acéphale* may be identified in André Masson's drawing of a headless man. This drawing was adopted by Bataille for the cover of first issue of the journal *Acéphale*. It shows a "naked figured, arms outstretched, a dagger in one hand, a flaming heart like a hand

grenade in the other, stars as nipples, and a skull in place of genitalia."[317] Bataille's *acéphale* is the figure of a sacrilegious demon that "is not a man [and …] is not a God either. He is not me but he is more than me."[318] He represents a sort of sacrilegious figure that transcends some of humanity's limitations, and is also a "sovereignty committed to destruction and the death of God."[319]

Figure 44. . Illustrations of 'Mandragora', in the Naples Dioscorides, a 7th-century copy of Discorides' De Materia Medica

On the other hand, Taussig interpreted the mandragora as "one flowering plant that [not only] stands out with regard to life and death," but is also killer as well as a "restorer of life."[320] The mandragora, which Linnaeus included in the category of *Paradoxa* and according to a pictorial tradition has human figure, at times male, at times female, at times with a head, is regarded by Taussig as "nature's *acéphale*" that "expresses the passage from the sacred to sacrilege with astonishing clarity."[321] In this order of ideas Taussig placed, on the one side, the *acéphale* as a sacrilegious sovereign rendered by art in a human form, and on the other, the mandragora as mythical human-like figure engendered by a sacrilegious nature. Having previously conflated *Flower Vase Cut* with "Mutis style" plates, which he described as 'art in nature and art of nature', he placed Echavarría's series between the two references aforementioned, suggesting that series as an artistic rendition of a sacrilegious sovereign and violence produced by a sacrilegious Colombian or human nature. Besides the exoticism implicit on his interpretation, Taussig pointed to what may be regarded as the dynamics of a myth of violence, in which acts of dethroning and decapitation not only continuously follow one after another, but sets a dynamic of capital punishments "founding violence" in a "Lawless Land" where, as he discovered later, the State has

[317] Taussig, "The Language of Flowers," 118-119
[318] George Bataille, "The sacred conspirancy," *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939* (ed.) Allan Stoekl, (trans.) Allan Stoekl, Carl R. Lowitt, Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1985), 199.
[319] George Bataille, "Proposition," in Visions of Excess…., 199.
[320] Taussig, "The Language of Flowers," 111-112
[321] Taussig, "The Language of Flowers," 118.

disintegrated. He read the series as if it 'embodied' the 'language' of a foundational violence that has become authority in a spiral-like dynamic and "motion of autosacrifice"[322] 'centered' in the absence of the head, not in its loss.

Historian Dominick LaCapra has correctly indicated that loss and absence affirm quite different experiences of negation. Loss affirms a failure to keep or to continue having something that was taken from you or was destroyed. In this sense, loss stresses the contrast between a past and present situation, and affirms that the world has somehow been impoverished or has changed in the interim. On the contrary, absence affirms a state or condition in which something expected, wanted, or looked for, is not present or does not exist, or is actually unspecific. Absence stresses the experience of incompleteness in the world. While loss highlights a 'have-been' and the need for letting go, absence highlights a 'have-never-been' and the desire for the existence of what has never been part of one's world.[323] In brief, absence forecloses historical change, and only involves mythical transformation.

Taussig's interpretation produced what LaCapra correctly criticized in postmodern accounts of trauma, particularly among Trauma Studies —a field of research created during the 1980s and still in fashion in the late 1990s in several places around the world, which resurfaced in 2001. LaCapra pointed out that in those accounts there was a tendency exemplified in Cathy Caruth's and Dori Laub's notions of trauma as a "hole", a "void", etc.; inspired in Paul de Man and Bataille.[324] This postmodernist tendency transforms loss into absence and into an aesthetic experience/discourse of what Jacques Rancière described as the "unrepresentable, intractable, irremediable."[325] A sort of romantic sublimation (not

[322] Taussig, "The Language of Flowers," 100
[323] Dominick LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", 698
[324] See: Trauma: Cathy Caruth "Introduction", and "Education and crisis, or the vicissitudes of teaching," *Explorations in Memory Front* (ed.) Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1995), 6-7, 43; Dori Laub, "Bearing witness, or the Vicissitudes of listening," and Shoshana Feldman, "The return of the Voice: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoa*," *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (ed.) Shoshana Feldman and Dori Laub, (New York, NY: Routledge 1992) 64-65, and 221.
[325] Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 29.

necessarily in the Freudian sense) of the past or a present past, offering therefore images/narratives that perpetuate loss by displacing it into a mythical memory, imagery and story.

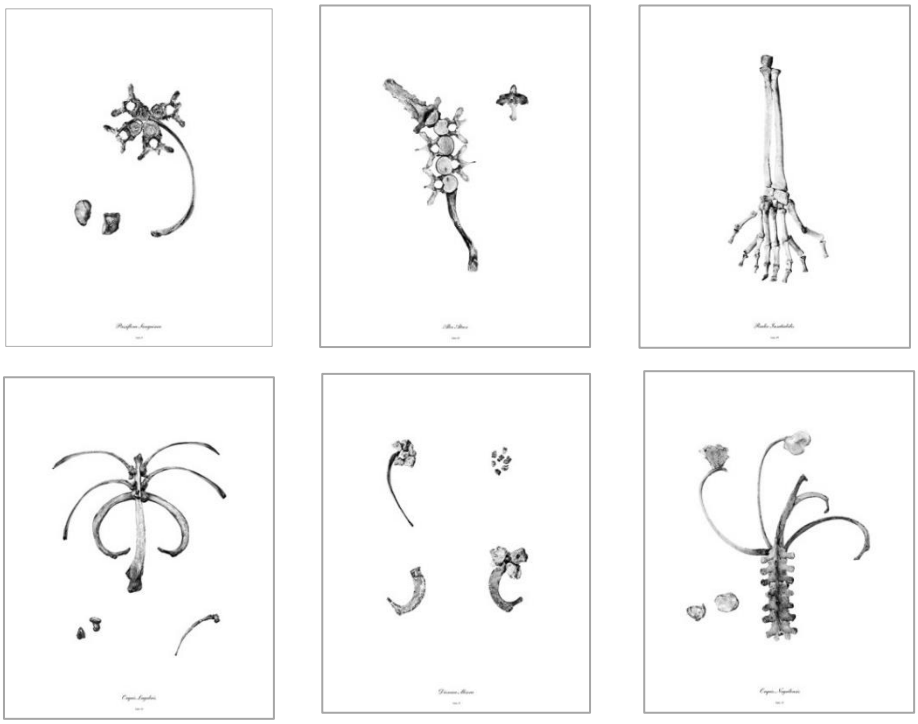

Figure 45. Echavarría, (six plates from) Flower Vase Cut, 1997-2007

Taussig's exoticizing gaze has not only uncritically and problematically ignored the irony and comedy involved in *Dracula Nosferatu* (in both the image and the title), but has also forced the plate to fit the obsession for a balanced structure and precise order found for instance in the *Cinchona lancifolia* plate. In other words, the conflation of *Flower Vase Cut* and Expedition plates forces the series to be a 'humanization of flowers', or more precisely, to assume the absent completeness of the human form as a mythical background and horizon, and as a cosmological unity. Paraphrasing LaCapra, Taussig assumed the plates to be "instantiations" of anxiety brought by absence in *Acéphale*.[326] Putting this in terms of the discussion of Linnaeus' taxonomy, Taussig's double decollation transforms the loss of the head, exerted in the first decapitation at the level of genera, into the absence of the head in the second beheading, at the

[326] LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", 703.

level of the mythical *qua* higher level of generalization where the human form becomes a mythical – taxonomical- family, and the trauma becomes the mythical decollated form of the *acèphale*; which could be described as form of transcendental "structural trauma" and a transhistorical absence.[327]

However, as was already suggested, the interruption of the nuptial chamber is not only an interruption of the very assembling *detalle* of Mutis' dissection and Linnaeus's taxonomy, but also a way of problematizing the order in such a way that neither a mythical nature not the complete human figure can actually stand as definitive horizons, not for naming a family, and a cosmos, if any. What if we accept the *detalle* as it is, that is to say, as a speck of blue, as a trivial present and a powerful gesture (particularly but not exclusively of mourning) in the series of dissembling ensembles? What if we assume the 'flowers' to be *detalles* of the series, and the series as a *detalle* in a more humble and disassembled manner?

## Medusa's forgotten torso

In Western modernist tradition, which includes Mason's drawing and Bataille's reaction to it, one of the most important references for trauma is Freud's interpretation of the story of the Medusa. According to Freud, it is not only the case that Medusa's head may be regarded as the vagina. More emphatically, it can also be regarded as what arouses horror in oneself, namely the terror of castration; terror that may be used to produce the same fear upon the enemy. "To decapitate = to castrate"[328] said Freud, and this idea is at the center of Mason's drawing: the head is displaced to the genitalia transforming the actual 'victim' of decapitation into a sacrilegious and menacing figure that arouses the terror of castration.

[327] Idem, 77.
[328] Sigmund Freud, "Das Medusenhaupt," in *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und Imago*, (Band XXV, Heft 2, 1940), 105-106.

The *acéphale* (with a skull placing where the genitals should be) represents a displacement where the sexual energy becomes the capital center of the spiral-like energy of self-sacrifice for the whole body and cosmos. And, in particular, it is the source and point of convergence for death or *thanatos* (represented by the dagger in the sinister or left hand) and the force of love or *eros* (represented by the flaming heart in the right hand). Given the unmistakable influence of Bataille in Taussig's arguments, the *acéphale*, which has apparently become a torso, is actually assumed as a (d)evilish integrated and unified embodiment of the capital energy of unproductive sexual excess of the "Triumph of death."[329] And as long as the latter is conflated with violence, the *acéphale* is assumed as the very devilish carnation (from now on meaning body and flower) of a sacrilegious authority.

Taussig and Bataille have rejected the conservative idea of symmetry as identified by French ethnologist Robert Hertz who, apparently akin to what Zupančič calls "traditional ontologies and traditional cosmologies", considered that "the patterns of symmetries and differences in the human body served for modeling culture."[330] Taussig and Bataille have preferred to subordinate Hertz's horizontal "organic asymmetry" and boring 'war' of sides (where the "sacred [spiritual] predominate[s] over the profane"),[331] to a war "between the superior and the inferior" expressed precisely in the decapitation. The *acéphale* is therefore a new devilish and deviant nuptial chamber (and embodiment of a cosmos), where *eros* and *thanatos* converge and from which they also depart.

Another interesting and compelling example of representation of Medusa's head in Western tradition, is offered by Benvenuto Cellini's masterpiece *Perseus and Medusa* (1549-54). Perseus, standing for Grand Duke Cosimo I, steps on the decapitated but convulsing body of Medusa, and raises her head as if 'turning to stone' and defeating the other stone-carved sculptures in La Piazza della Signoria:

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[329] Bataille, *Erotism, Death and Sensuality*, trns. Mary Dalwood (New York, NY: First City Lights edition, 1986, c1962), 173

[330] Taussig, "The language of flowers," 117.

[331] Robert Hertz, "The pre-eminence of the right hand: a study in religious polarity" *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life* (ed.) Margaret M. Lock and Judith Farquhar (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 40.

Donatello's *Judith decapitating Holofernes*, Michelangelo's *David*, and Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*; all of which represent and celebrate Republican values –particularly important is the sculpture of Judith, which was carried to the plaza by the Republican government, to celebrate, in 1495, the newfound freedom from the tyranny of the Medici.[332] It is arguable that Cosimo I wanted Medusa's head to symbolically represent the vigilance and now subdued power of the Republicans.[333] Nonetheless, Cellini brilliantly produced a Perseus that, unlike the heroic figure of Donatello's Judith, looks pensive.

Figure 46. Benvenuto Cellini, Perseus and Medusa (detail), 1549-54. Bronze

Michael Cole reminded us that Cellini had to show all his dexterity and gift when saving the sculpture from destruction due to the mistake of one of his assistants.[334] Ignoring detractors, he was able to remelt the bronze in the time and manner needed. The artist recounted the moment a follows: "Once I noticed I had resuscitated a dead, against the belief of all of those ignorants, so much vigor returned to me that I no longer felt any fever or fear of death."[335] Cole's interpretation did not emphasize what scholars usually brought up, that is to say, that Cellini had saved the work. Cole arguably identified links between alchemy and Cellini's manipulations of the material, in order to propose that bronze became for Cellini in this sculpture the very vital fluid. Reviving the corpse means that the sculptor saw himself as sort of semi-god that controlled fire and blood, life and death.

[332] Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze «David» and «Judith» as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence," *The Art Bulletin,* Vol. 83, No. 1 (Mar., 2001), 32
[333] Wolfang Braunfels, *Benvenuto Cellini: Perseus und Medusa* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1961), 7.
[334] Michael Cole, "Cellini's Blood," *The Art Bulletin,* Vol. 81, No. 2 (Jun., 1999), 221.
[335] Benvenuto Cellini, "A san Giovan Batista, "*La vita di Benvenuto Cellini scritta da lui medesimo ridotta alla lezione originale del codice laurenziano* … (MIlan: Sonzogno, c1907), 351

Figure 47. Cellini, Perseus and Medusa (detail), 1549-54. Bronze

In addition, it is interesting that the face of the supposedly liberating hero Perseus resembles the face of the menacing Republican head of Medusa. Or is it the other way around? It seems to us that Cellini produced a critical depiction of power, not by criticizing the Duke indeed, but perhaps suggesting in general terms the mythical possibility of cycles of dethronements (identified by Taussig). While this possible cycle, if accepted, would be very important in the sculptural program, no less important is the fact that all this drama of power occurs precisely over the contorted and forgotten torso of Medusa, which lays on the reflecting *aegis*. Sunk into oblivion, even in art history and philosophy, Medusa's torso —an Italian word derived from Latin *thyrsus* i.e., peduncle— "doesn't even have a body,"[336] or is depicted as mere corpse and a leftover, or in the best case, her torso is scenario of power's actions, as in Cellini's masterpiece. Nonetheless, we have to recognize that Cellini rendered it not merely as a dead, petrified corpse. In fact, while imprisoned in 1556, he wrote a poem dedicated to John the Baptist regarding the sculpture. The third strophe says: *Qualche saggio di me Perseo pur mostra / in alto ha 'l testio e 'l crudel ferro tinto, / sotto ha 'l cadavro e non di spirto privo."*[337] Cellini said that Perseus, who stands as proof of his gift and knowledge, holds high the head and the stained sword. Bellow, he adds: the cadaver *is not* deprived of spirit yet.

While Cole's exemplary interpretation emphasizes the resuscitation of the bronze, and understands the spirit as the blood oozing from Medusa's neck and head, we want to point out a *detail* hardly found in other representations of Medusa decapitated: her left hand seems to still hold her right lower leg, a gesture of Medusa's effort for retaining (to) herself. And remarkably, she does so through the

[336] Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism: naming contemporary violence* (trans.) William McCuaig (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 14
[337] Cellini, "A san Giovan Batista, "*La vita di Benvenuto Cellini ….*, 351

reflecting *aegis*, as if intending to be not a mere corpse to be seen, but to retain herself and her life though her own reflection.

Figure 48. Cellini, Perseus and Medusa (details, slightly frontal view, lateral view), 1549-54. Bronze

It could be said that Cellini addressed the public not only in terms of the epic history of the opposing forces on top. The highly elaborated pedestal that is a representation of the Duke's power and protection,[338] and a sign of the artist's gratitude, may be regarded as the new peduncle that supports the sculpture group. On its part, Medusa's torso would be like the opened carnation and nuptial chamber of war between Perseus and Medusa's head, and Cosimo I and the head(s) of the Republicans. If we accept that Perseus represents the Duke, and the decapitated head the Republicans, then Medusa's torso represents the Republican's body, that to say, the people; people who had forcedly or eagerly supported or silently resisted each government.

In this order of ideas, Cellini suggests to the public that the *spirit of* the people is not totally gone. His proudness for "having resuscitated the dead" may have renovated his self-assurance, and probably made him feel that he could become adviser to the Duke. This sculpture may be a celebration and a sign of terror, but it is also a caution for the Duke: the still alive torso may suggest the possibility that Cosimo I's head would replace Medusa's. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by Christine Corretti's

[338] Cole recalls Kathleen Brandt's pertinent indication that the pedestal on which the sculpture was installed should be read as "an altar to the Olympian gods who protect the Medicean 'son of Jove,' now Duke Cosimo I." Michael Cole, "Cellini's Blood," 226.

dissertation that has just been published, where even if she does not deal with the detail and torso, she argues that the sculpture "evoked the contingency of the Duke's power".[339]

Contrary to Cellini's master piece, *Flower Vase Cut* interrupts the chamber without erecting *eros* and *thanatos*, the Duke and the Republicans, or the status quo and the gesture of revolutionary artists as opposing forces of war on the opened and flattened 'flowers'. On the contrary, *Flower Vase Cut* shows us the very *detalle* that we tend to forget in Cellini's sculptural group. *Perseus and Medusa* let us see how traditional interpretations tend to diffuse her body in the *aegis* (which some ancient sources have interpreted as an animal skin and even Medusa's skin),[340] and assume the latter as a mirror where we, depending who we want to embody, see Medusa's face, or should have seen (if were not sleeping) Perseus' face.

In Echavarría's series, Medusa's torso appears as disassembling ensembles of bones in photographical images. And this could not be more *literal and linguistic*. We should not forget the very important fact that peasants themselves, both victims and perpetrators, are the ones who named the mutilations in such a manner. Peasants arguably did so for various reasons at the time, creating senseless or fractured meanings, but also building new and non-capricious meanings; something Taussig confessed he was unable to understand. Peasants had a 'language of flowers', and the mutilation called 'Necktie cut' is a good example of what mean here.

It consisted of a deep incision below the chin through which the tongue was exposed.[341] This incision was basically the same peasants used to extract the tongue of a cow for cooking purposes, which suggests that the body would become meat. However, instead of being removed, the tongue was extended over the chest as if it were a necktie. The corpse which was apparently assumed as meat, is given another

[339] Christine Corretti, *Cellini's Perseus and Medusa and the Loggia Dei Lanzi: Configurations of the Body of State* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 56.
[340] Euripides, "Ion", *The Complete Greek Drama* Vol 1. (ed.) Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr. (trans.) Robert Potter (New York, NY: Random House, 1938). URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
[341] M.V. Uribe, *Antropología de la Inhumanidad. Un ensayo interpretativo sobre el Terror en Colombia* (Bogotá: Editorial Norma, 2004), 173

meaning at new level of signification. In addition, a necktie is not solely a garment. And here we have to go beyond M.V. Uribe's interpretations, since it is remarkable that there is a colloquial expression (apparently only in Colombia), by which a 'necktie' refers not only to the frontal part of the neck of a rooster,[342] but also a job obtained by recommendation and also to the person recommended.[343] The expression "to be a necktie" means that authority has been stripped from the position and the person recommended, and are subordinated to a mentor or to what during 'The Violence' was (and still is in some places) identified under the figure of the *gamonal*,[344] and continued in the 1990s under the figure of paramilitary leaders, owners of large estates, etc..[345]

In this order of ideas, the "Necktie cut" is a very complex reorganization of the body that transforms it into a medium of signs as well as embodiment of different meanings: first, the cultural practices of cooking suggest the human body as being consumable, second, the parody and tensions regarding naming and control of language (*lingua*, *lengua* : language and tongue), third, since the mutilation usually had defined targets, the paradoxical enactment of political embodiment, and parody of as well as resistance to historical and particular civil and armed authorities, or those mocked for being so. Contrary to Taussig's (and M.V. Uribe's) fears of a dehumanization in mutilations, which make him resort to the horizon of the mythical human figure, what is a stake is rather Wolfgang Sofsky's correct

[342] See entry *corbata* in: *Diccionario de Real Academia de la Lengua Española*, 23rd edition URLhttp://lema.rae.es/
[343] See entry in: *Breve Diccionario de Colombianismos*.Cuarta edición revisada (Bogotá: Academia Colombiana de la Lengua, 2012)44. The *Diccionario Salamanca de la Lengua Española*, following the popular uses of the term, claims that this sense of "necktie" (*corbata*) is a colloquialism used only in Colombia. In this regard, it is remarkable that the 23th version of the dictionary of the Real Academia de la Lengua Española offers a less precise, and we think, more politically filtered meaning. Juan Gutiérrez, *Diccionario Salamanca de la Lengua Española* (Madrid: Grupo Santillana de Editores S.A., 1996), 75.
[344] Gonzalo Sánchez and Donny Meertens, *Bandoleros, gamonales y campesinos: el caso de la violencia en Colombia* (Bogotá: El Áncora Editores, 1998),, 20-56
[345] The case of contemporary paramilitary is exemplar in this regard, not only in Colombia. See for instance: Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, *Justicia y Paz: Tierras y territorios en las versiones de los paramilitares* (Bogotá: Editorial Semana, 2014), Julie Mazzei, *Death Squads or Self-Defense Forces?: How Paramilitary Groups Emerge and Challenge Democracy in Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2009), 87- 110; Arms Project - Human Rights Watch, *Colombia's Killer Networks: The Military-paramilitary Partnership and the United States*. (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 1996).

insight, found in his book published in 1998, that it is wrong to think that "dehumanization is the condition [and we add, the end] for cruel practices".[346]

This being said, we can arguably state that Echavarría's series adopts but also 'turns up a notch' the late 18th-century tradition of the so-called 'languages of flowers'. These secret languages that Beverly Seaton[347] and Jack Goody[348] have independently traced, apparently emerged when the nuclear family replaced the extended family, which means the isolation of women. These languages, related to sentimentalism and arguably eroticism, were meant as a form of secret communication among women. Interestingly, in the anonymous book *The Queen of Flowers: or, Memoirs of the rose* (1841), and in a sort of encrypted message, a female character, who apparently preferred to spend her time on 'serious matters' of men rather than 'chitchatting', said: "Flowers speak a separate language to the botanist, the poet, and the moralist. Some there are who may disdain this elegant intercourse."[349]


Figure 49. Francisco Goya, "Against the common good", from The Disasters of War series, Plate No. 71 (1813-1820)

In this order of ideas, and returning to the plate *Dracula Nosferatu*, would the bat-wing-eared man of Francisco Goya not be a mockery of the moralist, the botanist, or the grammarian who, by raising the left hand with an admonishing gesture, want to rule the intercourse? Goya's plate is part of the group 'emphatic caprices' that was critical of post-war Spanish politics and the Inquisition, and Robert Hughes referred to the group as the "disasters of

[346] Wolfgang Sofsky, *Traité de la violence* (París: Gallimard, 1998), 152. I am thankful to Elsa Blair for this reference.
[347] Beverly Seaton, *The Language of Flowers: A History* ([n.d.]: University Press of Virginia, 1996)
[348] Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
[349] Quoted in Seaton, *The Language of Flowers*, 16

peace."[350] In this order of ideas, we could suggest *Dracula Nosferatu* as a plate of the disasters of grammarian's repression of subversive and subaltern uses of language. This figure particularly recalls social and historical dynamics in the formation of political and cultural institutions in many countries around the world, for instance in Africa where French and English languages were imposed hand in hand with institutions, and continue alive today after independence (In Botswana English is the *de jure* language, and Namibia there was a bitter discussion in 1995 about the proposal of modernizing the country by making English the *national* language).[351] In Latin America, as Angel Rama's celebrated *The Lettered City* (1984) showed, Latinists, philologists, and grammarians, decisively linked excellence in letters and civilization (and we add: religion),[352] and defined and wrote the first national constitutions setting what Cristina Rojas has arguably called a "political economy of civilization."[353]

Thinking of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's dictum that "a functional change in a sign-system is a violent event",[354] we can say that in *Flower Vase Cut* there is a sort of 'negative hermeneutics' (we recall here Paul Ricoeur's notion)[355] that suggests that within the language (Latin) and grammar historically imposed by and though European Christian religion and civilizing economies and policies, there exist violent fractures in the system of signs and meanings used by the elite. And this is true, no matter if the

[350] Robert Hughes, *Goya* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 273
[351] Hage C. Geingob, "«Our official language shall be English»: The Namibian Prime Minister's perspective", *Discrimination Through Language in Africa?: Perspectives on the Namibian Experience* (ed.) Martin Pütz (New York, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 1995), 175 - 206
[352] The first presidents had also strong links with the Catholic Church and the conservative and nationalist parties. In an interview, Evelio Rosero, author of the celebrated novel "The Armies", quoted as epigraph of the second part of this study, has correctly indicated that "the Catholic church, along with the politicians, or the first «fathers of the nation,» bear all responsibility for the civil disgrace of our countries, if we're talking historically. Reactionaries, troglodytes, medieval, as well as perverted, the majority of priests in our educational history did nothing but prepare a mass of fools for perpetual resignation, and their leaders for extreme egotism." Evelio Rosero and Antonio Ungar, "Evelio Rosero", *BOMB*, No. 110, The Americas Issue: Colombia and Venezuela (Winter 2010), 28
[353] Cristina Rojas, *Civilization and Violence: Regimes of Representation in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Minneapolis, NM: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 43-65.
[354] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," *The Spivak Reader* (ed.) Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 206.
[355] "According to one pole, hermeneutics is understood as the manifestation and restoration of a meaning addressed to me in the manner of a message, a proclamation or as is sometimes said, a kerygma; according to the other pole, it is understood as a demystification, as a reduction of illusion" Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 26

latter perceive them as reverse or devilish inversions of the order, as seems to happen in Taussig's interpretation, or as mere howls and guttural or barbaric sounds, which according to Thalia Feldman, seems to be one meaning of the Sanskrit roots "garg" from which Greek *gorgone* derives.[356]

What is therefore at the heart of the series, is a 'negative hermeneutics' in the sense that the subaltern and subversive languages are not as they appear, because in fact they are 'secret'. Actually, a better way of describing this while avoiding falling to the lure of the cryptic, would be this: subversive languages have grown in what Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel call a "subversive complicity"[357] with an official visual and literary system of signs and meanings. In other words, subversive complicity denotes a "semiotic resistance able to resignify hegemonic forms of knowledge [and visuality] from the point of view of a post-Eurocentric rationality of subaltern subjectivities." In this sense, there is a visual and "semiotic resistance" capable of resignifying forms and methods of bodily knowledge and embodiment of knowledge. In this sense we could read, unpatronizingly, the political density of a boy's words in West Africa in 1945, where the British were so interested in teaching Classics: "We desire to learn Latin because it is your secret language from which you derive your power".[358]

*Flower Vase Cut* is not a record of the mutilations. It also avoids the strategy followed by Fernando Botero's last series (sometimes) presented under the title *Testimonies of a Cruelty* (1999-2004). This very literal series that intends to recall Goya's famous work, makes evident some of the limitations in Botero's approach to the phenomena, particularly a lack of critical rearticulation of the images of violence (Chainsaws have actually been used by paramilitaris forces in the 1990s, for mutilating and tearing bodies apart). *Flower Vase Cut* also uses Latin and avoids using the actual names of the

[356] Feldman, Thalia. "Gorgo and the Origins of Fear," *Arion* 4.3 (1965): 487

[357] Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel, "Giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico", *El Giro Decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, (ed.) Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007), 20

[358] This was published in the *Report* of the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa. Barbara Goof proposed an interesting multi-layered interpretation of the child's saying, by revealing the different dynamics of colonial power as well as identifying some interesting 'decolonial' instances. The boy is in Goof's book. Barbara Goff, *'Your Secret Language': Classics in the British Colonies of West Africa* (London: Bloombury, 2013), 1, 197-201

Figure 50. Fernando Botero, Chainsaw, 2004. Pencil and ink on paper, (15x19cms)

mutilations in order to offer the possibility of understanding this resistance in terms that are not just local, or Colombian. *Flower Vase Cut* also points to the fact of a relation other with trauma, where the double decapitation affirms a loss that does not necessarily or exclusively lead to myth, neither is it defined by nor subdued to it. In this direction, we move to a final key reflection which wants to 'close' this chapter and the first part.

## Intercourse — in the way an opening 'closing'

In 1996, Alfredo Jaar produced *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*, part of his celebrated series *Rwanda*, and inspired and strongly indebted to his experience of the Rwanda genocide. Jaar recounted that when he saw Gutete Emerita's eyes he realized that the "truth of tragedy was in the feeling, words, and opinions of those people, not in images," nor in any picture he could take after the actual event.[359] In his comments to this work, Jacques Rancière stated that "we do not see the spectacle of mass death, we see eyes that have seen that spectacle […we see] here, a pair of eyes staring at us", a pair of eyes "in which [when we] attempt to read the effect of the horror, [they] overturn [or reverse (*renversent*)] the privilege of the voyeur."[360] He later added:

> Speaking of the human quality [of this work] obviously gives rise to suspicions. Humanism or compassion are words people like to use with regard to Alfredo Jaar. Now, those words are not very favorably regarded: we do not like press photographers who tug at our heartstrings over the misfortunes of our fellows, even less so if it means displaying that appeal for pity in large expensive formats on the walls of museums and galleries. And we often contrast the conceptual and minimalist aesthetics of Alfredo Jaar's installations with this "compassionate" attitude. But compassion is not pity for the

[359] Jaar is quoted in Debra Bricken Balken, "Alfredo Jaar: Lament of the images" *Alfredo Jaar: Lament of the images* cat. exp. (Massachusetts: MIT, 1999), 23
[360] Rancière, "Theather of Images," 75.

> unfortunate, it is the capacity to feel with them, which equally entails the capacity to make them feel with us, to constitute the sensorium of a capacity shared equally by the boat people and New York artists. And conceptualism is not an intellectual frustration strategy. It is the construction of a sensory arrangement that restores the power of attention itself. "Conceptualism" and "compassion" are the two faces of the same attitude: it is not a question of looking at […] Gutete Emerita in a charitable way, nor simply of removing [her] from the voyeur's gaze. It is a question of constructing an arrangement that restores to [her] gaze the power to speak and to be silent, similar to our own power.[361]

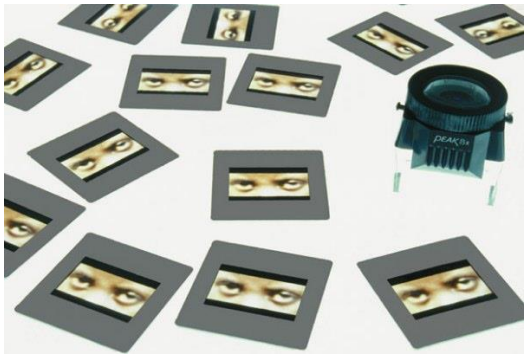

Figure 51. Alfredo Jaar, The Eyes of Gutete Emerita (detail installation), 1996

Notice that Rancière neither means 'our gaze's power to speak, nor her power to speak. In other words, on the one side is our power, on the other her gaze's power. Things are even more complicated when we realize that one's gaze is never mere capacity but *enacted* capacity of looking at, which is exactly what the French words *regard* and *regarder* suggest. In fact, there is an expression that serves as example of what Rancière means, and the actual problem indicated. The expression is: *on voyait à son regard qu'elle était contrariée*, 'you could tell from the look in her eyes that she was upset'. The expression does not mean simply that mood transpires though one's eyes. It denotes a way of looking at. It also means that the person is acting in a particular way, creating or suggesting a visual contact actively as subject. So, how can the work restore Emerita's gaze's power? Whose gaze is it actually taking place in Jaar's work? It seems to us that Jaar expressed the suppositions of his work more sincerely when he stated that "her eyes reflect our eyes. Her eyes are full of the content of our repudiation."[362]

Jaar can hardly address Emerita's capacity of re-garding something, i.e., finding herself in relation to it, because he has already become the 'great witness'[363] of the catastrophe. Jaar hardly lets the

[361] Idem, 76. Emphasis added.
[362] Jaar is quoted in Balken, "Alfredo Jaar: Lament of the images", 69
[363] The 'great witness' who not only bear witness to the existence of survivors, as he did in his *Signs of Live* (1994), points to the fact that we do not see what happens in Rwanda, as he did in his very superficial and trivially

Figure 52. Jaar, The Eyes of Gutete Emerita (detail installation), 1996

depicted witness speak and see for herself *in* the work. What happens in Jaar's series and Rancière's interpretations seems to be related to the supposition that grounds the *entailing* Rancière proposed. It is a supposition the French philosopher takes pains to disguise: Emerita's gaze would somehow be Medusa-like. Her gaze is invested with a power we have given to it in relation to our being caught as voyeurs or as ethical spectators (and judges) of something that is not in the photo.

Remarkably, Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux's research on Greek vase paintings has found that the Gorgon is never depicted in profile, but always in a frontal view. The Gorgon is not meant to look at something, she is not meant to be represented directing her eye (*ṓps*) towards (*pros*) something or someone. She has not *prósopon*. She is an *antiprósopon*, no person.[364] She cannot reveal her character and emotions, her point of view, her way of retaining herself. She is rather transparent, almost like the virtual reflection in a mirror. Frontisi-Ducroux also proposes something that evidently goes along with our criticism of Jaar and Rancière: the Gorgon is related to the *apostrophos*. The latter is the exclamatory figure of speech by means of which a speaker "turns away (*strephein*) from (*apo*)" the public, and addresses something or someone off stage, even her- or himself. That is precisely the case of the narrator in Ovid's Georgics, who "gains back his voice when [the decollated head of] Orpheus «breaths out» his anima to the winds."[365] The speakers use apostrophes in order to give the impression of direct and emotional contact, or introspection and sincerity (which may be the case for the pensive Perseus/Duke).[366]

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denunciatory series *Newsweek* (1994), and lets us 'know' that we, the voyeurs, are somehow both being seen and celebrating the fact of caching ourselves being compassionate, as in the work here discussed.

[364] Francoise Frontisi-Ducroux, *Du mosque cm visage* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 68. We are actually quoting her through: Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (trans.) Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York, NY: Zone Books, 1999), 53.

[365] Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2004 c2000), 73

[366] Andrew D. Morrison, The Narrator in Archaic Greek and Hellenistic Poetry (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 91

The Gorgon would therefore be like a silent addressee who cannot contradict the speaker, cannot talk by herself. And yet, her gaze has been endowed with the power of speech and hearing, so it gives the public impression that a genuine dialogue would be possible. This rhetoric is evidently at play in Cellini's masterwork.

In *Flower Vase Cut* something different happens. It is true that in an interview with Reuters, Echavarría admitted that he started to think of making the series after reading M. V. Uribe's famous book. It was then when he recalled the mutilations he had heard about, and realized they had let a strange imprint upon his childhood psyche.[367] He recreated memories 'impressed' on his mind, memories that are not necessarily the same or similar to those recreated or impressed on the minds of others, nor do they need the public to have some memory of these mutilations. He also resorted to visual scientific and cultural references, and altered and transformed some of those references in order to find a way of making something communicable between the artist and the viewers, between the viewers and the eye-witnesses. What is rendered communicable here is neither the mutilations, nor Echavarría's memories. What is rendered communicable is *working through trauma*. We appropriating (and displace) Mark Jarzombek's reflection from the context of a culture of trauma in USA, in order to affirm that such working through is rendered by giving the public elements to enable them "to operate as posttraumatic subjects"[368] who (are invited to) assume the challenge of making sense of or "working through that which is «worked through»

[367] In an interview with Laurel Reuter, Echavarría states that even if he lived in a city (Medellín) and the "war was far away in the countryside", the news of those cuts "must have filtered into my unconscious." And he adds that "many years later, after reading the book 'Matar, rematar, contramatar' by the anthropologist María Victoria Uribe, I recalled these cuts. Necktie Cut and Flannel Cut, in particular, left a strange imprint upon my childhood psyche." Laurel Reuter, "A Conversation: Juan Manuel Echavarría and Laurel Reuter (2004)," accessed April 23, 2012, http://jmechavarria.com/essay.html

[368] Jarzombek's criticism to the trends of trauma must be understood as emerging from the context of USA, and related not only to art, but also to a market and a culture around the treatment of PSTD (posttraumatic stress-disorder). This is very different in the case of Colombia, where it has been only since 2005 that the State (not even mention the health insurance companies) is starting to recognize trauma, and there is not a market for it. In this order of ideas, our criticism is not against a culture of trauma in Colombian society, but a decolonial critique of violence (and trauma) as cultural myth. Mark Jarzombek, "The post-traumatic turn and the Art of Walid Ra'ad and Krzysztof Wodiczko: From Theory to Trope to Beyond," Trauma and Visuality in Modernity (ed.) Lisa Saltzman and Eric M. Rosenberg (Lebanon. NH: Dartmouth Collegue Press, 2006), 256

by culture itself."[369] That is to say, working through trauma by rearticulating the colonial past, not merely in terms of the aforementioned *studia* (as it has been actually the case of all the interpretations of Echavarría's series, except Taussig), but in the sense of evidencing and fostering within a subversive effort for resignification. This is exactly what this series bears testimony of when offering pensive images that detaches "metaphor [i.e., 'flowers'] from stories [i.e., the aforementioned *studia*] in order to fashion a different 'history' out of them."[370]

'Posttraumatic' does not mean here that trauma and violence have been overcome or are gone. War and body violence continues affecting everyday life, collective imaginary and social memory. Trauma is not a shirt we remove at night and re-wear the next morning. Yet, violence and trauma are not unfathomable wounds suggested, for trauma, by Caruth and Feldman, or the mystified dynamics of absence in Taussig's interpretation. Contrary to that sort of unilateral and simplifying approaches, we underline that, as Gerrit Glas says, "in terms of ipse identity the picture is different […all people] suffer from a sense of loss […and basically] all are *capable* of reporting about this loss."[371] In this order of ideas, the point for Glas is to help the person to report the loss and learn how to work it through. On our part, we think that *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* move in direction of rendering culturally communicable working-though trauma.

The floral and natural forms here and in *Musa Paradisiaca*, are not merely mythical, nor are they forms of a structural order or trauma, as Caillois and Bataille assumed respectively. If we say that the forms are cultural, it is neither to affirm nature as product of the modern rational episteme, nor to be caught by the 'dissident' surrealist strategy of opposing to or counteracting modernity's rationality, with a

[369] Idem, 260
[370] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 130.
[371] Gerrit Glas, "Idem, Ipse, and Loss of the Self", *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* 10.4 (2003):351. Emphasis added.

mystery or a "convulsing"/ "compulsive" reality/order/beauty.[372] We can return to the opening of this first part and to Humboldt's geography of plants, which is not a mere description of plants in defined territories for future exploitation, but an incipient intellectual effort of articulating the Spirit through Nature. Having this in mind, we insist that the originality of *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* is neither pointing to images and taxonomies projected on the colonized in a particular region in the world, nor denouncing conditions of coloniality. Distancing from Humboldt's romantic inquiry, both artworks are an intellectual effort for interrupting the 'melancholic culture' that have assumed the historical loss – under colonial dominion– and lack –under neocolonial dynamics of power– as if they were either structural or mythical, while problematically giving to them a status of being "constitutive of the socialized psyche."[373] The works enact either an interruption or an allegorization of a melancholic dream by displacing or opening a crack or an *inter* in mythical violence and trauma. It is in such inter or 'crack' where they place historical lack/loss in terms of a historical culture (the latter in its active and 'verbal' sense) that has already enacted resignifications. In this order of ideas, instead of merely affirming a mystified present past trauma, the artworks invite us either to historically work through trauma, or to resort to historical worked-through trauma. In this direction, these artworks invite us to think (instead of merely repeating) *how trauma could and has been culturally worked through*, so we can create other relationship with violence. *Musa Paradisiaca* does this, for instance but not exclusively, by means of a parodic de-naturalization of mystified trauma, while *Flower Vase Cut* enacts a subversive re-'naturalization' of historical trauma that reveals the historical voices and fractures within.

Theirs are pertinent and original efforts which also suggest that, in conditions of coloniality, what matters for a critical and historical stance against enforcing colonial dynamics of trauma, is not reduced to

[372] Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1981), 115. Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993).
[373] LaCapra, "Trauma, abscense, loss", 714 fn. 32

a redistribution that assumes that "the incapable are capable,"[374] and "entail[s] the capacity to make [the colonized…] feel with us." That, from our perspective, would still be colonializing. On the contrary, a decolonial *partage* of the sensible, a decolonial "egalitarian redistribution taking place in the aesthetic sensorium" in conditions of coloniality, is more pertinently accessible by attending to the paradoxes of such 'entailed' capacity in terms of the *enactment* of either a parodic "cata-strophe" as proposed by *Musa Paradisiaca*, or a violent and "subversive complicity" proposed by *Flower Vase Cut*, that interrupt an order, affirming in their enactments, the capacity of culturally working through trauma.

This particularly implies to critically take distance from the practice of hypostatizing the artist as rescuer, therapist, or 'great witness', or affirming his or her as a dandy-flâneur who, as Giuseppe Patella proposed in his recent romantic proposal of an "aesthetic of resistance", "succeeds in provoking reaction and igniting imagination by his ability to resuscitate stupor and evoke admiration."[375] The task identified in *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* is not an easy one, and we have to recognize that Echavarría and Restrepo have at times fallen close to some of those roles criticized.[376] However, Echavarría's has

[374] Rancière, *The emancipated Spectator*, 48.
[375] Guiseppe Patella, "Aesthetics of Resistance," *Contemporary Aesthetics* 11 (2013). Accessed October 15, 2014. http://www.contempaesthetics.org/
[376] As it was mentioned, *The Passage of Quindio* (1996) is a case in Restrepo's oeuvre. In the case of Echavarría we will briefly discuss here his series of videos *Mouths of Ashes* (2003). The title is actually the name given by Spanish conquistadors to the mouth of the Great Magdalena River, the largest in Colombia. They 'discovered' the mouth on the Ash Wednesday. During the 1900s and early 2000s mutilated bodies were found floating in the mouth on a regular basis. The video-installation, as the title suggest, intended to connect the colonial history, the places where stories and bodies of violence appear and emerge. The artist recorded seven survivors of massacres in the north of Colombia. Each person was asked to sing the song he or she had spontaneously and previously created in order to remember the massacre, demand recognition from the government, thank god for being alive, and work the trauma through. They adapted popular rhythms of the areas they live: four songs associated to collective (harvest/labor) singing, and three associated to vallenato (a sort of minstrel singing).

Unfortunately, the piece has some key problems. Echavarría used an extreme close-ups of the faces of the survivors arguably intending to propose a sort of close relationship with the public. However, the way the HD videos were projected was actually counter-productive: the large heads (about six times life-size) broke away from the possibility of equal relationship with the viewer (Ana María Lozano pointed out this characteristic of the installation in a conversation we had after an invited talk I gave at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, in March 2011, in Bogotá). In addition, the video, which feels like a mere ethnographical register, was not able to suggest other type of connection, beyond the fact of having registered witnessed and survived massacres. The public felt the artists have let it alone with those large heads and those painful stories. It seemed as if the artist wanted to impose the moral authority of the witness's suffering, and therefore as if the disproportionate heads were rather a mark or sign of the role of the artists *qua* privileged and ethical witness. Not by chance, in her sarcastic and brief commentary, artist Marta Calderón indicated that those heads also looked like Echavarría's "talking heads." (Marta Calderón,

offered interesting efforts in his interrelated series *NN Requiem* (2006) and *Novena in standby* (2012), and Restrepo has successfully produced intelligent and critical works like his *Glorious bodies* (2008) and *Variations on the Purgatory* (2011). These artworks will be discussed in a future project.

"Masacre y Estudios Visuales: contrapunto en la javeriana", *Esfera Pública* (2006/06/15) URL: http://esferapublica.org/nfblog/masacre-y-estudios-visuales-2/)

# II. CONSUMPTION RITUALS OF VIOLENCE

SECOND PART

*The virtual expulsion of the lay from the mystical body was the Spanish heritage that led us to believe that we were Catholic people because we baptized our children or we attended processions. More than a village of Catholics, we are ritualistic people.*

Alonso Moncada, *An aspect of The Violence*, 1963. [377]

*In ritual's time or place, words and acts that may be indistinguishable \from those of everyday sometimes take on special meaning. (Think here of* «I do»*). The designation of special times and places for the performance of ritual also, of course, congregates senders and receivers of messages and may also specify what it is they are to communicate about. In sum, the formality and non-instrumentality characteristic of ritual enhances its communicational functioning. […] Auto-communication is of utmost importance even in public rituals. In fact, the transmitters of ritual's messages are always among their most important receivers*

Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the making of humanity*, 1999. [378]

In his book, Moncada wanted to offer an account of what, he thought, had happened during the 'The Violence'. His interpretation was meant to counter the accounts that were offered, since the 1950s, by followers of the Liberal party and some covered supporters of the Conservative party. As García Márquez indicated in 1959, those accounts, ofter disguised as novels, were characterized by a sort of 'pseudo-thanatomy', that is to say, a sort of "inventory of the decapitated, castrated, rapes bodies, scattered brains,

[377] Alonso Moncada, *Un aspecto de la violencia* (Bogotá, Promotora Colombiana de Editores, 1963), 25
[378] Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and religion in the making of Humanity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50-51

and guts removed," and "a detailed description of cruelty with which crimes were committed."[379] Rather than resorting to this strongly ideological fiction and "sectarism", Moncada, who was a member of the conservative party, intended to offer the "historic account of the facts."[380] And yet, his historical account, as he recognized from the start, was guided by a thesis he stated in the following words: "We are all responsible. Even if in the Catholic moral there seems to be no collective responsibility but at best a quantitative aggregate of individual responsibilities, I will try to show, without intending to lessen the particular guilt by diluting it with the group, how violence is a sin of all Colombians; although a sin with difference of degrees."[381] Moncada did not merely believe that at the base of violence was a crisis of dogma and faith, which are the supposed 'contents' of Catholic rituals. He also and mostly believed that the actual violence and mutilations were enactments of a emptied and altered Catholic ritual of sacrifice practiced that, as such, was incompatible with the faith and dogma, and the possibility of overcoming violence, and even sin.

We bring Moncada's book as reference against which initially attending to the request made by the two artworks discussed in this second part. As it will be shown, *Family Appetites* and *Service Included* demand us to critically and historically address 'guilt' and structural trauma within inherited and transferred rituals, particularly those related to sacrifice and the rather "onto-theological" assumption,[382] common in Western thought, of sacrifice (and self-sacrifice) as grounding reference for understanding cultural and symbolic structure of violence, subjectivity, and sovereignty.[383] In this direction, guilt and ritual come together in this second part, in what can be regarded as two complementary tasks concerning

[379] Gabriel García Márquez, "Dos o tres cosas sobre «la novela de la Violencia»," in *Obra periodística 3: de Europa y América* (Bogotá: Norma, 1997), 563.
[380] Nicolás Rodríguez Idárraga, *Los vehículos de la memoria. Discursos morales durante la primera fase de la violencia (1946-1953)* (Bogotá: Univeridad de Los Andes, 2008), 15
[381] Moncada, *Un aspecto de la Violencia*, 7.
[382] Miguel de Beistegui, "Sacrifice revisited," in *On Jean-Luc Nancy: The Sense of Philosophy* (eds.) Darren Sheppard, Simon Sparks, and Coli Thomas (trans.) Simon Sparks. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 159.
[383] Sacrifice is "the very institution of the absolute economy of absolute subjectivity." Jean-Luc Nancy, *Une Penseé finite* (París: Galilée, 1990), 83. Quoted in de Beistegui, "Sacrifice revisited," 159.

their reinterpretation and re-articulation, namely: the subversion of rituals (of guilt and sacrifice), and the parody of (ritualistic) guilt and self-sacrifice.

We have also quoted anthropologist Roy Rappaport, who reminds us that rituals could be better understood in terms of communication, and more exactly, as a way of self-communication for the performers, who perform "the immediate, the particular and the vital aspects of events," as well "the canonical, the general, and enduring aspects of [apparent] universal orders" whose "quality of perdurance is perhaps signified iconically [….] by the apparent invariance of its mode of transmission."[384] Following the art works here studied, we not only underline the ritual as communication, but also underline ritual as communication and 'object' of transmission, inheritance, and failure, as well as and practice of which its structure, places, times, and symbols are neither "strongly separated from the everyday" life, nor lack of "subversive and subaltern character."[385] In this direction, the following two chapters touch upon these issues while regarding violence in terms of how it is communicated, consumed, and performed by the society or part of it.

The third chapter focus on Clemencia Echeverri's video-installation *Family Appetites*, where the artist appropriated a ritual of food preparation and consumption that, like the Catholic ritual of Eucharist, goes back to colonial times and was inherited from Spain. Echeverri offers a meditation on violence in which she identifies and suggests structures of repetition and 'performativity' of a violence that hollowed out sacrifice. The fourth and last chapter discusses a series of photomontages produced by Alberto Baraya, and presented under the title *Service included*. In this post-photograhic series, Baraya parodically performs and recalls sacred relics and motifs (of those relics) found in baroque religious painting.

[384] Rappaport, *Ritual and religion*, 53.
[385] Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken, "Change and stability of ritual: an introduction," Ritual Matters: Dynamic Dimensions in Practice, (ed.) Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 3-4

# 3. FAMILY APPETITES: A MEDITATION ON RITUAL

THIRD CHAPTER

Clemencia Echeverri (1950), was born in Salamina. She obtained a BA in Journalism (1974), a BA in Fine Art in 1983. In 1995 and 1996, respectively, and obtained a Masters in Sculpture and a Diploma in Theory of Contemporary Art, both at the Chelsea College of Arts And Design, in London. Her oeuvre consisted mainly of painting and sculpture until the mid-nineties, when she started producing video-installation, sound and interactive works. She has worked as an art professor at University of Antioquia and the National University of Colombia, and has exhibited in Colombia and abroad.[386]

*Family Appetites* (1997-1998, color, 8'08" + header in loop, and stereo sound) is Echeverri's second art work related to video, and her second video-installation too. This work does not have the more technically elaborated edition of her later works, for instance her *Heritage Games* (2009). Nonetheless, it inaugurates a series of video-installations, both within her oeuvre and in the context of video in Colombia, interested in appropriating a sort of 'ethnographic' approach that intends to foster meditation on and about violence with and within social and cultural rituals, particularly catholic ritual and iconography. For the latter the case of José Alejandro Restrepo's video and performance work since 2000 is exemplary, for

[386] Solo exhibitions: Juegos de Herencia, Museo de Arte Moderno de Barranquilla (2014), Supervivencia, Alonso Garcés Galería Bogotá (2011), Versión Libre, Galería Santa Fe, Bogotá (2011), Actos del Habla, Museo de Arte Universidad Nacional. Bogotá, 2009, Treno, Alonso Garcés Galería, Bogotá (2007), Cal y Canto, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá (2000). Group exhibitions: Waterweavers, The River in the Colombian Contemporary Visual and Material Culture, Bard Graduate Center, New York, and Primera Bienal Internacional de Arte, Cartagena de Indias (2014), Coordenadas la historia de la instalación en Antioquia, Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellín (2013), Kratkofil Plus Video Festival, Baria Luka (2012), Liverpool Biennial, Loverpoool (2010), Dont stare at the sun, Centre of Contemporary Art "Znaki Czasu", Torum (2009), VI Havanna Biennale (2000), Arte y Violencia. Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá (1999).

instance *Iconomy* (2000) and *Glorious Bodies* (2008). Nonetheless, contrary to Restrepo's interesting work full of ironies and parodies accompanied by rather simple and intentional manipulations of the images, Echeverri's videos are practically on the other side of the 'spectrum': they offer subtlety, slow flow, paced meditations and silences where words or sounds become significant.

*Family Appetites* was first exhibited in 1998 in the VI Biennial of Bogotá at the Museum of Modern Art, in the capital city. The artwork has had different formats for exhibition, for instance, as a video reproduced on an LCD Monitor, and as a single projection. In this chapter we will solely focus on the format in which was initially presented in 1998, since it is the more impressive and interesting. It immerses the public in dark 'video-space' enclosed by three simultaneous square projections on floor-to-ceiling screens, arranged as three sides of a cube (leaving one side for access to the installation). The area (on the floor) is approximately 430 square feet.[387] In fact, the video starts by stressing that immersion.

Unfortunately, this work has been poorly discussed. The first commentary, chronologically speaking, was written by artist Juan Fernando Herrán, in 2000, as part of the catalogue, research and curatorial project known as *Proyecto pentágono*, the first and unfortunately only project ever, in the history of art in Colombia, that intended to offer a retrospective of art produced in the 1990s. Herrán was in charge of Video and photography. In his very short note, he correctly pointed to the interest of the work for fostering sensual-tactile perception, and identified an affinity with the notions of sacrifice, and particularly with Bataille's notion of the erotic and consumption.[388] Although in his commentary one senses that Herrán knew the video's appropriation of these notions was not exactly Bataillian, he did not describe it. In 2004, Martha Rodríguez wrote a longer text where she resorted to biography and the artist's description of what moved her to make the video.[389] In this direction, Rodríguez pointed to the fact that in the region where Echeverri is from, families still slaughter a pig to celebrate the New Year. She also

[387] Private communication with the artist via e-mail. April 13, 2015
[388] Juan Fernando Herrán, "Historias, escenas e intervalos: Fotografía y video," Projecto pentágono: investigaciones sobre arte contemporáneo en Colombia (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000), 57
[389] Martha Rodríguez, "Clemencia Echeverri," Art Nexus 3 No. 53, July-September (2004): 88

added that after having participated in this ritual for many years, the artist realized the violence involved, and wanted to reveal things that "are calmed down and pacified by custom,"[390] and could be understood as a possibility of thinking of the link between violence and customs in a larger sense. Rodríguez also highlighted the "textures and forms" and tactile elements that "acquire a peculiar strength so as to make evident a language indebted to painting."

Finally in 2009, there are two commentaries as part of the book *Sin Respuesta* / *Unanswered*, published by the National University of Colombia on the occasion of Echeverri's solo exhibition 'Treno - Speech acts' at the institution's Museum. Curator María Belén Sáez de Ibarra identified allegorical elements that apparently come from ancient traditions "extracted from the common cultural patrimony of the West," where the slaughtering of a hog recalls "Greek and Roman mythology regarding sacrificial ceremonies in honor of Demeter, goddess of fertility and patroness of the unifying links of kinship and marriage."[391] Apart from pointing to motifs of life and death, and "cycle[s] of perpetual rebirth" and regeneration particularly related to Christ's sacrifice, she also and correctly pointed to *bodegón* (still-life) as an important reference in this work and the use of chiaroscuro suggesting emotional proximity and the effects of daily life at home, and familiar, if not, marital union.

We agree with Sáez, which is by far the most attentive commentary ever produced for this work. Nonetheless, we also believe that, perhaps in attempting to avoid the biographical and 'localism' side of Rodríguez's commentary, she unintentionally simplified the work. In this sense, we recall Walter Benjamin's criticism of 17th century (German) baroque allegory: there is a danger of making allegory "indistinguishable from myth."[392] In other words, Sáez's comment, or at least her silence, suggests that allegories of the Eucharist, for instance, had not been rearticulated by the work in order to propose a kind

[390] Rodríguez quoted from: Clemencia Echeverri, "Apetitos de familia," Letrazas (Sicoanálisis) magazine, Bogotá. Rodríguez does not offer more information dates of publication and pages about primary source. Idem.
[391] María Belén Sáez de Ibarra, "Actos de Habla," Sin respuesta / Unaswered cat. exh. (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2009), 8
[392] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (trans.) John Osborne (New York and London: Verso, 1977), 68.

of meditation and reflection. Similar criticism should levelled at Herrán's comment. Moreover, Sáez missed the use of allegory as historical reference, which means it has a history, and that is what makes allegory interesting and critical for thinking of history, and as an "antidote" to myth, as Susan Buck-Morss identified in Benjamin.[393]

In this sense, our approach to this video-installation is interested in understanding the work's rearticulation of the local enactment of those apparently 'universal' references. We recall here María Victoria Uribe's short comment to the work, also included in *Sin Respuesta / Unanswered*. Although her short note is superficial in terms of art history, she nevertheless sensed an ethnographic character to the video, where the edition seems to be interested in communicating a sort of 'dark' side of the ritual practices "from which the work nourished;"[394] the practice of preparing the traditional dish known as *lechona* (female piglet); which may be related to mutilations.[395]

For our part, we are interested in decentralizing the universalizing myth as well as the role of painting as reference for haptic perception. It is symptomatic that the comments have paid no attention to how the video is organized and structured, and the fact that "what makes a film [and a video] a memory text, may not be much a matter of its explicit content as its form."[396] In this direction, the video offers interesting possibilities for thinking of a ritual. And while it is important to recognize that her video edition is comparatively underdeveloped when compared to her later works (and in this sense her work departs from the problematic idea of low-tech as a 'mark' of Latin American video art), [397] there is a familiarity with and an appropriation of structural film that we must emphasize in order to understand its

[393] Susan Buck-Morrs, *The Dialectics of Seeing* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991) 164.
[394] María Vicotria Uribe, "Visualidad sonora: Treno," *Sin respuesta / Unaswered* cat. exh. (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2009), 56
[395] In fact, the slitting of the throat in the mutilation known as 'Flannel Cut' resembles the slit for slaughtering of the piglet. We will touch upon this later.
[396] Katherin Hodgkin and Susan Radstone (eds.), introduction to *Memory History Nation: contested past* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 14.
[397] Claire Taylor, *Place and Politics in Latin America Digital Culture: Location and Latin American Net Art* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014). Se also: Rodrigo Alonzo, "On technological Tactics" http://www.roalonso.net/en/videoarte/tacticas.php

critical and historical approach to the interrelation between violence and ritual. In this order of ideas, our analysis will follow the temporal unfolding of the video in order to show the structure, the relations it proposes, and how allegories and mythical references are used and rearticulated in order to propose a meditation on violence.

## Setting the mood for meditation

The white screens, resembling large white canvases, are covered little by little, from the bottom up, with a red liquid. We hear fast heartbeats that will continue during the whole loop, setting the rhythm of and mood for perceiving the video. The reddish color and the chiaroscuro or high contrast of the images heighten the materiality of a liquid which, as we soon find out, is blood. The more than a minute and ten seconds that it takes for the blood to slowly cover the screen, provokes an intimation and fosters a sort of meditation that recalls the experience we have in two celebrated artworks.

The first is Nan June Paik's *Zen for Film (fluxfillm #1)* (1964, 14', 16mm), a sort of 'minimalist' work that contrasts with his more playful and colored video installations, and can be regarded as a revolution in "contemporary visions of cinematic expansion" of the time, and a "manifesto for a new conception of cinematic practice."[398] It was first shown at Filmmakers' Cinematheque in New York, as part of the 12 Fluxus Concerts series. It has also been reproduced in different formats, of which we will use as reference those that allow the public to stand and move freely between the projector and the screen and beyond, in a sort of open space. An old film projector runs, in an endless loop, a film with a clearly defined beginning (or 'head') and is mostly made of unexposed film. The film is projected onto a blank wall. The flickering of small shades produced by the dust and scratches on the film interrupt what could be otherwise regarded as a completely blank surface. There is no soundtrack, and the sound produced by

[398] Andrew Uroskie, *Between the Black Box and the White Cube* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014) 27, 29

the small projector is easily heard. In this sense, Paik seems to 'empty out' the usual film projection in order to emphasize the material qualities of film strips and film reproduction both. There is also the apparent idea of creating an odd experience of reproduction that encourages and forces viewers, much in a way reminiscent of the Buddhist practice of meditating in front of a wall (by either facing it or placing oneself in the opposite direction),[399] to oppose, in an inward movement, the absence of a flood of images from outside with the flood of one's own interior images.[400]

Figure 53. Nam June Paik, Zen for Film (Fluxfilm n°1), 1964, Film, Collection Centre Pompidou, Dist. RMN. Image Centre Pompidou, Peter Moore © Estate of Peter Moore/VAGA, NYC and Nam June Paik Estate

Figure 54. Clemencia Echeverri, Family Apettites, (Video-still, Opening) 1997-99. Color, 8'08" + header in loop, and stereo sound

The second artwork is John Cage's *4'33"* (1952),[401] a piece that uses silence or "rest", as it is called in musical terms. In a sense, it recalls Ferruccio Busoni's idea of silence, which is understood as the material for music and "in itself music,"[402] and as tool for helping the audience to distinguish periods of sounds (as happens in Cage's *Lecture on Nothing*)[403] and "divinate" music." Nonetheless, in *4'33"* silence is experienced in a sort of extreme way that apart from recalling Busoni's liberation of music from

[399] Edith Decker-Phillips, *Paik Video* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1998), 151.
[400] Eugene Kwon, "The Aesthetic of Active Boredom in Nam June Paik's Zen for Film (1964)", CLUJ 3 (3), Summer 2013. URL: http://ucb-cluj.org/the-aesthetic-of-active-boredom-in-nam-june-paiks-zen-for-film-1964/
[401] Nick Kaye, *Multi-media: Video – Installation – Performance* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 53
[402] "The tense silence between two movements – in itself music". Ferruccio Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music* (trans.) Th. Baker (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, 1911) 17, 23.
[403] The lecture starts by stetting the silence as both, bank and punctuation: "I am here , and there is nothing to say ." John Cages, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973 c1961), 109

"lawgivers", also recalls the idea of transforming the experience of music when "giving up intention" or meaning of music. For this very reason, Cage considered this piece to be like Paik's piece.[404] So, apart from the idea of the piece as an invitation to hear the sounds of nature as music when performed in the open space at Woodstock (NY), we may also describe the work as forcing the audience to perceive the 'background' of music usually covered by music itself, perhaps in a way similar to how the image projected on a screen hides the screen. This 'background' is not only the actual social (for instance, concert etiquette) and spatial constraint that delimits our hearing in a concert, but also, in a romanticist sense, our sentimental intimation with music that, in this case, is transformed into a feeling of frustration. In addition, the piece can also be read as an invitation to a meditation of the body, much in the vein of Cage's experimentation in the anechoic chamber: where he expected to hear just silence, he actually heard his heartbeats and what seems to be the high frequency of the nervous system.[405]

Echeverri's piece also suggest a sort of meditation. However, it combines and displaces the aforementioned experiences. First, the audio reproduction of the heartbeats makes the public perceive them as if the sound were echoed by the public's bodies. Instead of 'emptying out' image and sound in order to foster a movement inwards in an open space, the installation imposes a rhythm, provokes an aural and visual resonance where a sort of intimation with the image projected on the screen suggests a movement outwards within a rather closed space delimited by three screens. The video installation not only highlights the body as 'system' of reproduction and the blood as product of and image (a sort of 'body-image') of a body. It also connects the public within the space, leaving it wondering what kind of personal and 'collective body' is it that we are invited and forced to intimate with.

The opening also recalls large scale paintings produced by Colombian artist Delcy Morelos. It is surprising that no commentator has explicitly put them in direct dialogue as yet. *It is not a river, but a mother* (1996) (Figure 55) recalls the tradition of landscape with its bottom three-quarters spattered and

[404] Cage is quoted in: Uroskie, *Between the Black Box*…, 32
[405] John Cage, "An Autobiographical Statement" URL: http://johncage.org/autobiographical_statement.html

layered in blood-red acrylic. The work consists of four large, unframed paper panels tacked to the wall. One central element in Morelos's pictorial oeuvre is the use of startlingly bright red and brown colors that, evidently evoking blood, are applied on the paper in a way that has been regarded as reminiscent of abstract expressionism. Nonetheless, when closely and carefully observed, and this is something the works invites the public to do, one notices that colors have been meticulously applied using geometric forms. Beyond the (rather simplistic) ideas of contrasting the 'masculine' character of modern painting, exemplified by abstract expressionism,[406] and the 'feminine' delicacy of her fine work;[407] ideas that are further extended with a horizontality-femininity-textile ideology,[408] while missing the central fact that Morelos placed the regularity and continent function of geometric shapes in tension with the ebullient and violent flow that is barely contained by the geometrical shape of the medium, no matter that the organic is rendered by using small geometric forms. In this sense, the apparent opposition between order and chaos is fractured: the chaos is revealed as made of repetitive elements that, in their totality and dynamics, seem to overflow the very same regularity they are meant to affirm.

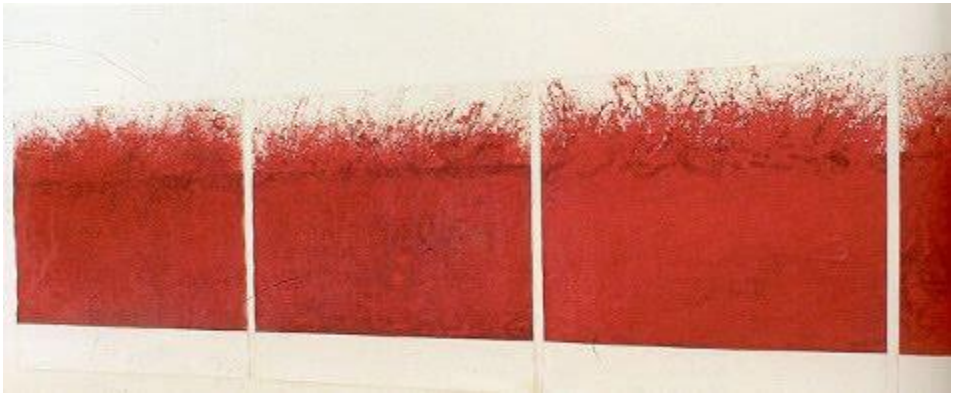

Figure 55. Delcy Morelos, It is not a river, but a mother (1996) Acrylic and Vinyl of paper (165 x1000 cms)

[406] Caroline A. Jones, "Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego", *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 19, No. 4 (Summer, 1993), 639.
[407] This delicacy is underlined by Junca. Humberto Junca, "Delcy Morelos. No es un rio, es la madre," Periódico Arteria, http://www.periodicoarteria.com/#!delcy-morelos/c23se
[408] For instance, Jaime Cerón's interesting interpretation of Morelos' Campo concéntricos (2007), even if critical of this sort of equation, is still attached to it. Jaime Cerón, "Pintura como labor, Campos Concéntricos de Delcy Morelos", Encuentro Internacional Medellín 2007 - Mediateca [m3lab], URL: http://www.m3lab.info/portal/?q=node/1776;

Many interpretations of this work can be proposed, but what seems to be at the center of a violent river of blood that evokes life and death, menstruation, birth, motherly protection and overprotection, violence of motherly passion and love, is the idea of a repetition (of passion, love, and death) that overflows regularity, order, and any sort of outside reference. While in front Morelos' four panels we are meant to see the flow, as it were, though four windows and from a rather safe place, Echeverri seems to take an extreme Morelos' suggestion and forces us to a meditation that requires us to immerse in the flow. This immersion in the image-space created by the installation could be understood, paraphrasing Benjamin, as an "enlargement [that] not merely clarifies what we see indistinctly «in any case», but brings to light entirely new structures of matter," while at the same time the "slow motion" "not only reveals familiar aspects of movements, but discloses quite unknown aspects within them."[409]

## Ambiguous sacrifice: first part

The video has eight different parts, including the opening already described, and a closing. It seems to have a 'stable' structure of three parts of approximately same length. Yet, differences happen within, and length apparently becomes a way of making emphasis. [410] In between there are six parts both separated

[409] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and other writings on media* (eds.) Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (trans.) Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn (London: Harvard College, 2008), 37

[410]

| PART | SCENE | EPISODE | TIMES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opening (flood) | | | | 1'27'' |
| First part | | | | 2'14'' |
| | Fist Scene (blood/wine) | | 1'17'' | |
| | | 'Color' | 0'23'' | |
| | | 'B&W' | 0'4'' | |
| | 'Curtain' | | 0'07'' | |
| | Second Scene (skin/communion) | | 0'45'' | |

and connected by means of crossfades that show (for a time between five to seven seconds), a close-up (CU), slow pan of traces of what looks like fresh blood on a white screen (Figure 57). These 'curtains' offer a sort of performance-oriented interpretation of Busoni's notion of silence, delimiting the scenes and punctuating the video; and in a sense reminding us of the opening. According to our analysis, the six parts, which following the idea of the curtain will be called scenes, are actually paired. We will discuss each of these three pairs, which offer three main layers of meaning. Let us start with the first pair.

Figure 56. Clemencia Echeverri, Family ApettitesI (video-stills, first scene), 1998-99

| PART | SCENE | EPISODE | | TIMES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Color: 'Cut' | | 0'22'' | | |
| | | Color: 'distrib.' | | 0'18'' | | |
| | 'Curtain' | | | | 0'05'' | |
| Second part | | | | | | 2'01'' |
| | Third Scene (birth) | | | | 1'21'' | |
| | | 'B&W' | 0'48'' | | | |
| | | 'Color' | 0'33'' | | | |
| | 'Curtain' | | | | 0'04'' | |
| | Fourth Scene (family) | | | | 0'28'' | |
| | | Color: embrace | 0'28'' | | | |
| | 'Curtain' | | | | 0'08'' | |
| Third part | | | | | | 2'07" |
| | Fifth Scene (evisceration) | | | | 1'03'' | |
| | | 'Color' | | 0'05'' | | |
| | | 'B&W' | | 0'58'' | | |
| | 'Curtain' | | | | 0'07'' | |
| | Sixth Scene (stuffing) | | | | 1'04'' | |
| | | 'B&W' | | 0'36'' | | |
| | | 'Color' | | 0'11'' | | |
| | | 'Color' | | 0'17'' | | |
| Closing (fire) | | | | | | 0'19'' |
| **Total time** | | | | | | **8'08''** |

After the impressive and lengthy opening in which blood has covered the whole screen, a crossfade of an extreme close-up (ECU), fixed camera shot appears (Figure 56, left) showing in red-yellowish and white colors and in slow-motion, a man's hand covered with blood pouring (collected) blood into a bucket. We also see what seems to be part of the slaughtered piglet. Besides the use of ECU that suggests the intimacy and involvement in the action, the slow motion, the fixed camera shot and camera angle, and the reddish color suggest the suspension of a thought process, and paraphrasing Carl Jung's interpretation of subjective plane,[411] a register in the unconscious. After 25 seconds the video image is paused, and a crossfade shows a B&W video-still (Figure 56, right), slightly 'out-of-step', of the same shot. From the left side of the frame, a woman's right hand gradually enters. We then realize we are seeing her hand moving on a B&W, life-size photo of the video-still. With a tender gesture, the hand slides over the picture as if touching the man's hand. At the same time sounds reminiscent of forced (animal?) breathing, or perhaps of bellows fade in. We also hear the sound of a lit fire and women chatting in the distance. For a moment, her hand emulates his and as if she held the cup. Yet, her fingers keep on moving swiftly touching now the cup and finally the blood poured into the bucket. As her hand touches the blood in the bucket (in the photo), all the sounds except the heart's beat fade out, and a red organic stain appears. It is as if she painted the photo with red oil or acrylic on her fingers. This is the longest and evidently heightened part of what we call the first scene, and evidently suggests a process of remembrance understood here as recreation of an event by activating records in the memory or marks in the unconscious.

[411] See entry in: Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types or The Psychology of Individuation* (trans.) H. Godwin (Online publication in *Literoscope*, 2013, c1923) URL: http://www.literoscope.org/en/jung-psychological-types/151-subjective-plane/

Figure 57. Echeverri, Family Appetites (video-still of one of the 'curtains'), 1997

When the hand recedes from the scene, a new crossfade occurs (Figure 57), for few seconds, a close-up (CU), slow pan of blood traces on a white screen, as if a piece of meat has been dragged across it. Similar shots appear in the video and work as 'curtains' that, in a sort of performative interpretation of Busoni's notion of silence, delimit the scenes and punctuate the video. When this 'curtain' starts to fade out, we hear a strange animal-like sound twice ushering a new crossfade and ECU of the piglet, which corresponds to the second scene (Figure 58, left). We also see a man's right hand holding a knife, and his left hand stretching a piece of piglet skin while skinning the animal.

Figure 58.Clemencia Echeverri, Family Appetites (video-stills, second scene), 1998-99

Given the color, light, and large size of the projection, the texture of the dry skin, presumably dried by fire, is impressive and highlights the haptic perception experienced during the whole video. Later, a cut shows a CU a man's and a woman's hands holding and slowly dividing a piece of skin in two (Figure 58, right). A few seconds later, the woman's hands leave the frame, we infer, as she eats the piece of skin. While she drags her piece, we notice in the background traces of blood on dry land, as if the slaughtered piglet had been dragged across there. It seems that Echeverri suggest a connection between recollection-remembrance and record-slaughtering. A connection is also suggested between the skin and

body of the slaughtered animal, and the actual land, as if the body of the piglet is a sort of mountain where our immersion could take a momentary rest.

The first and second scenes, which evidently appropriate the tradition of the Spanish *bodegón* and *naturaleza muerta* (Still-life genre)[412] as Sáez de Ibarra noticed,[413] are not only connected by the subjective plane, color and blood traces. They are also linked though elements and gestures that appear similar to those observed in the Christian ritual of the Eucharist, which is meant to symbolically reenact Christ' sacrifice by sharing bread and wine in remembrance of him (the Christian *anamnesis)*.[414] Moreover, it seems that the first part invites us to do both: regard the ritual as a process of remembrance that activates marks in the memory or the unconscious, and activate the ritual via records in the memory and unconscious. Nonetheless, the video also places the slaughtering and preparation of the piglet as the ambiguous stage of an enactment of the Christian ritual sacrifice. This ambiguity is key for the first part and its relation with the second part.

In this direction, in order to understand the sort of rearticulation produced by the video of the ritual of Christ's sacrifice, let us bring in René Girard's interpretation of sacrifice as a foundational mechanism of cultural and social life; notion very similar to Emile Durkheim's idea that religion has the function of creating social integration.[415] Girard affirmed that sacrifice, as a scapegoating mechanism that projects 'guilt' onto a victim, periodically enacted, channels the violence that threatens the very existence of a community and social order: "if left unappeased, violence will accumulate until it overflows its confines and floods the surrounding area."[416] Girard also recognized that in some cases the victim may be substituted by slaughtering hunted or domesticated animals for instance (the inverted order of substitution

[412] The term *bodegón* is derived from *bodega* i.e., 'pantry', 'tavern', and 'wine cellar'.
[413] María Belén Sáez de Ibarra, "Actos de habla", Sin respuesta (ed.) María Belén Sáez de Ibarra (Bogotá: Universidad nacional, 2009), 9
[414] Luke, 22:19; First to Corinthians, 11:24-25.
[415] Tiina Arppe, "Sacred Violence: Girard, Bataille and the Vicissitudes of Human Desire," Distinktion No. 19 (2009): 35-36
[416] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (trans.) Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 10

could also be enacted). Nonetheless, Girard has proposed that the 'New Testament' reversed the foundational mechanism of sacrifice: God the Father, incarnated and offered himself in sacrifice under the figure of his son, not only in order to atone for humanity's sins but, more importantly, to redirect divine violence onto itself, securing the conclusion of violence that would otherwise require an infinite series of sacrifices.

As Girard recognizes, this closure of the cycle needs to be ritualized in a way that works as collective memory of the sealing. In other words, the ritual must strategically and explicitly enact expressions or speech acts, especially the priest's saying 'This is my body and blood.' These speech acts remind us of an "undifferentiation"[417] between the wine and the blood (i.e., the mystery of the Eucharist where the wine is a symbol). They also reminds us of a "(re-) differentiation" that makes the reenactment of the slaughtering (and anthropophagy by means of sublimation) unnecessary,[418] while allegorizes the symbol, making of it an 'allegorical symbol'.[419] The ritual is therefore the memoir of a re-differentiating undifferentiation that separates the ritual from what Girard feared was proper of a sort of Heraclitean flux of divine violence.

In Western art history there have been many ways this memoir has been represented or suggested. Nonetheless, it is in the early 17th-century Spanish *bodegón*, where the re-differentiating undifferentiation of the ritual of sacrifice takes place in close connection with family, customs, religion, and everyday life; key and central references for *Family Appetites*. One good example is Francisco de Zurbarán's *Agnus Dei*

[417] Anthony D. Traylor, "Violence Has Its Reasons Girard and Bataille," Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture, Vol. 21, (2014): 132-133

[418] Zilkia Janer, "(In)edible nature: New world food and coloniality", *Cultural Studies* Vol. 21, Nos. 2 March-May (2007): 306

[419] "It would be useless, too, to make detailed vast domain by symbols not merely spoken or written but performed. Such is the domain of the liturgy, comprising both the sacraments properly so called, the essential structure of which theologians now defined, and lesser rites, the accoutrements and actions of which give symbolic representation to the mystery accomplished once by Christ and preserved effectively in the Church. For school use, for meditation, and for public worship, the twelfth century gathered into methodically organized treatises the whole disordered growth of expanded, combined, refined, conceptualized, and allegorized symbol-patterns." M-D Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West* (eds. and trans.) Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (University of Toronto Press, 1968 2nd Revised edition c1997), 111-12

Figure 59. Francisco de Zurbarán, Agnus Dei, 1635 – 1640. Oil on Canvas (37,3 x 62 cm)

(1635-40) (Figure 59), where the artist depicted an 'abnegated' and lonely lamb alone, as if extracted from a context and conformed with its fate, in order to secure the allegory of Christ's sacrifice. In other words, the undifferentiating title (Lamb-Christ) and composition that excludes everything but the lamb, is a re-differentiating depiction of Christ's sacrifice, so the slaughtering is not a sacrifice to God, and instead an allegory of the Eucharist, and a 'allegorized symbol' of Christ's sacrifice.

Another, altogether different situation is found in Flemish still-lifes like Joachim Beuckelaer's *Slaughtered Pig* (1565) and Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* (1655). Circumventing religious prohibitions, they offered religious allegories,[420] and used allegory to introduce personal issues,[421] while revealing, for the contemporary viewer, the actual presence of faith in everyday life within household or social activities; where the religious myth does not necessarily set the scenario for the motif.

*Family Appetites* appropriated both references. It comes close to Flemish still-life, as it involved people preparing the *lechona* and suggested a social context with the human voices. Yet, the video did not define that context and, on the contrary, deprived the human speech of meaning. This is a significant gesture from the artist, considering that voice and speech have played an important role in her works, as

[420] "Butcher shop scenes are featured in works by Maarten van Cleve, Adriaen van Ostade and Barent Fabritus. The subject matter also attracted Abraham van Hecke and David Teniers whose paintings of slaughtered beasts have been read as moralistic allegories of the punishment of sinners. Moreover, Aertsen's seemingly plain *Meat Stall* has also been ascribed a symbolic religious significance, presumably alluding to the Crucifixion. The submerged meanings read into the animal carcasses also recall the sixteenth-century Dutch interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) where the killing of a «fatted calf» is said to allude to Christ's sacrifice."
Avigdor W. G. Posèq, "A Proposal for Rembrandt's Two Versions of Slaughtered Ox," *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 30, No. 60 (2009), 271

[421] For instance, Posèq has identified in the two versions of Rembrandt's the *Slaughtered Ox* a relation of the carcass to a female figure, suggesting that "both scenes evoke traumatic experiences of the artist" with women, placing this paintings "among Rembrandt's most personal works". Idem, 275.

Sáez herself has correctly recognized.[422] On the other hand, the video came close to the Spanish *bodegón* as the former decontextualized the roles, and made the motifs (gestures, blood, and skin) uncannily similar to those gestures and allegorized symbols of the Christian ritual. Yet, the video disconnected the motifs from a speech act that could give them back their symbolic function. In short, the video not only emphasized the allegorical aspect of the allegorical symbols, but also transformed them into allegories. The Eucharist's symbols become forms but not contents of the ritual. It is here where the title of the work announces a (re)signification.

## Births and tenebrism

After a crossfading 'curtain' showing for a few seconds, a short, slow, top-to-bottom (and slightly right–to-left) pan of traces of blood on a tablecloth is seen, then a new crossfade opens the third scene showing a B&W photo of a video-still of an ECU of three male hands holding and pulling flesh to the sides. This is one of the, by-far, two longest shots of the video after the opening. Another hand holds a knife and seems to have been recorded when cutting and penetrating the flesh. In a similar fashion as before, Echeverri's hand enters the scene. With a gesture somewhere between suggestive and tender, she touches the hand that holds the knife, emulating its posture. Her index finger moves little by little touching first the blade, and then touching the wound. When her hand reaches the open flesh, it stains or 'paints' this photo too. Later, while receding from the scene, her hand leaves blood traces on the man's right index finger, while the soft cry of a baby fades in. This cry continues for a couple of second after her hand goes out of frame and a new crossfade shows the slow-motion video record of the hands holding the flesh. We see the slow back and forth motion of the knife penetrating the flesh and cutting what seems to be a tendon.

[422] For instance: *Casa Íntima* (1998), *Cal y Canto* (2002), *Muta* (2006), *Acidia* (2006), *Voz y Voz/Net* (2008), *Frontera* (2011).

Figure 60. Clemencia Echeverri, Family Appetites (video-still, third scene), 1998-99

Figure 61. Clemencia Echeverri, Family Appetites (video-stills, fourth scene), 1998-99

After a new 'curtain', a crossfade opens the fourth scene, offering the largest section after the opening. The scene shows a slow-motion, high-contrast record, we presume, of members of her extended family, embracing each other (Figure 61). This scene reminiscent of tenebrism, fades in accompanied by the ominous shriek of a piglet.

Paraphrasing Jeffrey Skoller's comments on Ernie Gehr's *Eureka* (1974), the gentle change from photo to slow motion, and backwards in the first and third scenes, reinforces the shallow 'pictorial' space, and underlines the material surface of both the image.[423] Of course, whereas in *Eureka* we have a "robotic flâneur," in *Family Appetites* we sense an attentive observation. Interestingly, the third scene opens with the inverted transition order (from color video record to B&W video-still) used in the first scene. If we accept the interpretation of the transition given in the first part, then we can suggest that this time Echeverri invites us to approach the fifth scene in these terms: the –long shot and therefore emphasized– activation and recreation of marks in the memory or the unconscious, precedes and 'fleshes out' the perception and recording of the ritual. This means that the first and second part of the video, if seen in

[423] Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows Specters Shards: Making history in avant-garde film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 13.

tandem, appeal to and reinforce the mutual implication and actual forward and backward movement from perception-recording to activation-recreation; movement actually present in the Spanish verb *recordar* (i.e., to remember),[424] derived from Latin root *cor* (heart),[425] meaning 'to bring something to/from the heart' –In this regard, the heartbeats heard during all the time in the installation suggest the movement and dynamics od memory. The inverted transition order also suggests a forwards and backwards movement from the first to the second part, so we can both use the second part in order to flesh out the emptied ritual of Eucharist suggested in the first part, and use the latter as a process of remembrance for activating the marks in the memory or the unconscious suggested in the second part.

Having said this, let us go back to the third scene and think what kind of video-like or film-like approach Echeverri offered the birth. Evidently, the shot not only emulates the recording of a birth. There is an odd proximity of the camera and a focus on the cut and flesh that makes the shot seem to be half medical, half pornographic. Yet, the slow motion makes it uncanny, and places the density of image more in the perception than in what is perceived. We would like to temporarily use as reference for contrast in this reflection on the structure of *Family Appetites*, Stan Brakhage's famous and silent film *Window Water Baby Movement* (1959, color, no sound, 17').[426] In that film there two shots in particular that seem to be fused in *Family Appetites*. We do not mean that Echeverri had Brakhage's film in mind, of course, but a comparison could be instructive. The first shot shows the doctor's hand opening and penetrating the vagina in order to sense the baby's position and head. The second shot recalls the

Figure 62. Stan Brakhage, Window Water Baby Movement (Film-still), 1959, Color, no sound, 17'

[424] See entry in *Diccionario de La Lengua Española*.
[425] See entry cor: Charlton T. Lewis and. Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) Online.URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
[426] I am thankful with Karen Wishnia for reminding me about this film

record of the cutting of the umbilical cord.

In his analysis of Brakhage's film, P. Adams Sitney correctly indicated that we see what the film-maker 'sees'. This seeing is not literally a seeing 'with the eyes', but with the mind.[427] Brakhage used material he recorded of his wife before and during the birth of their first child. He organized it in a way that the film appears as a 'fast stream' of images that forces the viewer to constantly imagine a sort of narrative that would give sense to the silent images. In this regard, it is exemplary the moment we see the record of the baby's head starting to emerge, and we then see Jane Collum's gestures of pain. Despite the lack of sound, we 'hear' her crying and are impacted by her gesture of her pain when this shot is immediately followed by one showing her smiling, presumably before giving birth. In this sequence Brakhage is able to foster a sense of drama to his wife's childbirth, reason why Sitney described Brakhage as a lyrical film-maker.

Echeverri's *Family Appetites* is partially lyrical, in the sense that it shares Brakhage's (and Kubelka's) idea "that a film must not waste a frame and that a single film-maker must control all the functions of the creation."[428] However, there are three important differences. Brakhage evidenced his artistic (lyric) expression in the combination and reorganization of the material.[429] He also offered a fast stream of images forcing viewers to almost back off and defer perception in order to spend their energy on making sense of the images and the film-maker's choices. Finally, not in this film but in *Art of Vision* (1961-65) inspired in the birth of his third child, and partially reminiscent of 'Baroque music',[430] Brakhage repeated and combined basic layers suggesting the idea of variations of a same piece, and dissolving pictorial space and fusing form and motif.

[427] P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, third edition 2002, c1974), 168
[428] Idem, 349
[429] David E. James, *Allegories of Cinema: American Film in the Sixties* (Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press, 1989), 28
[430] Brahkage in an unpublished interview with Sitney. Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 204

On the contrary, even if Echeverri followed a sort of 'formula' that appears less personal in content and organization, the video evidently has a more narrative approach to the records of the event. In addition, the video recalls the meditative character of "structural film"[431] which David James traced back to the "«radical film reductions» of […] Fluxus," as exemplified in *Zen for Film.*[432] The video recalls structural film in its 'shape': the use of fixed angle, distance, and framing in the close-ups that resemble the "fixed camera position (fixed frame from the viewer's perspective)," and the use of B&W video-stills seems to emulate "rephotography of the screen."[433] In this sense, regardless of the content of the images, there is a structure central to the video in terms of its 'shape' and in the actual organization of the scenes. In this sense, we suggest that there is a relationship between the structure of the video and the artist's expressed interest in "revealing the structural and ancestral truth"[434] in the ritual of the *lechona*.

Another key difference for our understanding of the second part and its relation with the first part of the video, is the baroque economy of perception. In a move that partially resembles cases of structural films[435] that departed from the "pure" subject of vision usually found in more 'canonical' examples,[436] Echeverri slowed down the video allowing the viewer to dwell in corporeal synchronicity with the images and the sound, and in a spatialized haptic perception. She also let the viewer move continuously from one image/sound/scene to the next, and between motifs.

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[431] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 179

[432] Craig Fischer, "Experimental Film,,"*Schirmer Encyclopedia of Film Vol 2 Criticism-Ideology* (ed.) Barry Keith Grant (New York , NY: Thomson Gale, 2007), 158

[433] Idem, 348

[434] Clemencia Echeverri and Piedad Bonnet, "Clemencia Echeverri: Conversación con Piedad Bonnet", Cal y canto / Clemencia Echeverri cat. ex. (Bogotá, Colombia: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, 2002). We had access to PDF of the interview in the artist's website. Page 5. URL: http://clemenciaecheverri.com/estudio/archivos/textos/articulos/entrevistas/Entrevista%20con%20Piedad%20Bonnet.pdf

[435] Feeling tired and almost falling to sleep when watching Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1967), affirms a sort of connection between body and film; which implies also a departure from the notion of apperception and type of meditation important for some structural films that, as Constance Penley criticized, fall in the vicinity of the transcendental subject centered as the "pure" subject of vision. Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* ([Durham, NC:] Duke University Press, 1999), 159

[436] See previous footnote. Constance Penley, *The Future of an Illusion: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1989 c1990), 12.

This is important since instead of trying to link the fast images while assuming they are somehow cryptically connected in the mind of the artist, we actually have a single and 'mysterious' moving image. In Brakhage's film, we are left to imagine what is not in the film i.e., the mother's and baby's cries. In Echeverri's video, we are given a baby's cry, and what seems to be the freedom of imagining in the projected ('B&W') images a baby and mother being separated. Yet, at the same time, the images show instead the *lechona*'s flesh penetrated. The video intentionally suggests the birth and the sacrifice of what, somehow resembles a 'motherly' flesh.

This undoubtedly recalls Julia Kristeva's idea the abject 'mother'. In her criticism to Jacques Lacan's "name of the father"[437] and his idea of "the Symbolic" as all linguistic and universal organizing principle of culture, Kristeva indicated that Lacan forgot to consider the semiotic, which corresponds, metaphorically speaking, to the womb and the moments before the birth, and psychologically speaking (or more exactly, in terms of psychosexual development) to "the maternal protospace, prior to representation."[438] The semiotic 'mother' 'embodies' the child's fear and *jouissance* that precedes the subject/object dichotomy key for desire, and can be regarded as the two faces of the experience of the "abject" as what has been "radically excluded."[439] In this direction, Kristeva has suggested that the semiotic mother is like the "Mother-Medusa" that threatens to engulf us "in the blind depths of the sea."[440] She has also proposed that society and religion are not inaugurated with the sealing sacrifice of the powerful paternal figure, as happens in Christian tradition though the figure of Christ. This sacrifice is preceded and made possible by the decapitation of the "Mother-Medusa;" decapitation that may be

[437] We will follow here Kelly Oliver's interpretation. The name (nom) of the father is a 'no' to incest, a 'no' to a new fusion of mother and child, and a 'no' to the child's identification with the father as "phallus" that satisfies the mother. The 'no' denotes a sort of performative force of a 'phallic' order embodied in social Law and conventions. The child complies with that body when the father (as symbolic father) interrupts between mother and child (cutting through the imminent 're-fusion'), and when the child accepts to be 'castrated' (i.e., rejects the semiotic) and to identifies instead with and within "The Symbolic" (i.e., all linguistic and universal organizing principle of culture). Kelly Oliver, *Reading Kristeva: Unraveling the Double-bind* (Bloomingto: Indianapolis University Press, 1993), 79
[438] Julia Kristeva, *The Severed Head: Capital Visions* (trans.) Jody Gladding (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2012), 82
[439] "One does not know it, one does not desire it, one joys in it [on en jouit]. Violently and painfully. A passion". Julia Kristeva, *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1982), 11
[440] Kristeva, *The Severed Head*, 32

regarded as dark and abject side of the universal organizing principle of culture. Contrary to Girard, Kristeva thinks that sacrifice does not really expels violence: what is sacrificed is not abjected, but consumed, and violence "remains as the mark of a wound" within community.[441]

Interestingly, the *Family Appetites* seem to echo some of Kristeva´s ideas, which in turn serve to propose not only a relation between the first and second parts of the video, but also reinforce the idea that, in dialogue with Morelos's four panels, we have 'sunk' into those 'blind depths of the sea,' as if returning to the 'Mother-Medusa' womb. We could even step further and suspect if we are actually returning to the pregnant womb of Obregón's *The Violence*, that is to say, to an iconic representation of violence. In this sense, is remarkable that the painter's idiosyncratic use of tenebrism covered part of her limbs, as if she were mutilated, but the calmness in her face resembles someone sleeping, not necessarily a corpse. There is an ambiguity that has not apparently been suggested before, in which we may not only see the victimized and mutilated Mother-Land, but also the very Mother-Violence before her labor. It may not be casual that this possible return to Mother-violence, may was also suggested by Historian Gonzalo Sánchez's description of his experience of 'The Violence,' similar to that of Echeverri and Franco who were born at the time and in small towns where violence erupted terribly: "my first relation with 'The Violence' was not intellectual, but rather intimate, pre-narrative; it brought me back to my origins, to my childhood, my small town."[442]

Notwithstanding these coincidences between video and Kristeva´s "abject", we have to be careful as we may risks affirming a sort of universalism by furnishing the theory with the video.[443] In this sense, we want to keep a safe distance from that 'structure' proposed by Kristeva as well as from the "abject criticism" supported by Anglo-feminist theories exemplified in the realm of film and art –Good examples

[441] Mafia Maigeeaas, "Towards an Iconomy of violence: Julia Kristeva in the between of ethics and Politics," in *Visual Politics of Psychoanalysis: Art and the Image in Post-Traumatic Cultures. London*, (ed.) Griselda Pollock (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013) 155.
[442] Gonzalo Sánchez, *Guerras, Memoria e Historia* (Medellín: La carreta editores, 2006 c2003),12
[443] We follow here Imogen Tyler's criticism to the so-called Anglo-feminist theories of 'abject criticism', which tends to furnish the theory with historical cases. Imogen Tyler, "Against abjection,"in *Feminist Theory* 10 (1) (2009): 77-98.

of the latter are Barbara Creed's idea that the monstrous-feminine at the dark heart of film "unveils the origins of patriarchy,"[444] and Simon Taylor's idea that the abject "can be used to renegotiate social relations in a (sic) contestary fashion."[445] Of course, we do not mean to reject that the video evidently suggest the role of patriarchy in violence; which may be also at interesting way of problematizing Obregón's canvas. Nevertheless, we are rather interested in attentively following the video and what it articulates and problematizes. In this direction, we move now to the fourth scene where tenebrism is central.

As Maria Rzepińska correctly pointed out, tenebrism must be regarded *culturally*, not just an 'aesthetic' technique. It cannot be reduced to Renaissance-like terms, and therefore it does not play a secondary role for *lume divino*, which is usually represented by means of a "light falling in a beam of brightness from an invisible source"[446] almost "invariably [depicted] as a condensed light surrounded by darkness". On the contrary, as it is suggested by the way paintings were also installed in 17th-century dark religious and secular interior spaces accompanied by few candles, darkness had an active role for contemplation. In fact, tenebrism is informed by theology of darkness in Saint John of the Cross' late 16th-century doctrine, where it is understood as the "senses' darkness" (that is to say, the extreme 'opacity' of touch, taste, smell), and as the grounding stage of the way leading to and being led by God.[447] It was in this direction that Saint Ignatius of Loyola proposed darkness as a sort of womb for educating and resorting to our body memory and for appealing to our imagination in order to experience, in one's body, Christ's and the martyrs' sufferings.[448]

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[444] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 164
[445] Taylor is quoted in: Winfried Menninghaus, *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation* (trans.) Henry Pickford (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 389.
[446] Rzepińska, 98-100. Maria Rzepińska, "Tenebrism in Baroque Painting and Its Ideological Background", *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 7, No. 13 (1986): 112
[447] John H. Coe, "Musings on the dark night of the soul: insights from St. John of the Cross on a developmental spirituality", *Journal of Psychology and Theology* Vol. 28, No. 4 (2000): 303 293-307
[448] Ignatius of Loyola, "The Spiritual Exercises," 141

Figure 63. Juan Sánchez Cotán, [Bodegón with Game Fowl, Vegetables and Fruits], 1602 Oil on canvas (69 x 89 cm).

Tenebrism is also informed by "occult doctrines", for instance, found in Athanasius Kircher's *Ars magna lucis et umbrae*. This treatise was published in 1646 and adopted "by vast numbers of unorthodox Christians [as well as by…] the institution of the Catholic Church", especially the Jesuits.[449] Remarkably, according to Kircher's most influential ideas, there is a hierarchy in which *Lux* or divine light, *Lumen* or second-degree light, *umbrare* or shadow, and *tenebrae*, corresponded respectively to God, angels, man, and animals.[450] In this order of ideas, tenebrism was not understood in terms of a 'scopic regime'. It was rather, in Spanish baroque culture, a way of affirming the body (and the flesh) as the grounding medium for 'communication', or better said, as a cultural strategy for corporeal performance of feelings. In this sense, it would be wrong to interpret, as Sybille Ebert-Schifferer did, tenebrous *bodegones* like Zurbarán's *Agnus Dei*, as if they were merely austere mystic depictions.[451] On the contrary, as Peter Cherry has arguably uggested regarding Juan Sánchez Cotán's *bodegones* (Figure 63), these works are not only informed by the mystic ideas of Fray Luis de Granada,[452] but also have a clear intention of being *trampantojos* as they have been described in Spanish, that is to say, of appealing to a memory of the senses, [453] and setting a trap (*trampa*) for the viewer's appetites (*antojos*).[454]

[449] Rzepińska, 98-100; See: Rene Taylor, "Hermetism and Mystical Architecture in the Society of Jesus", Baroque art: the Jesuit contribution ed. R. Wittkower and B. Jaffe (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1972): 63-97
[450] Athanasius Kircher, Ars magna lucis et umbrae, Liber X (Amstelodami [Amsterdan]: Janssonius à Waesberge & Weyerstraet, 1671) 801.
[451] Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, *Still Life: A History* (New York, NY: , Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 71
[452] Norbert Schneider, Naturaleza muerta (Colonia: Benedikt Taschen, 1992), 123
[453] Peter Cherry, "The hungry eye: The still lifes of Juan Sánchez Cotán," Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History Vol 62, Issue 2 (1996):75-95. See also: Peter Cherry, *Arte y naturaleza. El bodegón español del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Fundación de Apoyo a la Historia de Arte Hispánico, 1999).
[454] Sophie Degenne Fernandez, "La ventana fingida de Juan Sánchez Cotán," *Líneas* [On line], Décembre 2012 (Recovered: 12/01/2013). URL: http://revues.univ-pau.fr/lineas/611.

Notably, Echeverri recalls this cultural strategy of perception. Nonetheless, she appropriates it in a way that even if it fosters corporeal perception with the use of slow motion, soft transitions, partial homogenization and flattening of the records by means of red coloration, and sort of texture, it hardly fosters experiences of horror ("abjection") or delight ("jouissance"). This is important as it is a way of departing from an immediate relation with the 'Mother-Medusa' and with Kristeva's account. We may instead attend to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's indication that, when regarding cinema, "the aspect of the world would be transformed if we succeeded in seeing as things the intervals between things."[455] In this direction, we would like to underline and link the tenebrous darkness (which not exactly a pleonasm) and the ominous cry of the piglet to recognize that the fifth scene suggests not only the animal as connecting and uniting tissue of the family, but also the family as womb and wound in which Echeverri has immersed us.

In this order of ideas, after examining the second part, we can read the ambiguous title *Family Appetites* (*Apetitos de Familia*) in the double sense of genitive: as the appetite for having a family (reproduction, birth, baby's cry) —which may also mean extending the maternal or paternal family—, and the family's desires and appetence for familial unity (sacrifice, death, piglet's cry). The family not only denotes a groups of blood-related individuals, but also and more emphatically a communal-being of both spontaneous solidarity and fracture within, and a sort of actual as well as 'imagined community' (as Benedict Anderson would say)[456] that has become heart and womb, receptacle (host) of violence and a hostile place of gestation of violence (during 'The Violence'[457] and the 1990s).[458]

[455] Merleau-Ponty 's statement was originally published in his "Le Cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie," and is quoted in: Stephen Health, "Narrative Space", in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader* (ed.) Philip Rosen (New York, NY: Columbia University Place, 1986), 410

[456] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1996, c1983)

[457] M.V. Uribe's analysis of local and national newspapers as well as juridical expedients produced between 1948 and 1964, demonstrated that armed gangs followed a well-defined pattern: "They were made of family members and relatives – parents and children, brothers, uncles, nephews, godparents, godchildren–, friends and acquaintances." In this sense, the "spontaneous solidarity of community", apparently expressed in ideological identification with a political party, was basically or mostly defined by family ties as identified by Fernán Gonzalez, and confirmed by

In this direction, *Family Appetites* would distance from the idea of seeing the family as a victim or heroic group — This actually happens in Carlos Correa's *Violence* (ca. 1959), where, notably, the family is represented following the idea of the 'Holy family', all three members being crucified (mother and child with their heads down and the father decapitated), and Alipio Jaramillo's *Self-defences* (c. 1958), where he depicted a large campesino family defending itself, in this case, presumably from conservative government forces (and the "chulativas" or parapolice). *Family Appetites* announces the idea of a disarray of society that Peter Waldmann described as "a state of society" that lacks of a "consistent normative structure,"[459] idea also central in Echeverri´s video-installation *Exhausted, [It] still can fight* (2000).

Let us now present our interpretation of the interrelation between the first and second part, by noticing two additional things. First, as it is suggested in the first part of the video, the transference (into video and well as cultural transference) of rituals has less to do with mere desecration. It has more to do with appropriating forms, references, structures of the rituals, and emptying them out in order to inserting

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Pedro Antonio Marin (ca.1930 – 2008), the historical and unbeatable figure and leader of guerilla movement known as FARC; movement that grow exactly from families incorporated since 1940s, and then lured or conscription of children since early 1990s, for whom the guerrilla become a family. See: María Victoria Uribe, *Matar, rematar y contramatar: Las Masacres de la Violencia en el Tolima 1948 – 1964*, published as issues 159 and 160 of Controversia magazine (Bogotá: Cinep - centro de investigación y educación popular, 1990), 20, 107; and Arturo Alape, Las vidas de Pedro Antonio Marín, Manuel Marulanda Veléz, Tirofijo. (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 1989), 50.

[458] The family was again confirmed as literal and rhetoric heart of violence in late 1990s, particularly in the region known as The Great Antioquia (where the artists is from), and the Northern regions of Colombia, with the rise and consolidation of Medellin Drug Cartel in 1980s, and the Colombian United Self-defenses (AUC), the largest group of rightist paramilitary. It is not accidental that the most visible leaders of the AUC were the members of the Castaño family, some of who finally ended killing one the other by 2005. See: César Augusto Tapias Hernández, *Historias de familia. Etnografía delirante sobre el amor, la violencia y las drogas* (Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2005).

"The [Medellín] cartel members shared family ties, kinship or proximity in their rural or urban provenances. They were cousins, uncles, nephews, brothers, sons, brothers-in-law, sons—in-law, daughters-in-law, in short, relatives or neighbors from the same neighborhood or village, and they knew each other long before entering in the business, temporarily or permanently". Carlos Alberto Uribe, "Magia, brujería y violencia en Colombia," Revista de Estudios Sociales, no. 15, Junio (2003): 68

Fidel, Carlos, and Vicente Castaño founded the Peasant Self-Defense Forces of Córdoba and Urabá (ACCU), in order to retaliate the assassination of their father, Jesús Castaño, by FARC-EP guerrillas. Jasmin Hristov, *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Colombia* (Ohio University Press, Jul 31, 2014), 65-70. See also chapters 4 and 5 in: María Teresa Ronderos, *Guerras recicladas* (Bogotá: Aguilar, 2014).

[459] Peter Waldmann, *Guerra civil, terrorismo y anomia social: el caso colombiano en un contexto globalizado* (trans.) Monique Delacre (Bogotá: Grupo editorial Norma, 2007), 101

new meanings, and use the rituals as an aesthetic and formal mechanisms for communication. This is especially but not exclusively true of rituals practiced by "non-elite and marginalized groups;"[460] rituals that "cannot be as strongly separated from the everyday" as Victor Turned believed, and on the contrary, tend to get a "subversive and subaltern character."

The second point is related with the apparent appropriation of structural film, which seems to be instructive once again. According to Peter Gidal, structural film seems to have no other -more important- content than the filmic event, or in other words, the performance of its own making; character that actually allowed structural film to be the object of "deconstruction exercises, [that] in their limited way, are not irrelevant as sociological insight into certain filmic operations."[461] In fact, in the late 1990s, Catherine Russell identified in contemporary film, the pertinence of structural film for "experimental ethnography,"[462] which in this case marks more a coincidence of interest in allegory and ethnography at the time,[463] than actually a direct relation between Russell's criticism to anthropology and Echeverri's meditative work. Having said this, and given the fact that *Family Appetites* recorded the ritual and is a meditation on the ritual (in fact it is a very performative meditation that includes haptic perception, sound, scenes, curtains, opening and closing, etc.), the 'shape' given to and the emptying out of the Eucharist ritual are arguably intended to reveal the subversion happening in the *lechona* ritual as a culturally defined performative ritual. In other words, *Family Appetites* is not really interested in making culture and customs the explicit content of the video as if it were an ethnographic documentary or as poetic work that just recalls metaphores of classic myths, as Sáez suggested. The video-installaiton seem to be more interested in customs as the driving force that *also* gives form and empties out rituals; a force that the

[460] Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken, "Change and stability of ritual: an introduction," Ritual Matters: Dynamic Dimensions in Practice, (ed.) Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 3-4
[461] Peter Gidel, "Theory & definition of structural/materialist film", Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies Vol 4 (ed) Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson, and Karen J. Shepherdson (New York, NY: Routkedge, 2004), 153. Originally published in Studio InternationalL Film Issue, 190, 978, November-December (1975): 189-196
[462] Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* ([Durham, NC:] Duke University Press, 1999).
[463] Idem, 4-9. Hal Foster's text "The artists as ethnographer" also betrays that particular move in the mid-1990s.

artist wants to reveal, as she described her way of working, by "mobiliz[ing] fixed temporality of the document", and for "plac[ing] it into a timeless level."[464]

In this sense, we think that the structure of the video, as it has been analyzed here, suggests that the tenebrous community transforms the ritual of sealing violence into a formula for (self)-inflicting violence, and for aesthetically and symbolically communicating it in order to affirm the community's sovereignty —This is importantly related to, but not exclusively derived from, the *lechona* ritual transferred from Spain and partially subverted: ritual which we describe in the footnotes as related to a 12th century tradition[465] of sovereign power (power of exception) and exclusion in Spain,[466] and 17th

[464] Clemencia Echeverri and Piedad Bonnet, "Clemencia Echeverri: Conversación con Piedad Bonnet", page 5

[465] While this legacy has apparently not been researched, what follows in this and next footnote are some important elements to take into account. In this footnote we recount some points regarding the ritual in Spain, and in the next in Colombia.

*Lechona* is part of a tradition of slaughtering piglets inherited from Spain. In 15th and 16th centuries, this tradition was alredy regarded to descend from the times of the Visigoth *Hispania Christiana* (7th-8th centuries). The latter, which ended with the Muslin conquest of most of the Spanish peninsula, not only marked "the glorious origins of the country's first [Christian] evangelization"(i), but also stablished, as it is evident in the Lex Visigothorum (ca. 654), the ideas that all the subjects would stop being *romani* and *gothi* to become *hispani*, and that "Spanish lineage and not dynasty was at the root of the nation."(ii) Therefore, we should not be surprised by the fact that even if the Spanish Reconquista (8th-15th centuries) was not exactly a unified project (as it actually involved many confrontations between medieval Christian rulers), nonetheless each of the more influential local forces pulling for reconquering the land recalled the Hispania Christiana as a central and mythical reference of a nation united by bloodline; reference that arguably preceded the notion of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) important for the Spanish Inquisition centuries later (iii).

The importance of bloodline was particularly central in Asturian-Leonese kings (iv), whose idea of founding a neo-Visigothic empire was still alive in 12th century. In this sense, it may not be accidental, that the ritual was recorded in the agricultural calendar (ca. 12th century), part of most emblematic series of frescos celebrating Catholic religion and Spanish nationalism at the time. We are talking of the frescos of the Royal Pantheon in León, popularly known as the 'sistine chapel' of the Romanesque period. Exactly between the vault with the impressive fresco of Christ Pantocrator, and the vault with the representation of Christ of the Apocalypses, we find an arch with the fresco of the calendar, where the piglets are painstakingly depicted.

Notes:

(i) Guy Lazure. "Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II's Relic Collection at the Escorial", *Renaissance Quarterly* Vol. 60, No. 1 (Spring 2007), 69 See also: Pablo Fernández Albaladejo, "Materia de España y edificio de historiografía: algunas consideraciones sobre la década de 1540", *La encuadernación: historia y arte*, ed. Guadalupe Rubio de Urquía (Madrid: efeda, 2001), 142-159

(ii) "In Spain, unlike France, lineage and not dynasty was at the root of the nation. In the eyes of sixteenth-century chroniclers, the Visigoths were the ones who had given Spain its religion, its political system, its unity and continuity, and ultimately its identity. Claiming their heritage was a way to smooth out regional differences and distinctions and give the new Habsburg dynasty (itself of gothic origin) a certain historical legitimacy" Lazure. "Possessing the Sacred…," 69 fn. 32.

(iii) See for instance: Stafford Poole, "The Politics of Limpieza de Sangre: Juan de Ovando and His Circle in the Reign of Philip II", *The Americas*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Jan., 1999):359-389

(iv) Lyle N. McAlister, *Spain and Portugal in the New World: 1492-1700* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1984), 16

[466] Given such importance of the ritual as it was indicated in the previous footnote, it is arguable that it became a significant public performance and strategy for mockery and cultural oppression of Muslims and Jews, and for "distinguishing" them from those loyal to both Catholic religion and Spanish nationalism. (i) In fact, we should not forget that the Spanish word *marrano* (applied generally for pigs and piglet), apparently derived from the Arabic terms *muḥarram* (i.e., 'forbidden') and *Mura'in* ('hypocrite', 'traitor') or from the Germanic *marrjan'* (i.e., 'to deviate from what is right') (ii), was first used in Peninsular Romance (documented since 965) to designate the pigs, and since 13th century in Castellan to designate new Christians converted from Islam and Judaism.

Interestingly, as Pamela Parton has recently showed, Jewish and Muslim were many times conflated, and the former were depicted with physical features of the latter (who were also called *morisco*) (iii) as it is betrayed in Master Bartholomew's panels for an altarpiece of Cathedral or Ciudad Rodrigo (1480-1488). Arguably the public was very aware of the conflation, and contrary to depictions in the North of Europe where the black skin would follow the link between dark skin and demonic behavior, in this case the conflation worked as a particular way of estrangement. (iv) Notably, it was only at the end of the Reconquista when the word *marrano* was applied solely to Jews converted into Christianity, while the words *mudéjar* (v) and *morisco* continued to be being used for Muslims or Muslim converted, undoubtedly as a way of categorizing the new subjects of the triumphant Spanish power.(vi)

Arguably, the ritual of slaughtering of pigs in late 15th century and early 16th century not only intended to transgress Muslims' and Jews' taboos, but also showed the Spaniards (and converted) as people who were liberated from it. In other words, the ritual of slaughtering became not only a way Catholic-Spaniards reinvented and rewrote Christian mores, but also celebrated them as invested with the power of the exception, a gift given by God to be used against the nonbelievers. In this sense, we could wonder if the ritual was, up to certain extent, a sort of profane practice of a sovereign power that had its official and non-transgressive face in Saint James, the slayer. Notably, this mythical figure central in the narratives of the Reconquista and who will dubbed him as 'Moor-slayer' apparently in the later 16th century but not before, (vii) emerged in the 12th century in Asturias as a saint-warrior, and was recognized as patron Saint of Asturias-Leon and Castilla in 13th century, and of the Catholic King and Queen in late 15th century at the end of the reconquest, and played an important role "in the burgeoning understanding of the Spanish nation." (viii)

Notes:

(i) Jaume Fàbrega, "La cultura del cerdo en el Mediterráneo, entre el rechazo y la aceptación," *La alimentación mediterránea*, (ed.) F. Xavier Medina (Barcelona: Icária Antrazyt, 1996), 228-29

(ii) Joseph Pérez, *Los judíos en España* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2013) 242, fn.7

(iii) *Morisco* is the diminutive of Spanish *moro* i.e., moor; which in turn derived from Greek *máuros* i.e., black) See entries in *Diccionario de La Lengua Española*

(iv) Pamela A. Patton, *Art of Estrangement: Redefining Jews in Reconquest Spain* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press), 117

(v) Mudéjar derives from the Arabic *mudaÿÿan* i.e., 'domestic' or 'domesticated'. See entries in *Diccionario de La Lengua Española.*

(vi) A copy of the first *Cédula Real* issued in 1501 can be found in: Pascual Boronat y Barrachina, *Los Moriscos españoles y su expulsión: Estudio histórico-crítico*, Vol 1 (Valencia: Imprenta de Francisco Vives y Mora, 1901) 8 ft.38

(vii) There is no documentations of the use of the term 'Matamoros' before 17th century. Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, appears to be the first text where the expression 'Santiago Matamoros' is found, Nonetheless, it may be the case that, as Denise Péricard-Méa suggests, the expression was already a popular one and easily recognized by the readers. Denise Péricard-Méa, "Saint Jacques, de l'apôtre au Matamore", *SaintJacquesInfo [En ligne], Saint Jacques un et multiple, Le saint politique*. 20/12/2011, URL: http://lodel.irevues.inist.fr/saintjacquesinfo/index.php?id=1333

(viii) Erin Katheleen Rowe, *Saint and Nation*: *Santiago, Teresa of Avila, and Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 21

century colonialist discourses and practices in New Granada,[467] in which undoubtedly, paraphrasing Aimé Césaire, becomes evident that nobody colonizes and is colonized innocently, and no one really colonizes

[467] It is remarkably that Extremadura, a region in Spain recognized as the land where the most cruel leaders of the bloody conquest of the American continent were born, was not only one of the main focus Christian resistance against the power of Muslim caliphate in Spain since the 13th century, but also was well known for being a land of "hog-oriented people" who recognized "the utility of the pig as a dependable source of fresh meat". For instance, accounts offered by Inca Garcilazo de la Vega and other sources, say that Gonzalo Pizarro included in his ill-fated Amazonian expedition a motley combination of men and animals, including a drove of hogs whose number was estimated at from three to five thousand.(i) Similar interest in use of pigs is found in conquest expeditions directed by Hernando De Soto, Juan Vásquez de Coronado y Anaya, Hernán Cortés, and Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada. (ii) Notably, Father Bernardino de Sahagún, the Spanish Franciscan compiler of the famous Florentine Codex (1575-1577) taught natives not only the religion but also to eat "that which the Castilian people eat, because it is good food, that with which they are raised, they are strong and pure and wise." (iii)

Apart from having been used as victuals, and having actually become a destructive 'natural force' that affected the native landscape and devoured native's crops and brought illnesses (which accidentally killed many natives who were not immune to them) (iv), pigs were, in the minds of conquerors and colonizers, metaphors of exceptional power and sovereign violence. It is worth noticing that at the time of the colony, the region of Tolima, since then famous of the preparation of lechona, was inhabited by the Pixaos, Coyaima, and Natagaima groups, who apparently practiced anthropophagy until 16th century, but probably had stopped practicing those rituals before the 17th century. (v) Whatever the case, in 1611 Don Juan de Borja, Governor and General Captain of New Granada, exaggerated, like others did, (vi) the information about anthropophagy among Pixaos. He resorted to a Real Cédula issued in 1553 —which stated that only the anthropophagous groups could be slaved— (vii) in order to legitimize the subjugation and taxation of the 'bellicose' Pixaos who, unlike the Coyaima and Natagaima, explicitly and decisively rejected the domination and control by the Spaniards. (viii) Besides the economic and political interest, it is remarkable the rhetoric used by Spanish representatives and local Chroniclers: in his demand, de Borja stated that "Prisoners [taken by Pixaos] were fattened up for the purpose of consumption, infants roasted like lechonas on the barbecue, [and] dead exhumed and cut into pieces that were later fried and eaten." (ix)

It is worth noticing that the use given here to the motif of the lechona does not contradict what Bernardino affirmed about teaching natives to become pure and wise as Spaniards are. On the contrary, they both reaffirm in the 'New World' the motif of the slaughtering and consumption of the piglets as a practice of transgression that restated Catholic Spaniards' power, while described the criminal transgression when in need of otherizing the natives.

Notes:

(i) David E. Vassberg, "Concerning Pigs, the Pizarros, and the Agro-Pastoral Background of the Conquerors of Peru", Latin American Research Review Vol. 13, No. 3 (1978): 47

(ii) Inca Garcilaso de la vega, Historia general del Perú (Córdoba, 1617), folio 83 and 83 verso; Augustín de Zárate, Historia del descubrimiento y conquista delas provincias del Perú... (Sevilla, 1577)

(iii) R. A. Donkin, *The Peccary: With Observations on the Introduction of Pigs to the New World [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society Vol. 75, Part 5]* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1985), 42

(iv) Quoted in: Jeffrey M Pilcher, *¡Que Vivan los Tamales!* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1998), 36

(v) León García Garagarza, "The Year the People Turned into Cattle: The End of the World in New Spain, 1558", *Centering Animals in Latin American History*, ed. Martha Few and Zeb Tortorici (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 43

(vi) Angela Mendoza, "Indianische Bauern in Zentralkolumbien (Guatavita-Tuá)," Anthropos, Bd. 71, H. 5./6. (1976): 796

(vii) Pedro Ordóñez de Ceballos, *Historia, y Viaje del mundo*… (Madrid: Juan García Infanzón, 1691), 111.

(viii) Manuel Lucena Salmoral, "Mitos, usos y costumbres de los indios Pixaos", Revista Colombiana de Antropologia 11 (1962): 146.

(ix) Mendoza, "Indianische Bauern…",796.

(x) Pedro Simón, *Noticias historiales de las conquistas de tierra firme en las índias Occidentales* Tomo I (Bogotá Imprenta de Medardo Rivas, 1882 c1626), 192.

and is colonized with total impunity.[468] On the other hand, seeing the second part of the video from the first, we have the idea, simple as it may sound, that the transference and appropriation of the rituals intends to activate the traditional response to the ritual appropriated, and intends to impose a foreclosure of previous (exertion of) violence in order to reach the community's immunity.

In this order of ideas, *Family Appetites* not only suggests, on the one hand, communication, and on the other, immunity, but puts both in a 'structure' of mutual implication, in which, paraphrasing Roberto Esposito's interpretation of Niklas Luhman: 'not only exists communication (and family-community) and then its immunization, nor is it merely the case that family-community (and the communication) immunizes itself from the foreign as well as from the treason with the familiar. What is actually the case is that immunization is *already of itself* communication, and in complementary fashion, communication is the very form of immunization.'[469]

## The ambiguous touch: Third part

The central scene fades out, and a new 'curtain' fades in. It is followed by a new crossfade that shows, for a short time (even shorter than the 'curtain'), a slow motion ECU of the hands of two men opening what seems to be the chest of the piglet (Figure 65). The video record is then paused and, like in the first scene, replaced by the B&W photo of the video-still. This later shot is the second longest after the opening, arguably underlying the activation of memories. However, while in the first scene you get the sense that

[468] Regarding this sovereign power and exception indicated in the previous and next two footnotes, and particularly Don Juan de Borja's words, we paraphrase Césaire: "The colonizer, who in order to [facilitate and affirm his sovereignty and exception from taboo…] gets into the habit of seeing the other man *as* an animal [or presents the animal as mocking representation of the other], accustoms himself to treating the other like an animal, and tends objectively to transform himself into an animal." Our italics. Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (trans.) Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 41

[469] "This is the classic scheme that Luhmann's critique takes as its point of departure. For him, communication is *already of itself* immunization. Or, in complementary fashion, immunization is the very form of communication: its *non*-communication of anything other than communication, that is, once again, immunization." Roberto Esposito, Immunitas: the protection and negation of life (trans.) Zakiya Hanafi (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011 c2002), 47

Echeverri has paused the video so the activation can take place, in the present case it appears as if the movement of opening the chest were rapidly stopped. It is as if the artist wanted to halt the instrusion, and let the open chest looks like a large wound. The hand enters again in the frame, from the top left. It first touches and emulates one of male hands, and then, slowly and tenderly touches the area corresponding to the 'wound' downwards. Then, in an upwards movement, the fingers stain the two borders of the wound in the photo, while the sound of what seems to be a lit fire (probably burning dry logs) fades in. Then after reaching the uppermost part of the wound, her hand descends again, and the sound starts to fade out. Finally, when we hear only the heart beats, her hand leaves scene through the bottom of the frame.

Figure 65. Clemencia echeverri, Family Appetites (Video-stills, fifth scene) 1998-99

Figure 64. Clemencia Echeverri, Family Appetites (Video-stills, sixth scene) 1998-199

A new crossfade gives way to a 'curtain', followed by a crossfade showing a B&W photo of a video-still of three women's hands stuffing the viscera, apparently in the kitchen. This time the artist's hand enters from the top of the frame briefly emulating one of the hands in the photo, and then moves downwards touching and staining the viscera. We hear again the sounds of lit fire, fireworks, and people talking and celebrating, but we can't understand what they say. The hand continues and touches the stuff in the pot, and later leaves the frame at the bottom right. These sounds continues until a crossfade replaces the photo with the color video record of the women slowly stuffing the viscera. Later, a cut introduces a shot slightly closer to the women's hands, and we hear the voices of women and men.

The use of B&W video-stills in the two scenes seems to suggest that the third part of the video may be one that compresses and invites us to meditate on the first two parts anew. If we assume the use of the video-still as a gesture that suggests playful relations, we can say, at first, that the fifth scene serves to make us rethink the first part, and the sixth, the second. So the gesture of stopping the video short, and the tender touch of the wound, seem to stress cure and care when contrasted to the third scene showing the opening and aggressive penetration, while the scene of stuffing the viscera contrasts with the fourth scene.

Juan Fernando Herrán suggested, probably with the fifth scene in mind, that the Echeverri revisited the "Christian motif of Saint Thomas of Aquinas, who needs to touch the wounds of Christ in order to internalize and accept their suffering."[470] He also affirmed, that the video "alludes to eroticism in order to [let us] experience flesh, blood and death," and "has strong resonances with the concept of «consumption» proposed by Bataille in relation to the sacred. This French author refers not to consumption of goods, but an unproductive consumption in material terms, and needed at a symbolic level in both psychological and social realms." As indicated before, we agree with the first part of Herrán's comment, related to the touch, and even eroticism, but we think that emphasizing Bataille misses

[470] Juan Fernando Herrán, "Historias, escenas e intervalos – Fotografía y video", Proyecto Pentágono: Investigaciones sobre el Arte Contemporáneo en Colombia (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2000) 57.

the first part of the comment, and the importance of it for the meditative 'return' to the family-womb, as we have identified in *Family Appetites*.

Compared to Greek tradition, as it is inherited through modern philosophy in terms of the precedence of mind over body, Bataille proposed a different 'human history,' where the freedom of humanity does not consist in emerging from animality thanks to reason, but redirecting the instinct of sexual reproduction into eroticism and pleasure[471] that transgressed *homo faber*'s life,[472] and the law of *conservatio vitae*. The erotic affirmed the sacred in terms of death and exhaustion, and what he called the "continuity of being," which was meant to take its paradigmatic place in the interrupting practice of sacrifice. In this direction, we can understand his interesting and problematic interpretation of the paintings in Lascaux caves as he stated in a lecture in 1955,[473] and finally recognized in his posthumous book *The Tears of Eros*. For him, the sole figure of the man, painted in the innermost place of the cave/womb as if wearing a bird mask and as if laying on the floor with his phallus erected, was the erotized and death-fearless maker/hunter who hides behind the mask/image.[474] In his interpretation of the cave Bataille identified the 'birth' of humanity with the figure of the maker/hunter who "cease[s] to be animal [by] giving to the animal, and not himself, a poetic image."[475] This is where sacrifice is the exact ritual through which humans imagine themselves in the slaughtered animal, and destroy the animal in an act of faith of being-with others. In short, by destroying the animal-mask, emerged the 'being with' the being behind the mask, that is to say, emerges the community. In this order of ideas, humanity would for

[471] Bataille, *Erotism, Death and Sensuality*, (trans.) Mary Dalwood (New York, NY: First City Lights edition, 1986, c1962), 258
[472] Richard White, "Bataille on Lascaux and the Origins of Art", Janus Head: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. Volume: 11 Issue: 23 (2009): 325.
[473] Georges Bataille, "A Visit to Lascaux: A lecture at the Société d'Agriculture, Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts d'Orléans" The Cradle of Humanity: Prehistoric Art and Culture, ed. and trans. S Kendall and M. Kendall (New York: Zone Books, 2005): 47-56
[474] "Thus, in this barely accessible crevice stands revealed—but obscurely—a drama forgotten for so many millennia: it re-emerges, but it does not leave behind its obscurity. This essential and paradoxical accord is between death and eroticism […] Is it not heavy with that initial mystery, which is in itself the coming into the world, the advent, of man? Does it not at the same time link this mystery to eroticism and death?" Georges Bataille, *The Tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1990), 53.
[475] Georges Bataille, "The Passage from Animal to Man and the Birth of Art", The Cradle of Humanity: Prehistoric Art and Culture, ed. and trans. S Kendall and M. Kendall (New York: Zone Books, 2005): 60

Bataille a sort of post-animal project (We adopt here David Clark´s use of the temr as a critical response to the idea of post-humanism.'[476] ).

However, Bataille himself recognized that the ritual of sacrifice is a "comedy": we actually witness the "blind convulsion of organs" that have replaced the life of the animal. In the same vein, sacrifice seems to inaugurate humanity and community, but according to Bataille, when unmasked, the other being is still another, and humanity-community is rather something that cannot be achieved. We can hardly ignore that his characterization of sacrifice echoes G.W.F. Hegel's description of what the later identified as a third type of comedy:[477] one where there is a sort of "erasure of subjectivity",[478] and where the "comic harmony is actually one of chance, not of reason". In this sense, it is not contradictory that Bataille´s response to the photo of the Chinese prisoner who raised his eyes heavenward while being skinned alive: Bataille described and enjoyed the cutting exerted by the sovereign power, [479] while he also "shut[ed] off the vision of the other side of the vulnerable."[480] In his reaction to the romantic idea of community, the vulnerable becomes for Battaile a mask, a disguised comic mask of the impossibility of community. Symptomatically, his notion of eroticism hardly dwells on touch and tenderness —It is worth noticing that for Kristeva the situation is somehow similar, since she understand that the abject "emerges

[476] We follow here the idea proposed by Mathew Clark, of 'post-animal' as a sort of critical corollary to the Carry Wolfe's question and book "What is Posthumanism?." Clark suggests that the term post-animal is meant to have render problematic the 'post' in Wolfe's account, "while preserving the interrogative force and irremissible open-endedness [of Derrida's question] «What does 'to be after' [the animal] mean?.»" Matthew Senior, David L. Clarck and Carla Freccero, "Editors's preface: *Ecce animot*: postanimality from Cave to Screen," *Animots: postanimality in French though* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 8.. See also: David L. Clark, "Not ours, this death, to take into our bones": The Postanimal after the Posthuman," *Woldpicture journal* 7, Autum (2012) URL: http://www.worldpicturejournal.com/WP_7/Clark.html

[477] "A third type, in addition to the first two, is based on the use of external contingencies. Through their various and peculiar complications, situations arise in which aims and their accomplishment, inner character and external circumstances, are put in contrast with one another comically, and then they lead to an equally comic solution" Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts. Trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 1201.

[478] Mark W. Roche, "Hegel's theory of comedy in the context of Hegelian and modern reflections on comedy", Revue Internationale de Philosophie 3/2002 (n° 221), 417.

[479] "What happens to the anguished gaiety of Bataille's gaze upon the work of death and dismemberment and/as the (immeasurable) loss of meaning, which he associates with a practice of sovereignty, that could only take place at the limits or the interruption of discourse" Louis Kaplan, "Unknowing Susan Sontag's Regarding: Recutting with Georges Bataille", *Postmodern Culture* Vol. 9, Number 2, January (2009) URL: http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v019/19.2.kaplan.html

[480] Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism: naming contemporary violence*, 56

into sight when man strays on the territories of the animal,"[481] that is to say, as Imogen Tylers underscores, abjection and violence are though and seen "from the perspective of 'the man who strays' rather than the perspective of the subject who finds themselves interpellated as abject."[482]

A different relation with the animal takes place in *Family Appetites* and in works like Heide Hatry's performance and installation *Skin Room* (2006), which involves a cave/womb fostering sensual perception and we describe in a footnote.[483] In both works the artists point to memory, rituals, intimate spaces, and human or social bonding involving experiences of sensual closeness between humans and pigs (Remarkably, according to archeological findings, pigs were the only animal whose gender, as with humans, was differentiated by using different terms in Ancient Egypt.[484] It is also said that Aristotle called pigs "the animals most like people").[485] In addition, both artworks emerge in relation to the artists' families.[486] Nonstheless, there are important differences between both works. While Hatry's performance

[481] Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, 12.
[482] Tyler, "Against abjection," 86
[483] In this three-day long work originally presented in the Kunstverein in Heidelberg, in 2006, this German artist wore a sleeveless white long wedding gown, and carried the bloodied lifeless carcasses of slaughtered pigs to a stainless steel butcher's table. She skinned the carcasses, washed and scrubbed the skin pieces on a washboard, cut them into perfect rectangular sections by using a glass template, and printed an oval-shaped dry-seal mark that included the title, place, and date of the art piece. Afterwards, she used the sections she had cut, and affixed them to wood panels she latter assembled as walls, floor, and ceiling of a small and narrow 'house' (two meters long and high, and one meter wide). People were required to remove their shoes and socks before entering and walking through the room, which was minimally illuminated by low-wattage light-bulb. The room provoked an intimate connection with a skin that is uncannily resembled human skin. By building the room as a sort of enclosed and lightly lighted space, the artists wanted to recall caves as first human dwellings with floors covered with fur of animals. As a place of transit (and as transitory space of inhabitation), the room also recalled the "warm body of [one's] mother", as Heinz-Norbert Jocks affirmed. According to the artists, the room was also intended to connect the audience with "basic materials on which we have built civilization and which we have progressively hidden from view over the years" in a sort of repression that goes hand in hand with the consolidation of an "industrialized, socially invisible, and largely unconsidered slaughter of animals". The performance included a woman naked and laying down face up on a white and horizontal pedestal, and two women (seemly tweens) who mixed with the public and wore very similar clothes apparently made of similar pig skin. See: Heinz-Norbert Jocks, "Der Geist der Schwelle Im Licht tradierter Rituale", Kunstforum International 184 (2007): 48, 50; Heide Hatry, "About the Work", Heide Hatry. 2006. URL http://www.heidehatry.com/skin_room.html
[484] H. te Velde, "Some Egyptian deities and their pigishness", The Intellectual Heritage ofEgypt. Studies Presented to Laszlo Kakosy by Friends and Colleagues on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Studia Aegyptiaca XIV, ed. Ulrich Luft (Budapest, 1992): 571-578
[485] Brett Mizelle, Pigs (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 31.
[486] Heinz-Norbert Jocks, "Der Geist…", 48.

appears to us a parody of Bataille's Lascaux cave (and perhaps of the so-called "abject criticism"),[487] *Family Appetites* subverts Bataille's sacrifice. In fact, Hatry emphasizes the idea of touch (sensibility) in order to recover the forgotten 'prehistorical' animal lost in daily and mechanized even if artisanal production of sacrifice. For her part, Echeverri recovers the *lechona* as ritual of community and humanity in terms of humanity as a human, too human "project in the making."[488] This points to the fact that Echeverri participates in a ritual that has been inherited, transferred and translated, and is still performed by and in community. In a sense, sacrifice is neither assumed as sealing sublime ritual, nor comedy, but an enactment of violent heart of community. Hatry's and Echeverri's works propose different emphases in the way of interpreting Jacques Derrida's dictum *l'animal que donc je suis*, which can be understood, respectively, as 'the animal therefore I follow´, and ´the animal I therefore am.'

In the second sense, we can identify *Family Appetites* as a project revealing "atavistic" links, as the artist herself calls it.[489] Atavistic affirms neither social Darwinism, nor Battaille´s animal. It rather suggests two different meanings that, we think, converge in the video-installation. First, it may be

[487] Hatry explicitly relates the performance with her father, who made a living from slaughtering pigs. Interestingly, the artists imitates the acting role of her father, marks and cuts the skin in standardized sections suggesting industrial (re)production, and dresses two women with clothes made of skin suggesting consumption of goods. She mimics the sort of (re)production Bataille criticized, and even more, the mature groom skinning pigs, is also an ironic if not parodic imitation of the maker/hunter (in Bataille's cave) aroused and dead when interacting with animals. Hayte interrupts and points to the problematic idea of making of the animal a poetical image or human's mask/skin. Skin Room does not suggest a move out from animality by means of the erotic, but rather a sensual move towards the animal, as if looking for life and sensitivity (i.e., tactile and emotion) as a common element between animals and humans. And more particularly, as suggested by the artists, the touch is also meant the let people perceive the socially invisible and unconsidered slaughter of animals. Her 'marriage' with pigs, is a double gesture of critic and invitation to rethink the Ehe (which in German means 'social contract' and 'marriage'), that is to say, the (re)productive as well erotic 'coupling' that has 'washed away' and repressed a relation other with animals. In a sense, her work echoes some ideas found in the so-called 'biocentrism' (see Botar), and the criticism to the erasure of animal subjectivity and emotion as identified by proposal on "animal welfare" in Europe (see Johnson). Oliver A. I. Botar, "Defining Biocentrism", Biocentrism and Modernism, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wünsche (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 15-45; Connie L. Johnston, "Geography, Science, and Subjectivity: Farm Animal Welfare in the United States and Europe", Geography Compass, 7: 139–148

[488] We have adopted this idea of the 'project in the making', from Brett Buchanan. Unfortunately, he does not develop it in his article, and just calls it a "wild hypothesis", that is to say, that "humanity is a condition that is never fully formed inasmuch as it is a process continually in the making." Brett Buchanan, "Painting the Prehuman: Bataille, Merleau-Ponty, and the Aesthetic Origins of Humanity," Journal for Critical Animal Studies, Volume IX, Issue 1/2, (2011): 15

[489] "These documents have a temporary that contains elements of archival and register (trace). It is a material that located between the atavistic or its posterior meaning." Clemencia Echeverri and Piedad Bonnet, "Clemencia Echeverri: Conversación con Piedad Bonnet". Page 5

understood in relation to its Latin etymology: *atavus* means grandfather's grandfather,[490] and denotes familiar bonds (even bloodline), and a span of six generations, that is to say, a little over one century, and a period of memories, stories, inheritance hardly fitting the idea of prehistoric, or Caillois' imaginary of nature. This period could perhaps be thought of as immemorial, if by this we mean the 'shape' of transferred, subverted, and subalternated rituals. On the other hand, 'atavism' recalls the idea of traits that have disappeared phenotypically but do not necessarily disappear from an organism's DNA, and may be (spontaneously or experimentally) activated. While the common view understands the trait as only reappearing in an individual under exceptional circumstances, there is also another possibility called *taxic atavism*, according to which the "ancestral traits have become established as normal phenotypic component of descendant groups."[491] These two possibilities may help us to understand atavism in less derogatory and 'prehistorical' terms.

We interpret atavism in the video-installation, appropriating Heidegger's terminology, as a latent and (accidentally or intentionally) to-be-gestated-and-activated 'being-with' of the historical past, that may presently be projected towards the future. The atavistic is therefore part of the very process of gestation and a sort of social memory or a memory of a collective residing in the mutual social and cultural connection.

It in this direction, we can move to the last scene where the video suggests that the act of activating memory 'fleshes out' and gives substance to 'posterior' perception of violence for and within a community; the latter echoing the idea of *communitas* as "the sole dimension of the animal «man»,"[492] and also as the most "potentially disintegrating" force for fracturing, transforming, subverting and drifting meanings of social forms. In fact, the scene acquires a particular sense as it is the only one related to

[490] See entry atavus: Charlton T. Lewis and. Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) Online.URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
[491] Melanie Stianssy, "Atavism", Keywords and Concepts in Evolutionary Developmental Biology (eds.) Brian.K. Hall, Wendy M. Olson (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2007), 12
[492] Esposito, *Communitas*, 8.

cooking, and not slaughtering (scenes 1, 3, and 5) or consumption (scene 2). It is also interesting that the third part reinforces a division of genres in duties (*mūneras*, i.e., the individual's responsabilities to provide service or contribution to his or her community) in the video, and at the same time the last scene reveals for first time women having a clear leading role in the communal ritual.

One could be tempted to follow Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralism in order to identify poles, where the male figure (and the convex space, the opening and dividing mutilation, the exo-cuisine, the excess, the flashing inspiration, and the roasting), stands in opposition to the female figure (and the filling and curing operation, the concave space, the endo-cuisine, the development of social ties, the knowledge patiently achieved, and the boiling).[493] However, these sort of analytical poles run the risk of affirming a problematic 'ontologization' (for instance, males kill, females cure), that hardly accounts for both the reality of violence,[494] and the fact of a hand staining the photos as if violence (even if by contamination) has not necessarily been left behind after being exerted by male hands. In this order of ideas, the sixth scene does not gratuitously speak about the end of violence. Seen in relation with the previous parts, the scene speaks of a sort of ambiguity and highlights that perception of violence is mediated, prepared, and arranged for immunization-communication.

In this order of ideas, we can recall Jean-Luc Nancy's reflection on violence published in *The Ground of Image*, and declare with him that "violence always makes an image of itself",[495] and imposes its appearing (*aletheia*, truth) and therefore makes its truth.[496] However, while we agree with the previous idea, *Family Appetites*, *Flower Vase Cut* and even *Musa Paradisiaca* suggest the need of distancing from Nancy's statements according to which "violent and violating" violence "does not transform what it

[493] Pedro Gómez García, "Lo crudo, lo cocido y lo podrido: de las estructuras mitológicas a las culinarias", Anthropologica: Revista de etnopsicología y etnopsiquiatría 13-14 (1993), 102.
[494] "By 2000, women accounted one third of the FARC [-EP] combatants". Elaine Carey, "Women in Political Violence in Colombia," Women and War: A Historical Encyclopedia from Antiquity to the Present (ed.) Bernard A. Cook (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 127. In the case of the AUC and paramilitary groups, see for instance: Patricia Lara, *Las Mujeres en la Guerra* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta, 2000).
[495] Nancy, "Image and Violence", The Ground of the Image (trans.) Jeff Fort (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2005), 20
[496] Idem, 16

assaults." Nancy added that violence takes away the "form and meaning [of the assaulted 'object', turning] it into nothing other than a sign of its own rage," while "reveals [itself] and believes that it reveals [itself] absolutely."[497] In a highly romantic approach, Nancy posits an extreme and ontological difference between the violence of truth, which we could call world-transforming and world-creative violence, and the truth of violence and violating violence where "the [perpetrator's] force [contrasted to the artist's force and effort,] is no longer force […but] a sort of pure, dense, stupid, impenetrable intensity."[498] While it is true that this is not the place for a criticism of Nancy's proposal and understanding of community, we thik he uncritically assumes a depoliticized ontology of violent and violating violence. In fact, Nancy problematically (dis)places violent violence outside the system it affects.[499] It seems to us that Nancy not only undertheorizes and depoliticized the 'Streit' as Oliver Marchant criticized,[500] but also (dis-)misses what the artworks here studied show and attend to: the fact that violent and violating violence creates body-images and is *world making*.

These artworks do not only point to –historical facts of– 'institutionalizations' of violence and the configuration of cultures of violence that are not limited to the structure, figure, and power dynamics of State violence. They also point to the dynamics within communitas and the very fact that the challenge and possible task for artists is not just counteracting the supposed self-grounding character of violent violence, but attending to the very paradoxes of such grounding and disruptive violence. A decolonial approach recognizes that the polarity foreignness vs. system lets important historical dynamics of violence unrecognized, especially when we have pointed to the fact that immunization -against violence- is already of itself communication *of* violence, and communication -*of* violence- is the very form of immunization.

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[497] Idem, 26.
[498] Idem, 17.
[499] Violence is understood "*a minima*, as the application of a force that remains foreign to the dynamic or energetic system into which it intervenes." Idem, 16.
[500] Oliver Marchant, *Post-foundational political though: political difference in Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Laclau*. (Edimburg: Edimburg University Press, 2007), 80-81.

In this order of ideas, and appropriating Heidegger's terms once more, we think that *Family Appetites* suggests that violence is also an act *of* being-with (in the double sense of the genitive). Being-with's violence hides (*letheia*) *and* unconceals (*a-letheia*),[501] shatters, rearticulates, transforms from within our being-with, and also configures and intends to impose a being-with on the victims and their families and communities (which can be the very same communities and families of the perpetrators and both individuals and familiar groups). Being-with's violence reveals and hides itself in the symbols and forms of its body-images and performative gestures like the mutilations (vg. the slitting of the throat in the mutilation known as 'Flannel Cut'[502] and the ritual slaughtering of the piglet related to the former)[503] that evoke and provoke effects and passions, and could only superficially and wrongly be considered merely marks of rage, when they are actually images and performances of sovereignty and power. In short, *Family Appetites* underlines that there is *also* (the) being-with's grounding groundless violence that

[501] We appropriate here Heidegger's widely known interpretation and use of the term *aletheia* after 1935: *aletheia* is truth (*a-letheia*) and untruh (*letheia*). Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth", *Pathmarks*, trans. John Sallis (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 148.

[502] This is the more famous and arguably most exerted mutilation. It has been identified as one initially produced in the region of Tolima during the period known as 'The Violence', It is basically a slit of the neck that cuts the tendons of the front neck, in order to create a hole in the area of the esophagus, in which most of the times sticks are inserted. The slit resembles those performed on piglets in order to bleed them. The "Flannel Cut' was (and is still) a highly sexualized practice of transgression undifferentiatedly exerted on men and women but evidently assumed as way of 'effeminizating' the victim. (i) The practice of "Flannel Cut" meant to stain el honor of a family within a very sexist and religious society in which peasants used to say "honor is the poor's wealthy", (ii) and where the figure of honor and the God father, instead of defining ethic patterns and condemning the perpetrator, (iii) actually served or is articulated to reaffirm a patriarchal structure indeed.

Notes:

(i) Juan Carlos Guerrero Hernández, "Los cuerpos en dolor (I): emblemática del régimen ético de la violencia", *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 35 (Abril, 2010), 128.

(ii) Peasant quoted in: Virginia Gutiérrez de Pineda, *Familia y Cultura en Colombia* (Editorial Universidad de Antioquia, 1994 c1968), 203

(iii) From a social perspective on this crime, the use of the word dishonor to refer to rape against women is symptomatic, since "rather than repudiating the perpetrator, it deprives the victim [and the family] of her [and the family's] reputation and prestige." CNRR - Grupo de Memoria Histórica, "*Mujeres y guerra Víctimas y resistentes en el Caribe colombiano* (Bogotá: Ediciones Semana, 2011), 18

[503] Remarkably, the effeminization that, as indicated in the previous footnote, takes place in the 'Flannel cut' is also present in the preparation of *lechonas*, which are called 'virgin [female] pigs', and when a male piglet is used, it has to be previously castrated because the "male odor" and "flavor" is said to be 'repugnant'. The smell and taste are actually owed to androstenone molecules, pheromones produced in the testicles, released during times of excitation, and deposited in the fat. Alicia Varela Lalanda, "Castración de lechones", El blog del manejo del cerdo 15 febrero 2008, 8:21 pm URL: http://porcinoformacion.wordpress.com/2008/02/15/castracion-de-lechones/

intends to impose itself as truth, and to impose hows, whats, whys, institutions, images, messages, and policies, and articulates and subverts rituals.

## The focus

Finally, a new crossfade shows the closing of the video. It is a CU and slow-motion record of flames, perhaps inside a wood-stove. At this moment, apart from the heart beats that have accompanied the video images the whole time, we hear the sounds of the lit fire and voices. We cannot understand what they said, but we suppose are the voices of the family members celebrating at the table.

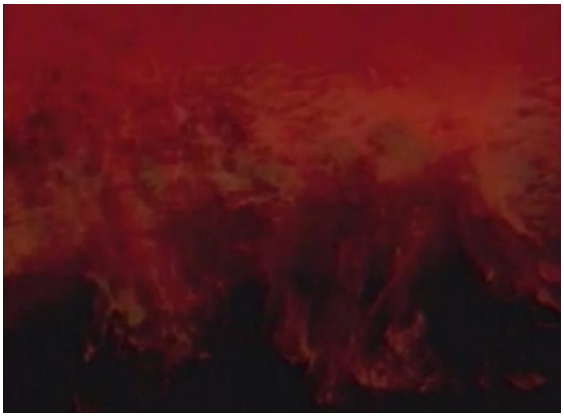

Figure 66. Clemencia Echeverri, Family Appetites (Video-stills, closing) 1998-99

The use of motif of the fire at the end of the video is somehow ambigous. It may recall, in Western arts, decay and consuption, like in the depictions of Christian hell. Nonetheless, it also recalls rites of passage, transformation, and purification, as it is suggested in Christian depictions of the Purgatory, which runs closer to the the idea, stated by the so-called Fathers of the Church, according to which one could not enter into heaven with one's "wood and hay and stubble",[504] as it would "defile the kingdom" of God, but it would not be just to receive no reward for one's "gold and silver and precious stones." The fire may also be the fire of passion, which has been rendered in Christian paiting in relation to the 'Sacred Heart of Jesus' as well as to the mystic hearts and visions of saints like Saint Theresa of Avila, for whom cooking and spiritual service went together. In addition, among the Aluund Democratic Republic of Congo,

[504] Edward Hanna, "Purgatory," The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church Vol 12 (eds.) Charles George Herbermann, Edward Aloysius Pace, Condé Bénoist Pallen, Thomas Joseph Shahan, and John Joseph Wynne (New York, NY: Catholic Encyclopedia Incorporated, 1913), 577

conception is described in terms of the water (semen) entering to warm itself and be ignited by the fire in the womb, allowing the red blood-stuff to be cooked and become a child.[505]

The closing of *Family Appetites* seems to confront us with death, a passing and a purge, a consummation and a birth in the family-community as womb-heart of violence. The fire, at the end of the video, is focus of meditation (in Latin, *focus* means fire),[506] a meditation we were initially invited when being immersed in the 'blind depths' of the flood of blood, and in the womb of violence. In this immersion, the videoínstallation hardly makes us resort to the nostalgic and romantic idea of a symbiosis of child and mother, yet it affirms a familiarity and complicity with violence. In this sense, this return to the womb may rather be described by recalling John Dwyer's description of the pregnancy of a mother: "we always have before us the picture of a happy mother with a Mona Lisa smile, gazing at her protruding abdomen, with hands resting lightly on that «rumor» that she obviously deeply desires. Deep down, however, her body is doing its best to reject this foreign parasite. The fury of that attack, which nonetheless allows the fetus to survive, is inexplicable. How can a continuous immunological reaction against a developing fetus end up protecting it, rather than destroying it?"[507] Esposito notices that the mother's immune system is "working on a double front, because if on the one hand it is directed toward controlling the fetus, on the other hand it is also controlling itself."[508] So gestation is successful when the "[mechanism] immunizes itself from an excess of immunization." Important role in this has a difference "transmitted hereditarily from the father," which is exactly the reason why, Esposito says, "symbiotic unity between the mother and the child" is just a myth.

[505] Henrietta L. Moore , *The Subject of Anthropology: Gender, Symbolism and Psychoanalysis* (Cambridge, UK: : Polity Press,2007), 89
[506] See entry focus: Charlton T. Lewis and. Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) Online.URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/
[507] John Dwyer, *Le guerre del corpo umano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1991) 104-105. Quoted in: Esposito, Immunitas, 170
[508] Idem.

*Family Appetites* places us in a womb, and with it may suggest the possibility of birth, the possibility of being re-born in history by differentiating us from our being-with's violence. Stepping outside of biology, let us notice a surprising historical inversion of the meaning of the term 'fetus': it derives from the Latin word *fetus*, which means pregnant, breeding, bearing, hatching, producing, filled with young,[509] terms are usually predicated of the pregnant mother. Translating this into our discussion of *Family Appetites*: those in the womb carry within themselves the latency of stablishing a difference with the historical being-with's violence, by gestating and activating in the community as the sole dimension of the animal 'man', a historical being-with past that may presently be projected as human project in the making. The atavistic is the very possibility and opportunity for historical and human (too human) re-creation.

When describing the atavistic before, we pointed particularly to a possibility of understanding it in terms of the video: a span of time and the memories so related that they do not necessarily fit the immemorial, unless we understand the latter as the 'shape' of rituals that have gone through transference, subversions, and subalternations. We would like to add here that *Family Appetites* not only stresses, on the one hand, that the ritual of communion has been fractured and served as ritual of immunization and communication of violence, and on the other, that such communication of violence is the very form of immunization. It seems to us that *Family Appetites* also opens the possibility that the emptied form of the ritual reveals not just a loss of the communal myth (vg. the myth of Christ's sacrifice as sealing sacrifice, the myth of community, the myth of fundamental sacrifice of the mother), but also the possibility for re-configuring the ritual and "transform[ing] the broken repertoire of meanings and expressions,"[510] so with

[509] See entry fetus: Charlton T. Lewis and. Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary. revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879) Online.URL: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/

[510] Anne Kaplan and Ban Wang, "Introduction: From traumatic paralysis to the force field of modernity," *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations* (eds.) A. Kaplan and B. Wang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 12

rituals one may (re-)create a *sense* of community without resorting, for instance, Girard´s sacrificing father, Kristeva's Mother-Medusa, and Battaile's sacrifice.

If this is the case, we think that *Family Appetites* 'responds' to Alonso Moncada's complaint, quoted as an epigraph for the second part of this study. He said: "[t]he virtual expulsion of the lay from the mystical body was the Spanish heritage that led us to believe that we were a Catholic people because we baptized our children or we attended processions. More than a village of Catholics, we are a ritualistic people".[511] On the contrary, ritual is not mere blind mimesis enacted by the colonized or the subordinated. It can be performed as a subversive practice of allegorzation that, paraphrasing Roy Rappaport, "seems to do the impossible", as it may transfer the atavistic "from the domain of the irreversible to the domain of the recurrent."[512] In this sense we underline once more that *Family Appetites* points but also distances from a "structure of trauma" present in Bataille's, Kristeva's, and Girard´s proposals as we briefly discussed them, a structure arguably describable, paraphrasing LaCapra, "as deeply ambivalent, as both shattering or painful and the occasion for *jouissance*, ecstatic elation, or the sublime."[513]

*Family Appetites* also appears to us an effort to address "threshold experiences." Paraphrasing Benjamin once more, we would like to say that the pertinence of *Family Appetites* particularly rests on its awareness of the fact that "we have become poor of threshold experiences (*Schwellenerfahrungen*)"[514] of violence, because we have assumed or have made of them borderline experiences (*Grenzerfahrungen*) of extreme mental/physical stress (i.e., trauma), exclusion and even transcendence, as well as instantiations of structural trauma. That is to say, we have assumed and confined them, like its 'transformed' version in the 'Flannel Cut', to be extreme and deathful irreversible ritual of communication-immunization, or like

[511] Alonso Moncada, *Un aspecto de la violencia* (Bogotá, Promotora Colombiana de Editores, 1963), 25
[512] Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and religion in the making of Humanity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 230.
[513] LaCapra, "Trauma, Absence, Loss", 724
[514] Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagenwerk* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 495 [O2a1]

the contemporary ritual of *lechona*, to be antique 'copies' of classical or mythical rituals, 'innocuously' repetitive popular practices of sacrifice.

On the contrary, we identify a decolonial gesture in *Family Appetites*, even in incipient, in it's the acknowledgment that inherited and subverted rituals serve as pertinent references and places for a performative allegorization of myths of our being-with's violence, and for configuring pensive images that rearticulate the intertwined practices (of mutilations as practices) of immunization and communication of violence. It may be then that the ritual, understood now as "threshold of creation," would be the subversion that "incubates our poverty [of (our) threshold experiences] and turns it creative."[515] In this direction, we think *Family Appetites* resonates with *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* in terms of the actual need of performatively interrupting and allegorizing myth and the structure of trauma, in such a way that these are transformed into critical tools for perception addressing and meditating on historical violence, or are subverted for either for rendering culturally communicable worked-out trauma, or identifying in the ritual the possibility for such work and communication.

[515] Mauricio González, "La imagen Pensante I (El umbral de la creación)", in *Paul Klee: Fragmentos de un mundo* (eds.) María del Rosario Acosta and Laura Quintana (Bogotá: Universidad de Los Andes, 2009),188 .

# 4. SERVICE INCLUDED: A COUNTERFEIT COIN

FOURTH CHAPTER

Alberto Baraya (1968), was born in Bogotá, and currently lives in that city. He studied Fine Arts at the National University of Colombia (1992), and holds a Masters in Aesthetics and Contemporary Art from the Madrid Autonomous University (1995). Baraya's work has been produced and exhibited in different formats like photography, video, painting, and drawing.[516] In this chapter we will discuss his series *Service Included* (1997), produced between 1996 and 1997, before he turned 30. This means he was a young artist at the time and the series shows the in-progress condition of his work's interest in fiction. Unlike his later and more mature work *Herbarium of artificial plants* (2002-2006), which dialogues with the Botanic expeditions mentioned in the second chapter, *Service Included* has scarcely been discussed; Sol Astrid Giraldo's few pages (in her master thesis)[517] being the sole exception.

The series is made of seven cibachrome photomontages, which were initially exhibited in 1997, at Galería Santafe. Given the large number, we have decided to study only a set of three, which offers a

[516] Solo exhibitions: Expedition, Galería Santa Fe IDCT, Bogotá (2006), Fotología, Fundación cu4arto Nivel (2005), Herbario de plantas artificiales, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Bogotá (2003), Mira que teas de morir, Mira que no sabes qvando, Sala Oriente, Sevilla (2000). Group exhibitions: Sin remedio, Galería Alcuadrado, Bogotá, Colombia "Paraísos indómitos", MARCO,Vigo, C.A.A.C. Sevilla, España (2008), How to live together, 27th Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo, (2006), "Global Tour", W139.Amsterdam (2005), Jornadas de video, Laboratorio de las Artes. Mexico City (2004), Quinzaine de la photographie, Lyon (2002), Arte y Violencia en Colombia, Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Bogotá (1999).

[517] Sol Astrid Giraldo Escobar, *De la Anatomía piadosa a la Anatomía Política* Unpublished Master Thesis (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2009), 225-227

clear idea of the project, and which were also selected for the 'Art and Violence in Colombia since 1948' exhibition in 1999.[518]

As has been the case in the previous chapters, we are interested in understanding how, around 1997, artists were working on rearticulating and confronting a tradition of representations of violence. In the case of Baraya we are interested not only in recognizing that, as Sol Giraldo correctly pointed out, this series avoids the practice, found in Augusto Rendón and Luís Ángel Rengifo, of giving very descriptive titles to the works that may serve to foreclose interpretation. On the contrary, Giraldo added, Baraya recalls a "large mythical and historical repertoire", as large as "it may be in the imagination of the viewer." This is in fact a key element. Nonetheless, Giraldo offers what seems to us a 'literal' reading of the panels when she describes the body parts represented as "detritus of a desecrated body in a universe where the fragment is king, and where the body has been thrown to mass graves."[519]

Distancing ourselves from her interpretation, we will pay attention to process involved in the work. It seems to us that one of the challenges that this work has offered in Colombia, both at the time and now, is the lack of repertoire and reflections regarding post-photographical practices in the country, in particular regarding the sort of reappropriation of painting that *Service Included* proposes. In this order of ideas, we need to take into account the very referential work of Beatriz González produced during the 1970s and early 1980s, as it undoubtedly becomes a banister for the idea making of this series an interpretation of dream-working, and a post-photographic simulation of baroque relics that reveal our illusionistic compliance in a traumatized society. At the end, our argument is that this series of "pensive images" brings together painting and photography, and exchange their logics and powers,[520] in order to offer a performative interruption of the crystalline dream of trauma.

[518] Álvaro Medina, *Arte y Violencia en Colombia* cat. Exh.(Bogotá: Museo de Arte Moderno, 1999), 56, 139, 268
[519] Giraldo, *De la anamotía piadosa* ,227
[520] We are here following a description of the pensive images proposed by Rancière in his interpretation of Godard: "[w]hat interest me here is the way in which he employs the labour of the figure on three levels. First of all, he radicalizes the form of figurativeness that consist in intertwining two logic of sequence: each element is articulated

## Counterfeit head

Figure 67. Alberto Baraya, Head, from Service Included series, Photomontage Cibachrome (30x30cms), 1997

We see a life-size head in profile, as if it were placed on a white circular plate on a brownish-red tablecloth or table, and accompanied by something that 'lays' on the left, and is partially is out of frame. The 'panel' evidently recalls the iconic representations of the decapitated head of Saint John the Baptist. While it is true that the artist, in an interview we had with him, does not remember having been inspired by any particular depiction of the saint's head,[521] he was consciously inspired by baroque depictions of the decollation, reason for which a comparison with those representations is instructive in order to identify how Baraya reappropriates the motif. From the large repertoire of depictions of the head, we have selected two that are part of the celebrated collection of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, to which the artist undoubtedly had access when living in Madrid.

The first painting is Domenico Zampieri's *Head of the Baptist* (ca. 1636-1639). Domenichino, as he was also known, painted a life-size head, at a slight three-quarter view of the head turned to our left. This painting, made by an artist who was regarded as Annibale Carracci's favorite pupil and is remembered as strong defender of a classical position on painting in Naples[522] (at the time a Viceroyalty

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with each of the other in accordance with two logic ·-that of the narrative sequence and that of infinite metaphorization. At a second level figutativeness is the way in which several art and several media come to exchange their power. However at a third level it is the way in which one art serves to constitute the imaginary of another." Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* 130.

[521] Skype Interview with the artists. May 21, 2015.

[522] Elizabeth Cropper, *The Domenichino Affair: Novelty, Imitation, and Theft in Seventeenth-century Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 100, 191

of the Spanish Empire), betrays nonetheless the interest in horror "characteristics of Neapolitan [patrons and] art of the first half of the seventeenth century."[523]

Figure 68. Domenichino, Head of the Baptist, Oil on canvas (49 x 60 cm), undated

Remarkably, while it is true that the soft skin and half-opened eyes and mouth, purplish lips and eyelids remain classic, there is an evident baroque twist to the gesture of turning the head to let the viewer see and enjoy the dry, red blood at the neck. The head, depicted on a golden tray, the table dressed with a spotless white tablecloth, and the viewpoint that Domenichino imposes on the viewer, arguably make of the canvas a devotional painting and a representation of the Eucharist. Moreover, the composition and central role of the head obliquely recall the medieval full-face portraits known as *imitation Christi*, meant to represent Christ's virtues, following therefore the tradition of representing a virtuous and rightful Baptist as a premonitory figure of Christ's horrific and promised sacrifice. Nonetheless, the painter again departed from such a strict formula where his *inventio* would be obliterated. So he turned the head to its right side, the very same side on which the good thief is meant to be when Christ is on the cross, but also showed his virtuosity as painter and suggested symmetry by means of a conspicuous fold of the tablecloth.

The second work is Jusepe de Ribera's *Head of Saint John the Baptist*. This painting, produced in 1644, also in Naples, is apparently the first of several representations of the Saint's head produced by the painter.[524] On this canvas, *lo Spagnoletto* painted a life-size head that lies on its right side upon a tray, which in turn is placed on what seems to be a stone slab. The set is accompanied by a sword and a white

[523] Harald Hendrix. "The Repulsive Body: Images of Torture in Seventeenth-Century Naples," in *Bodily Extremities. Preoccupations with the Human Body in Early Modern European Culture* (eds.) Florike Egmond and Robert Zwijnenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003) 69

[524] Blanca Piquero López, "27, José de Ribera: Cabeza de San Juan Bautista, 1644," *Real Academia de San Fernando Madrid - Guía Del Museo* (Madrid: Real Academia de San Fernando Madrid, 2012), 74

cloth on the left, a wooden cross on the right. While the facial features and full-face portrait again reminds the *imitatio Christi* type of portrait, Ribera clearly made a *svolta sinistra* (i.e., counter clock and sinister turn), apparently departing from a premonitory depiction of Christ's sacrifice and death.

Figure 69. Jusepe de Ribera, Head of Saint John the Baptist, Oil on canvas (62 x 73 cm), 1644

Tellingly, the immaculate tablecloth in Domenichino's canvas was transformed into a red spotted piece of dirty cloth, the main altar-like table became a side table, the golden tray standing for a sacred receptacle of the relic was replaced by a sumptuous tray, and the face with gestures of pain but surrounded by a halo denoting the triumph over death, was replaced by a rather pleasant halo-less head that surprisingly, when compared to Ribera's idiosyncratic gruesome scenes (as correctly described by Palomino),[525] shows hardly any mark of the execution.

Significantly, the comparatively lower viewpoint transforms Domenichino's witness of the Eucharist into a person who actually crouches down and observes a calm head that hardly betrays the violence exerted, no matter if the hilt of the sword precedes the almost hidden or forgotten cross. The careful action of decollation and distribution of elements, instead of a representation of a holy relic, places before us the virtuoso work of the artist, where the life-giving fluid staining the cloth seems to stand for the oil and the sword for the brush. It would not be surprising to find that, like Caravaggio and many

Figure 70.Giovanni Battista Cecchi, Jusepe de Ribera, ca. 1774, engraving (presumably after a self-portrait).

[525] A. Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica* Vol. 1 (Ed.) J, Celan y Bermúdez (Madrid: Aguilar, c1947), 877

other 16th- and 17th-century artists in Italy, Ribera would depict himself in this painting; thesis that apparently has not been suggested, but could be supported when comparing this head with one of the few apparent self-portraits of Ribera.[526]

Let us now discuss Baraya's *Head*. It seems like an unsophisticated rendition of the baroque motif, where the golden or sumptuous receptacles have been replaced by a very simple circular white plate that barely holds the head. The virtuously folded tablecloth in Domenichino's canvas, and the cloth tainted with oil in Ribera's painting, have been replaced by either red table or tablecloth, both reminiscent of popular small dinner tables. Instead of red traces of blood on the neck or dish, and instead of a wooden cross, the panel shows what seems to be a dark and irregular shadow next to the mouth, and an object to the left that resembles the handle of a knife. In addition, we experience the uncanny in two interrelated ways.

The first is related to Wilhelm Jentsch's interpretation, according to which the uncanny denotes a "disorientation experienced […] when faced with an illusion that is, only if momentarily, inexplicable."[527] A sense of awkwardness is experienced in relation to the fact that the shadow in front of the mouth, which we would initially assume to be dry blood, actually has the same color as most of what appears to be hair. In addition, the neck stands out quite unnaturally: we can see the cut itself, but contrary to Domenichino's canvas, there is hardly any sign of violence. As we start to study the photo closely, we identify the mark of the brush anywhere except on the face, the beard, ears, and part of the neck and even in part of the cut where we see actually two necks for the head. We realize that the artist has inserted his photographical self-portrait wearing a black turtleneck sweater into the painting. This is not sophisticated laboratory work interested in completely hiding the montage and fusing all incompatibility. Nonetheless, there is a sort of

[526] The engraving here brought was originally published as an inserted and unpaged plate in: Luigi Bastianelli e compagni, *Serie degli uomini i più illustri nella pittura, scultura, e architettura* (Firenze: Nella stamperia di S.A.R. per Gaetano Cambiagi, 1774).
[527] Laura Mulvey, "A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai): From after to before the Photograph," *Oxford Art Journal* Vol. 30, No. 1, Jeff Wall Special Issue (2007): 31

fusion. Baraya had already experimented with the camera between 1995 and 1996 producing double exposure images. In this series he resorted to a more controllable double mask strategy,[528] so there is still an accidental outcome, but at the same time there is a design and intention.

The second sense of the uncanny falls closer to Sigmund Freud's idea of what remains both familiar (and evident) and unfamiliar or (hidden). That "disquieting strangeness,"[529] is a sort of revelation of what is private and hidden not only from others but even from oneself. We must also add that the uncanny "displays its branches, its enigmas and apparitions on an historical-mythical foundation." In fact, Ribera's noble allegory of the painter's brush has been transformed into a popular table knife. The reverential or observant attitude provoked by Domenichino's and Ribera's paintings are replaced by an aerial view and apparent spatial proximity to the head, plate, and table, as if we were invited to or were about to consume the head. Nonetheless, what seems to be for consumption does not look quite dead. His skin and lips are not purple, and his gesture in profile looks proper of a person sleeping deeply and unaware of the viewer. Things are more jokingly unsettling when we notice that the head, actually Baraya's head, appears comfortably wearing his glasses.

It is worth noticing that Freud considered that, at times, it was difficult distinguishing a joke from a dream,[530] since jokes seem to be subject to a process similar to the 'dream-work' (*Traumwerk*) i.e., the process of production of dreams. He identified four steps of such process: condensation, displacement, dramatization, and secondary revision. Nevertheless, dreams are basically private affairs, and the dream-work "attempts to disguise, censor, distort and hide latent thoughts."[531] For their part, jokes are meant to

[528] Interview via Skype with the artist.
[529] Helene Cixous, "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's Das Unheimliche (The "uncanny")", New Literary History, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Spring, 1976): 525, 539
[530] Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, PFL I (Harmondsworth: Penguin Freud Library1979), 273
[531] David Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2003), 137

be public and a "play"[532] that needs to retain "certain legibility in order for it to full its social function."[533] It is arguable that Baraya was well aware of this familiarity of dreams and jokes, and settled a sort of puzzle that photographically speaking condensed dream and joke, Baraya's profile and the motif of Saint John the Baptists' head, the head and the background, and photography and painting.

It is worth remembering that condensation is perhaps the central mechanism in jokes, since these not only intend to set and take advantage of ambiguity and ambivalence, but also, paraphrasing Freud, suppose determinants "present in the unconscious thought-process."[534] In other words, a joke is produced by giving a "preconscious thought to unconscious revision, and the outcome of this is at once grasped by conscious perception".[535] This sets an interesting reference for approaching *Head* in terms of a movement from the conscious to the unconscious, and way back. In this order of ideas, what would be, so to speak, the 'conscious thought' and dream-work in *Head*? What is this joke actually pointing to and thematizing, and why the aforementioned conflations?

Let us start by considering painting, the background of the panel and the idea of betrayed illusion within the context of painting in Colombia. In fact they recall the work of one of the most original painters since the 1970s: Beatriz González (1938). She is regarded as the most celebrated case in Colombia of a sharp interpretation of Pop Art painting. González's works in the 70s and 80s were characterized by producing a particular appropriation and transference to the canvas of pictures found in newspapers, popular prints, and art encyclopedia, creating with it, as she described it, a "representation of a representation".[536] In particular, she produced works of "painted furniture", as Marta Traba called them,

[532] Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, PFL 6 ((Harmondsworth: Penguin Freud Library, 1980), 238.
[533] Bate, *Photography and Surrealism*, 137
[534] Freud, Jokes …, 226
[535] Idem, 223.
[536] The artist is quoted in: Marta Traba, *Los Muebles de Beatriz González* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte moderno, 1977), 65

or works that we could describe, paraphrasing Rosalind Krauss,[537] as 'paintings extended in their cultural and social field'. This kind of work can be exemplified by her humorous *Nature almost dead* (1970), an ironic work of the still-life genre, which we describe in a footnote.[538] Another example, more pertinent for Baraya's *Service Included*, is *Klonk* (1974).


Figure 71. Beatriz González, Klonk. 1974. Enamel on metal disc and assembled in a metal object. (D 23 X H 4 cm)

In it, González transferred onto the base of the metal tray, a detail of a European representation of Salome holding a tray with the head of the Baptist. Here she used her 'strategy' of transferring images of celebrated European artworks taken from Salvat Encyclopedia published in Spain,[539] and of exaggerating the contrast of colors, the flattening of the image, overlapping of planes and mismatching unions, in order to making the artworks used as reference unrecognizable, while emulating the inaccurate printing system used for (religious) popular stamps.[540] Evidently, this type of work affirmed photography as a highly mediated 'index', in order to cross the apparent boundaries between European center and Colombian 'periphery' (as González

[537] Of course, in this case we affirm a sort of post-structuralist reading of Krauss' ideas proposed in 1979, forcing to think the space as essentially social, and the object in terms of use. Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field", *October*, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44.

[538] For this work she reappropriated a popular print of 'Our Fallen Lord of Monserrat', a self-standing sculpture that mixes iconographies related to the Via Crucis and Ecche homo. Christ appears terribly extenuated and in pain, with blood in his head and nude chest and arms. He lying laterally on the ground but makes a great effort to rise. This sculpture has been considered miraculous and, according to the popular story, was found bleeding in the very step path that leads to the top of Monserrate; the tutelary mount of Bogotá where it is currently exhibited and worshiped. González transferred the print on a metal piece by using serigraphy and enamel. The piece was later assembled to a popular metal bed frame, as if the suffering figure, apparently lying where the mattress would go, were finally and successfully resting.

[539] It is a Spanish-language (20 volumes) encyclopedia, compiled and published by Editorial Salvat (Salvat Editores), based in Spain, and a well-known house in development and publication of dictionaries and reference works on various levels.

[540] Nicolás Gómez Echeverri, "Colombia y el Arte Pop. Selección de obras de la colección del Banco de la República", *Andy Warhol: Mister America*. (Bogotá, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango del Banco de la República, 2009) [Online] March 16, 2015, URL: http://www.banrepcultural.org/warhol/colombia/

suggested),[541] and between fine art and 'popular art'. In addition, it is notable that the title of the piece here referenced, renders the actual sound of the metal tray when knocked, as if ironically affirming the idea of painting "as fiction, and not the support or the equivalent of [a physical] reality."[542] Moreover, the title and gesture of inserting a painting into a small tray not only suggested the disruption of function[543] of the painting as object for aesthetic contemplation, but also humorously subverted and ridiculed practices of mystification of paintings.[544] Instead of distancing themselves from the world her artworks criticized, the latter became subversive paintings that thematized the extended social uses and world of painting appreciation among dilettanti and middle class proud of tracing their creole culture to European origins (even if some have hardly ever seen European art). In this sense, González also achieved what Pop art did in the 1960s: "justify its reliance on painting precisely because it was the medium [most celebrated and already stablished, and therefore] most able to concretize the contemporary image world."[545]

Having said this, Baraya's triple gesture is significant since it dialogues with and takes distance from González's work and Pop art in general. First, he uses his photographical self-portrait instead of images taken from books, magazines or the media. Second, he inserts his self-portrait in a background that obliquely resembles the simplicity of Pop Art and works made by Gonzalez, in which case it would apparently mean 'transferring' his portrait onto an already legitimized background and reference. Nonetheless, he actually transfers painting into photography. And finally, he repeated this sort of photographical interruption and transference in others panels within the series.

[541] "I feel I am precursor of a Colombian art, even more, of a provincial art that may circulate in the worl, at best, as curiosity" ("me siento precursora de un arte colombiano, más aún, de un arte provinciano que no puede circular universalmente sino, acaso, como curiosidad"). The artist is quoted in: Marta Traba, *Los Muebles de Beatriz González*, 64
[542] Idem, 87
[543] Hector Olea, "Aesthetics of an Art of Chaos," *Inverted Utopias: Avant-garde Art in Latin America* (eds.) Mari Carmen Ramírez, Héctor Olea (Houston, TX: Museoum of Fine Art of Houston, 2004), 145
[544] Carmen María Jaramillo, "Imágenes de los otros," Beatriz Gonzáles (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 2005), 100
[545] Wagner, Anne. "Tomorrow is here again. (Review of The First Pop Age, by Hal Foster)", *London Review of Books* 34 no. 19 (2012): 24-25, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v34/n19/anne-wagner/tomorrow-is-here-again.

The interruption, transfer, and repetition may reminds us of what Hal Foster has called "distressing image"[546] present not only in Warhol's repeated action of tearing images, but also in the distress, mourning, and trauma, and post-war subjectivity and the bodies increasingly affected and destroyed by new technologies in the 50s and 60s in the USA.[547] We could follow Foster, and state that Baraya's self-portrait, which is in fact a sort of photographic 'self-decapitation,' not only 'distresses' the background and his own photographical image, but also seems to acknowledge a distressed subjectivity within the context of violence in Colombia and the end of the 20th century. Nonetheless, there is a significant difference. Remarkably, this work deals with baroque motives in painting. Baraya appropriates a distressed baroque subjectivity that is "on the border of what is medieval and modern,"[548] in the midst of the fragmentation of the collective body and the emergence of the modern subject, and a subjectivity struggling for retaining the unity of the astral body affected by the mechanical body of modern anatomy.[549]

In a sense, and paraphrasing Geoffrey Batchen, if González's painting achieved the haunting of the printed reproduction as Pop art did, Baraya's post-photographic haunts the painted motif. [550] In fact, when photographically inserting his self-portrait into painting, Baraya photographically reinserted 'painting' into painting. This move resembles neither the technical manipulation of photography in Jeff Wall's post-photographic tableaux, nor the Dadaist practice of montage. Instead of being a "representation of a representation", *Head* echoes the idea of taking distance from photography as a record of the instant, and rather tries to photographically recover the "illusion that the painting depicted a

[546] Hal Foster, *The First Pop Age: Painting and subjectivity in the art of Hamilton, Lichtenstein, Warhol, Richter, and Ruscha* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012) 109.
[547] Idem, 146.
[548] María Constanza Toquica, "Las visiones de Jerónima: encarnados de amor místico," *Las representaciones del cuerpo barroco neogranadino en el siglo XVII* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Colonial, 2003), 5.
[549] Georges Vigarello, *Historia de la belleza. El cuerpo y el arte de embellecer desde el Renacimiento hasta nuestros días* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 2005), 75.
[550] "It used to be said that photography was tormented by the ghost of painting. Used to be said. For now photography is the one that is doing the haunting. Where once art photography was measured according to the conventions and aesthetic values of the painted image, today the situation is decidedly more complicated". Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: writing photography history* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 109

single moment;"[551] an illusion in which different times "were simultaneous in it, and play with each other or clash." *Head* 'installs' illusion as *il-lusio* (*in-luder*), that is to say, as a fictional play.

The panel not only echoes Benjamin's judgment that montage "interrupts the context into which it is inserted."[552] It also seems to offer a fictional play that may "counteract illusion", that is to say, counteract the fictional play of the baroque motif. For this reason, we also need to approach both repetition and interruption of the legitimized background and motif in other terms that complement what we can appropriate from Foster's insight. In this regard, it seems to us that Gilles Deleuze's comments on Warhol's works are helpful. The French philosopher pointed out that "there is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life,"[553] and to do so "art does not [have to] imitate, above all, because it repeats; it repeats all the repetitions, by virtue of an internal power." This is the power of creating something new by creating a difference in the difference, and we say, by creating difference within the baroque articulation (in painting) of the distressed baroque subjectivity. In this direction, repetition and interruption, as it will be argued in this chapter, also mean a way of "emptying out of meaning" the baroque motif of distressed subjectivity; an emptying out that is "neither distressing nor a cause for mourning, but rather [one] to be embraced as a perspective on a space of «displaced difference»"[554] in order to rearticulate the baroque subjectivity.

In this sense, the ironic gesture of a decapitated head that looks like it's sleeping deeply and wearing glasses is telling. The fact of wearing glasses make us think that this 'head' has been "defeated by Morpheus" (*vencida por morfeo*). This expression in Spanish renders the idea of falling-asleep-caused-by-exhaustion, and suggests a sort of struggle and failure to keep oneself awake. This also renders the

[551] Jeff Wall, "Restoration: Interview with Martin Schwander (1994)", *Jeff Wall* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 134.
[552] Benjamin is quoted in: Susan Buck-Morrs, *Dialectic of Seeing* , 67
[553] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (trans.) Paul Patton (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 293
[554] Reneé Hoogland, *Violent embrace: Art and aesthetics after representation* (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College, 2014), 79

idea that, as Marcel Proust said, "fatigue [comes to punish] indulgence,"[555] and "sleep in turn depends upon fatigue". In this order of ideas, it seems that in this panel sleep may not only depend on exhaustion and indulgence, but also does not happen without struggle and failure. What may appear an innocuous 'head' that unintentionally wears prosthetic tools for perception, may actually suggest an intentional and designed self-portrait in which glasses denote the artists intention of dream-working, that is to say, interpreting his dreams.

Yet, are his dreams just *his*? Hans Belting reminds us that dreams are not exactly under the dreamer's control, and instead the dreamer is under the authority of memories and cultural images that, in the dream, become somehow independent.[556] Moreover, given the very fact that Baraya represents himself sleeping and places this photomontage in and for the public, we must take into account what Marc Augé has insightfully indicated: "more than anyone else the dreamer-narrator [, and in this case, the artist as dreamer and interpreter] is thus in a condition to 'takes his bearings' and gauge his position, between the living who wish to hear him speak of the dead and solicit his testimony and the dead to whom a special bond connects him, between the dead and his dead, [… or] between death and his death".[557] In this direction, we can also wonder, paraphrasing Carl Jung's principle of compensation —which he thought applicable to individuals and groups[558]—, if *Head* and the series suggest a critical appropriation of baroque motifs as prosthetic tools for a dream-working a 'collective dream', or better said, dream-working the authority of memories and cultural images.

In this regard, it is outstanding how *Head* shows a 'three-dimensional' head in profile on a two-dimensional background and 'encircled' (i.e., hardly encircled) by the white rim. The panel recalls the sort of dignified representation usually found in bas-relief portraits on medallions, and more precisely, on

[555] In the chapter 'Cities of the Plain'. Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things* Past Vol 2, trans. Charles Kenneth Scott-Moncrieff, Stephen Hudson (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2006), 13
[556] Hans Belting, *Antropología de la Imagen* (Buenos Aires: Katz editors, 2007), 90.
[557] Marc Augé, *The war of dreams* (trans.) Liz Heron (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 62
[558] Renos K. Papadopoulos, *Carl Gustav Jung: Psychopathology and psychotherapy* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1992), 231

coins (*monedas* in Spanish), where the authority is represented and its power is meant to be remembered in the circulation of the exchange medium. Taking into account that the baroque motif understood as traditional motif of remembrance (*monere*) and memory (*Moneta*, i.e., *Mnemosyne*) is also at stake, *Head* seems to be. Among other things, an ironic prosthetic for dream-working, and a counterfeit reproduction that may point to an economy of remembrance.

## Counterfeit tail

Let us now pay attention to the second panel, *Foot*. It has the same dimensions as *Head*, and offers a similar background; actually a background repeated in most of the photos part of the series, as if recalling Freud's idea of the double as motif connected to the fear of death. In this case, the head has been replaced by the painted rendition, with a decided aerial viewpoint, of a mutilated and skinned foot. Once again, the panel seems to evoke baroque motifs. Moreover, the foot has also been painted with some sort of 'precision' as if Baraya wanted us to recall both anatomic and artistic renditions of the human body.

Figure 72. Alberto Baraya, Foot, from Service Included series, Photomontage Cibachrome (30x30cms), 1997

Interestingly, those renditions traditionally have one of the most referential examples in the plates of Andrea Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543). As it is well known, Vesalius took advantage of the current familiarity with and cult to classic sculpture, so this highly legitimized background and "artistic idiom [made…] less terrifying these intrusions into the [human] body," while rendering his work "triumphantly classical."[559] Yet, contrary to Erwin Panofsky's suggestion that art (perhaps under the

[559] Peter Schwenger, "Corpsing the Image", *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Spring, 2000), 404.

guise of someone like Titian)[560] triumphed over science in these plates,[561] Vesalius rearticulated the classic references for his scientific ends. In fact, he complained that, even "in a world friendly to study […] «the structure of instruments so divinely created by the Great Artificer of all things should remain unexamined»."[562]

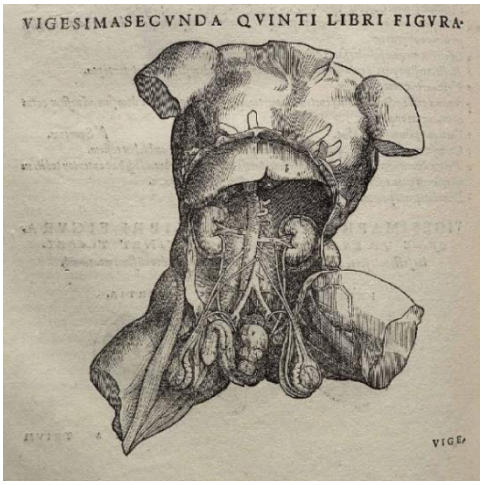

Figure 73. Unknown draughtsman, Plate N. 22, from Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica*, ca. 1543

His appropriation of classical sculpture was also an intrusion meant to 'reveal' the interior, much in the vein of what was his main goal for his book and anatomic research: correcting Galen and Greek anatomy. Of course, he said, it should be done in a way that the correction of the Greek master would be guided by the empirical analysis of the human body, so people would not emulate "[a] certain person who had the temerity to write against the opinion of Galen on venesection in dolor lateralis before he had seen an anatomy, even in dreams."[563] A similar critical stance is registered in his description of the anatomy of the brain, which he accompanied with detailed illustrations revealing the steps of dissection: Vasalius rebutted criticized philosophers, theologians, and scientist who "frivolously, like Prometheans, and with greatest impiety toward the Creator, fabricate some sort of brain from their dreams."[564] In this order of ideas, his

[560] For a long time it was unarguably said that Titian was designer of the plates, but contemporary studies of documents show that this is not the case. Patricia Simons and Monique Kornell, "Annibal Caro's After-Dinner Speech (1536) and the Question of Titian as Vesalius's Illustrator, "*Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Winter 2008): 1069-1097

[561] Erwin Panofsky, "Artist, Scientist, Genius: Notes on the «Renaissance-Dammerung»," *The Renaissance: six essays* (ed.) Wallace K. Ferguson, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 123-82.

[562] In the *Epitome*, which is the educational supplement to *De Fabrica*, he stated that lament. R. Grant Williams, "Disfiguring the Body of Knowledge: Anatomical Discourse and Robert Burton's «The Anatomy of Melancholy»," *ELH*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Fall, 2001), 594.

[563] Stephen N. Joff , *Andreas Vesalius: The Making, The Madman, and the Myth* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2014), 87.

[564] Vesalius is quoted in: Charles Donald O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, 1514-1564* (n.d.: University of California Press, 1964), 178

very explicit (even if a times imprecise) descriptions and illustrations, revealing the uncanniness of the interior of the body, were meant to awake those sleeping souls from their dreams of the classical body.

Up to certain extent, Baraya is doing an inverted work. He is recovering the baroque motif of the baroque subjectivity that González's work has 'obliterated' when she has assumed it as graphic motif subjected to her irony regarding the connotation of social status of painting. Baraya recovers the motif by performing it parodically and emptying it out, while keeping its formal and iconological reference to the crisis of baroque subjectivity. While Vesalius revealed the organic truth inside of illusion of the classical body, Baraya places the fragment of the baroque body on top of the graphic motif as part of a process of dream-working, which means in this case a conscious process of moving backwards from the conscious to the unconscious, from being 'awake' to 'asleep'.

In this sense, Baraya is moving in parallel to a baroque strategy of dream-working found in Antonio Vieira's considerations when interpreting Saint Xavier's third dream, actually his more important dream as it is linked to his triumph over a temptation presented in the dream. By understanding the term 'relic' as register, and by later displacing this idea to the realm of the mind, this Portuguese Jesuits said: even if "dreams are the 'relics' of our deeds (*cuydados*) when [we are] awake"[565] –that is to say, deeds let in our psyche a mark that can be seen in dreams–, our "deeds [as they are seen in dreams] are actually effect of the 'relics'", that is to say, our deeds (we see) in dreams are enacted based in our deeds when we were previously awake, and are therefore done in response to what is currently dreamed. In a moral sense, relics are for Vieira not just marks but habits, and in his interpretation of Saint Xavier's third dream are good habits that both save the saint from temptation, and showed the saint's virtuosity once more, no matter if one has no control over what is dreamed.

[565] "L*os sueños son las reliquias de los cuydados*" and "*el cuydado efecto de las reliquias.* Antonio Vieira, *Xavier dormido y Xavier despierto* (tarns.) Don Iván de Espinóla, Baeza, Echaburu (Madrid: Juan García lnfançon, 1696), 65

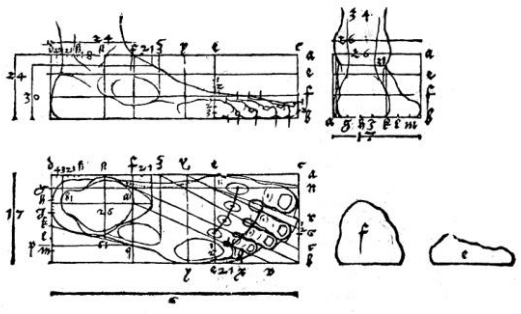

Figure 74. Albrecht Dürer, [Schattenbilden], 1528

In Baraya's case, dream-working's disruption does not show real things, but shadows, relics. In this direction, not only we interpret the fact that *Service Included* resorts to disrupting the illusion of painting by means of photographic illusion, an illusion described by Talbot in terms of 'skiagraphy' or drawing of shadows. We also recognize that *Foot* arguably resembles the *Schattenbild* ('image shadow' or projection on three orthogonal planes) of a engraving of a feet found in Dürer's *Four books on Human Proportion* —Notably, in both panels so far studied, Baraya creates the illusion (as illusion) of three-dimensionality of photographical 'shadows' with painted shadows.

And this use of shadows can be understood not just down to the idea of the photographic record as such, but rather to a sort of conceptualization of the relic. In this regard it is worth underlining that a relic is never literally an uncorrupted fragment of a body, as if it had never been touched by death and time. On the contrary, what characterizes relics, and especially those holy relics of the martyr-saints, is that they embody a mystery: decay has been inexplicably halted. Instead of being mere ruin, a relic is like a 'fossil' that "captures as well the process of natural decay."[566] In addition, relics are like 'shadow-images' of God's power, since the latter lets the relic come to presence and remain present.[567] If we allow ourselves the liberty of using terms of analog photography and its indexicality for interpreting the relic, we can say that, on the one hand, a relic is like the shadow recorded on the film or paper so its fleeing nature is somehow halted, and on the other, it is like a shadow burned by God's powerful flash of light. In this sense, there is a dual and paradoxical character to the relic.

[566] Susan Buck-Morss, *The dialectics of seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 160

[567] Agustine stressed that God, is who has let the relic come to light. Augustine is quoted in Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1985 c2005) 91

Finally, even if Baraya's gesture of affirming the illusion, the shadow, and the fragment seems to almost comply with the baroque, it is also worth noticing a difference. Yet, just before this, it is worth underlying that the baroque fragmentation of the body is not a mere fractionation, and even less and anatomical dissection. The baroque relic and the distressed subjectivity so related, affirm the body (and its fragmentation) neither as site of a classical body (lay reference for Nancy's approach to the body),[568] nor to the mechanical body or organs. They rather affirm a fragmentation where the parts of bodies 'speak' the language of Christ's passion. The fragment is like a fragment of Christ's absent body, *tópos* of mystery and melancholy, and paraphrasing LaCapra, *topós* of the transformation of absence into loss. Having said this, we must underscore that, as the collections of baroque relics, sculptures, and paintings in Spain and New Granada suggest, there is a regime and corporeal scheme according to which some baroque fragments are more eloquent than others.[569] In this respect, it is remarkable that *Service Included* includes a self-portrait and foot depicted in similar plates, 'compensating' the baroque scheme and 'spatial' toponymy (*tópos*: place; *ónoma*: name) that actually affirms that the lower parts of the body are less significant. Moreover, the fact that Baraya has inserted merely a head and a foot in that toponymy without indicating a full name (for instance 'Foot of Saint Bartholomew'), seems to address either or both an erasure of the name and a fusion of name and place. In other words, what is meant to be the 'authority' (Vg. Saint Bartholomew) disappears, and what we are left with is the authority of both motif and body fragment. With *Head* and *Foot* we have two sides of a same 'coin' and prosthetics medium for dream-working a particular sort of economy of memory and communication of trauma.

[568] "Something with a head and a tail rises up from a site [i.e., the unified body], not a place [i.e, *topos*]: head and tail are placed alongside a sense (direction, meaning), the ensemble itself placing a setting for sense." Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus*, (Trans.) Richard a. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 17
[569] Sol Astrid Giraldo Escobar, *De la Anatomía piadosa a la Anatomía Política* Unpublished Master Thesis (Medellín: Universidad de Antioquia, 2009), 91.

## A crystallizing regime

Figure 75. Alberto Baraya, Forearm in a glass Jar, from Service included series, Photomontage Cibachrome (40 x 27cms), 1997

The third panel shows a left forearm in a glass jar, both placed against an enigmatic background that is more elaborated than the one in *Head* and *Foot*. This panel actually betrays Baraya's interest in landscape[570]. The horizon divides the canvas in a way that reminds of but also exaggerates those idiosyncratic 'skyscapes' in Jacob van Ruisdael's *Haarlempjes* or little views of Haarlem. Yet, there are no clouds, and there is hardly any sign of human life, apart from the set in the foreground. It is as if Baraya has not only inserted a rare *bodegón* within a transformed Dutch landscape, but has also 'installed an enigma.'[571] The imposing forearm formally linking ground and sky, forces foreground and background to come together in a sort of counterfeit intimation: are we looking at a large and monumental arm and jar standing on a flatland or plateau, or are we prey to an optical illusion and the set is actually placed on something like a table?

This panel does not want to give away any clues. It recalls some of those enigmatic paintings by René Magritte, where the artist not only dispelled "any illusion that what we are looking at corresponds to reality,"[572] but also sat "a tension between illusionism and its self-subversion." This subversion that, in Magritte's works leads "to what might be described as a mild double vision —we see the paintings as corresponding to a world *and* as mere fabrication— [where ] the illusion of correspondence is not sufficiently strong to persuasively resist subversion."[573] Of course, Baraya adds to Magritte's playful

[570] Interview with the artist.
[571] I owe this commentary and the link to Magritte's work, to María Cristina Sánchez León.
[572] Barbara E. Savedoff, "Transforming Images: Photographs of Representations," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring, 1992), 103
[573] Idem, 104

illusion (which Magritte arguably often constructed from photos),[574] the fact that the panel is a photograph again photographically inserting his arm in a painting. In this sense, Baraya not only affirms a folding and unfolding of realities *in* the panel, but also *with* the post-photographical illusion of time, and his appropriation of the popular and very important motif of the All-powerful Hand.

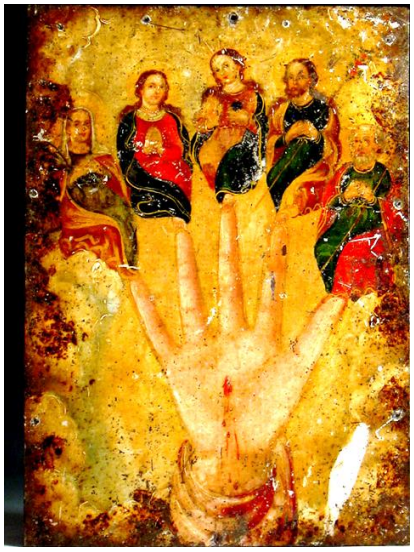

Figure 76. Anonymous, All-Powerful Hand, ca. 1875, Mexico, Oil on metal (14 x 10 in), James Caswell's Inventory # T127

Figure 77. Anonymous, All-Powerful Hand, Mexico 19th century. Oil on metal, possibly tin-plated iron) (13 7/8 x 10 1/16 in) Brooklyn Museum

This motif has been fully explored.[575] We can suggest here that it is possibly derived from at least three different sources. One is the 'horizontal- or downward-pointing' motif known as "The Hand of God" in Jewish and early Christian art, representing God the Father's intervention in or approval of affairs on Earth. A second source is the upward-pointing Roman motif known as 'Hand of Power', which

[574] See: Patrick Roegiers, *Magritte and Photography* (trans.) Mark Polizzotti (Lund Humphries, Aldershot, 2005, 2005).

[575] Apart from being mentioned in few exhibitions catalogues and articles —like *Colonial Art from Puerto Rico, Selections from the Gift of Teodoro Vidal*, exh. cat. (Washignton, DC: National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1997), n.p.— the larger text on it is a seven pages-long article written by Art Historian Jacinto Quirarte, part of another catalogue: Jacinto Quirarte, "Los cinco Senores and La Mano Poderosa: An Iconographic Study," *Art and Faith in Mexico: the Nineteenth-century Retablo Tradition* (ed.) Elizabeth Netto Calil Zarur and Charles Muir Lovell (Albuquerque: UNM Press, c2001): 79-87

is arguably derived from the 'Hand of Sabazius' originated in Phrygia or Thrace,[576] and possibly a reference for linking the hand with Christ.[577] Finally, the All-powerful Hand may also be derived from the Syrian-Iranian iconography of the *khamsah*, which represents (in each finger and the thumb) Fatima's family also known as Ahl al-Kisa ('the people of the cloak').[578] The All-powerful Hand represents Christ's right hand with fingers and thumb stretched upright, hand lines, a fresh stigma, and the figures of the large sacred family floating or seated on top of the phalanges. In paintings, it shares motives with the traditional and highly celebrated iconographic representations of 'The Mystic Vintage', the 'Tree of Jesse/David', and the almost unknown representation of the 'The Five Lords'.[579] We have chosen two examples of the All-powerful Hand, which in the 19th century were usually painted on tin. The one on the left may be regarded as less hybrid version: the hand and figures appear within the cloudy scenery of the vision. The second panel shows a more complex version, which is the referential one here: the cloud-sky serves as scenario for God, the dove, cherubim, and the five holy figures. On earth we see palms (symbol of victory, triumph, peace and eternal life), and lambs drinking the blood of Christ (the shepherd) from the holy chalice or fountain of eternal life. Finally, the colossal and protagonist hand of Christ in the

[576] M.J. Vermaseren, *Corpus cultus Iovis Sabazii* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 37-44

[577] In the Roman Empire, Sabazius was associated with Dionysus. Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that, as Albert De Jong pertinently indicated, this association was proposed by outsider literary Greek references, whereas texts apparently written by worshipers in the Balkans and modern Turkey, link the god to Zeus and called him "Zeus Sabazius". We believe, this double aspect interestingly suggest a sort of cult that probably shared elements, which centuries latter influenced the idea of linking the All-Powerful Hand with the God the father and the sacrifice of his son. Albert De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 30.

[578] Muhammad (Fatimah's father) is represented by the thumb, Ali (Fatimah's husband) by the index finger, Fatima by middle finger, Hasan (Fatima's eldest son) by ring finger and Hussein (Fatimah's second son) by the baby finger. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, "Hand-of-Fatima. An Iconological Investigation of the Role of Gender in Religious Art", *Beyond The Exotic: Women's Histories In Islamic Societies* ed. Amira El Azhary Sonbo (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 346.

[579] The latter is often confused with the iconography of the large holy family in Mexican viceregal painting. Quirate affirms that while the large holy family is usually depicted in interior spaces, 'The Five Lords' usually takes place in a landscape and includes God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit floating among the clouds above them. However, this idea is clearly questioned by the celebrated representation of "The "Five Lords" produced by the famous Cristóbal de Villalpando in the 18th century, and part of the collection of the Soumaya Museum in Mexico City. Quirarte, "Los cinco Senores and La Mano Poderosa: An Iconographic Study," Art and Faith in Mexico: the Nineteenth-century Retablo Tradition, ed. Elizabeth Netto Calil Zarur and Charles Muir Lovell (Albuquerque: UNM Press, c2001): 80.

foreground rises triumphantly from the chalice, supplies holy liquid, and connects the earthy motives of his successful sacrifice with the heavenly figures.

Interestingly, the size and format of these panels are comparable with Ruisdael's views with bleaching fields in the foreground, and Baraya's *Forearm*; which in the case of the format is not necessarily a mere coincidence, since there is a clear intention in all the three cases of transforming the landscape into a portrait. In the case of Ruisdael's landscapes, especially of his views with the bleaching fields in the foreground, it is worth remembering that they not only betray the emergence of an aesthetic enjoyment of nature,[580] and a sort of optimistic representation that celebrates bleaching linen as the second most important major industry in Haarlem, much in line with Protestant values.[581] It also shows a sort of *vanitas* in which humanity "craws on the back of the earth like scattered fleas on a dog",[582] and God seems to hide somewhere behind the clouds, only present by means of the veil of 'clouds of linen.' [583] In the case of the second panel of the All-powerful Hand, the format affirms the principal role of the hand, and the verticality reaffirms a chronological order and hierarchy: from top down we pass from the creator to the Christ as child and the family as its locus, and then to the hand and the stigma as sign of

[580] Seymour Slive, *Jacob Van Ruisdael: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 2001), 60

[581] Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woud, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 290

[582] Catherine Levesque, *Journey through Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Holland: The Haarlem Print* Series and Dutch Identity (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1994), 44.

[583] Vanitas is also a proud image of one riches and sicess, that are not the less submitted to God. The motif of the *linnen wolken* (clouds of linen) could be a poetical description of an aesthetical experience and perhaps a proud local image, if not at the time of the painter, it was such in the 18thcentury. In 1792, Adriaan Loosjes letter published letter in the magazine Kabinet van Mode en Smaak (Cabinet of Fashion and Taste), where he made fun of the way Italians, and used not only used the expression *linnen wolken* (clouds of linen), but also suggested the ski covered by clouds, and suddenly, a through an opening in the sky, a deity, and this he meaning with sarcasm meaning a Italian woman, appeared as messenger of the god of taste and fashion. What follow are my free translation and the original in Dutch: 'The closer he comes to the earth the formless mass takes shape more and more, and behold! Those linen clouds unfurling in an oblong square, in which [there is] a hole big enough in the center for the gods' messenger to pass, show him sitting on the bench of his Carriage of clouds.' "Deeze vormlooze massa ontwikkelt zich meer en meer, hoe nader zy by de aarde komt, en zie daar! het zyn linnen wolken, welke zich in een langwerpig vierkant ontrollen, en in het midden een gat hebben, groot genoeg, om den Goden bode, door hetzelve heen, in zyne Wolkenkoets op een bank te zien zitten." Adriaan Loosjes Pz.'s letter is quoted in A. van der Kroe and J. Yntema (ed.*) Algemeene Vaderlandsche Letteroefeningen* (Amsterdam, 1792), 576.

Christ's sacrifice, placed in a goblet on the ground and located in the promised land of redemption, in the center of the Christian and saved community gestated through the sacrifice.

Something that has drawn contemporary artists to use this motif is precisely the fact that it celebrates a family/community and reunion of heaven and earth through Christ's sacrifice, and echoes the baroque idea of benediction and abundance coming down from God.[584] For instance, Juan Camilo Uribe's *Mandala of the All-powerful Hand* (1975),[585] Bibiana Suárez's *Domino/Dominó* (1998),[586] and Miguel

[584] Bolívar Echeverría, *La modernidad de lo barroco* (México: Era-UNAM, 2005), 70.

[585] Juan Camilo Uribe (1945 – 2005) produced this work by using popular prints of the late 20th-century version of this iconography and of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is the most popular motif in Colombia (a country that called itself as 'Republic of the Sacred Heart') and has strong relations to the history of Violence. J.C. Uribe created a wind-rose (or compass) of 8 points topped by the popular Saint, physician José Gregorio Hernández, whose figure is revered in Colombia. The artists playfully and sarcastically "adopted the miracle as excuse for desacralizing the message," and created a figure that as mandala, was meant to represent the universe linking the visible and the invisible, and as wind-rose, represented the forces and direction affecting navigation at a particular location. Alberto Sierra and María del Rosario Escobar, "Juan Camilo Uribe, arte con sentido común", *Catálogo de la exposición Juan Camilo Uribe, arte con sentido común*. Casa de la Moneda, Banco de la República, agosto – septiembre de 2007 (Bogotá: Casa de la Moneda, Banco de la República, 2007).

[586] Bibiana Suárez is a Puerto Rican artists. Based in Chicago, Illinois. .*Domino/Dominó* (1998) is a series of circular-shaped and paired illustrations, made for the "centenary of the transfer of Puerto Rico from the hands of Spanish to USA colonialism," as Robert J. Loescher described it. This series, as it suggested also by the title (see the explanation at the end of this note) and the artist intended, invited the public to think how "Puerto Rican culture is ostensibly tied to whether we choose to continue our adaptation to U.S. culture or move away from it by embracing a new construction of our Spanish past." In particular, one of the illustrations involved the transformation of the late 20th century motif of the All-powerful Hand, with stigma, by replacing the holy figures with household electrical appliances presumably of the fifties and sixties when Suárez lived in Puerto Rico. The illustration is paired with a transferred monochromatic drawing of two scenes: in the first, two hands are collaboratively about to shoot something slingshot, and apparently aiming to the transformed All-powerful Hand, in the second we seen only hand holding the slingshot after the shoot.

The pairing playfully suggests dethroning the hand itself as Spanish colonial motif, or the electrical appliances that as it was indicated, are presumably of a time of the so-called 'progress' was 'injected' in the Island in response to the Cuban revolution in 1959. The overthrowing (that is also 'throwing a projectile over' the space from one disc to the other) may be regarded not only as one made by two hands, a Spanish and North American, but also as a one mane by internal struggle and caesura implicit in nationalism, pointing in a double sense to a "divorce" of power of colonization(s) and resistance(s) or as act of double and complex survival. Finally, if we read the title as if it meant to suggest almost the same words in English and Spanish, it would denote the game of dominoes (Actually, in English domino is a piece of dominoes, but Spanish the word *dominó* means the whole set or the game, and the re o specific word of a piece). Nonetheless, when it is read only in Spanish, the title offers a different aspect of the work: the first term, *domino*, means 'I dominate', 'I conquer', 'I subdue', 'I master', while the second words as conjugation of the third person singular past of *domino*, suggesting therefore a movement from present to past, and the transfer of domination on the Island as well as the struggle involved in a way that they suggest the internal struggle and caesura in Puerto Rican people, pointing in a double sense to a "divorce" of power of two colonizations and nationalist resistance, or acts of double and complex survival.. Robert J. Loescher, "Domino/Dominó a Mixed Media Installation by Bibiana Suárez," Brochure presentation of Bibiana Suárez' exhibition Domino/Dominó March 1-April 9, 1999. Illinois Art Gallery, Chicago; Bibiana Suárez, "Artist statement: Domino/Dominó", *Bibiana Suárez*. http://bibianasuarez.com/domino-statement

Luciano's *The All-powerful Hand Racetrack* (2001-2004),[587] have also addressed social and political issues by resorting, to what we can call the 'redemptory promise' of the All-powerful Hand.

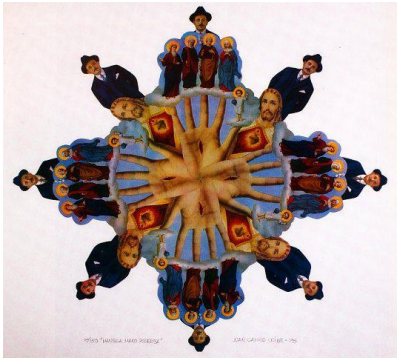

Figure 79. Juan Camilo Uribe, Mandala of the All-powerful Hand, intaglio (53.5x73.5cms) 1975

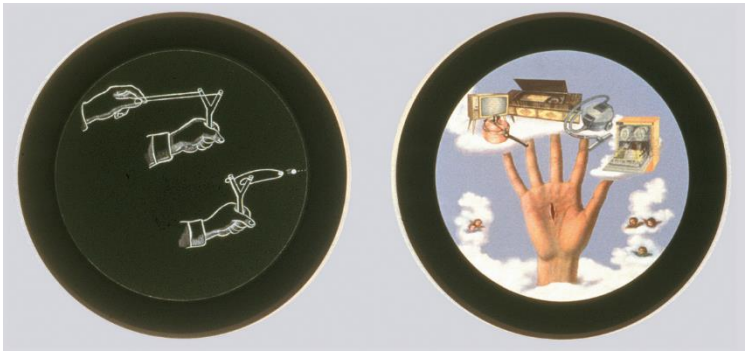

Figure 78. Bibiana Suárez, The All Powerful Hand, 1997-1998. Flashe paint, laserprint transfer on paper & ENCAD digital print on paper, on MDF panel (21 inches diameter)

When compared to those works, the sarcasm of *Forearm* is evident and betrays the intention of fracturing that promise. The panel transformed the rich, green landscape of the All-powerful Hand panel, symbol of the apogee of the 'good news', into a desolate, barren ground. Similarly, the sky has no cloud to hide the absence of god. We see the sinister, left hand, not the right hand of Christ. The fingers are neither extended, nor crowned by holy or 'devilish' figures or desired objects (like in Luciano's and Suárez's works, respectively). The half open half closed hand seems to betray a gesture of impotence, but not actually death, since it seems to still be 'alive' as it suggests movement. Moreover, the mutilated forearm has no stigma, and instead of freely and powerfully rising by itself from a goblet, it is supported and contained by the glass jar which, in turn, cannot emphasize any more clearly the absence of the holy liquid.

[587] It transforms the holy hand into a devilish 'claw', with the phalanges crowned by 'Randy McDonalds' and 'Aunt Jemima' and other figures dressed like the holy figures. The installations is related to consume culture, and particularly with fact that "Hot Wheels racing was a consumer phenomenon in Puerto Rico that became a wide spread social pastime, producing record-breaking sales for Mattel Corporation." There is both a bitter/sweet flavor in this installation, where people is invited to complete in a car race from the 'Stigmata Starting Gate' to the 'Sacred Heart Finish Line', "where finalists compete to win coveted Golden Plátano-Mobile Trophies." Miguel Luciano, "La Mano Poderosa Racetrack," *Miguel Luciano* URL: http://www.miguelluciano.com

In this sense, there seems to be a total desecration and disempowerment with which the forearm can be regarded, in culinary terms, as if stocked for consumption. Inf so, the panel would be like an uncanny rendition of a *bodegón* that reveals the sublimation of the ritual of anthropophagy hiding within the consumption of baroque motifs (of relics). Nonetheless, the panel could also read as showing a forearm soaked in transparent formalin for analysis and exhibition, this time perhaps related to a sublimation of practices of necrophagia also sublimated in the consumption of baroque motifs of the relics.

Appropriating Deleuze's interpretation of cinema, these interpretations could be identified in terms of an "orgnic description," that is to say, as if the "setting described" in the picture, were presented "independent[ly] of the description" or picture itself. [588] In this sort of description illusion and reality are meant to counter one another according to "the needs of the present actual or the crises of the real."[589] In this sense, if we keep with Deleuze, there would be two possibilities that may be interpreted as follows. On the on hand, *Forearm* could be regarded as representation of the crisis of a subjectivity. This would mean that this desecrated motif stands for "actualizations in consciousness from the point of view of the imaginary", and therefore, stands as an imagined representation or still-life of 'other' reality. In this case, the panel could recall the fantastic, even the magic exemplified by the 'Hand of Glory' i.e., the hanged man's hand that rendered "motionless" anyone to whom it was presented. [590] On the other hand, the panel could be regarded as a register of the crisis of a world in violence, and therefore the desecrated motif could offer "linkages of actuals from the point of view of the real." This seems to fall close to the case of

[588] Gille Deleuze, *Cinema 2* (trans.) Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, c1997 1985), 126
[589] Idem, 127
[590] Witchcraft treaties mention a 'Hand of Glory' or *Main de Gloire*. For instance, in 1722, 'Petit Albert' described how to dry and pickle the hand; ideally to be the left hand of a man who has been hanged, or when it was a man hanged for murder, the hand that 'did the deed.' According to tradition in Europe that Albert recollected, the Hand of Glory would be installed as candlestick for candle made of fat from the corpse of the malefactor. When lighted and placed on the Hand of Glory, the set would render "motionless" anyone to whom it was presented. In some engravings, the hand appears with the candle on it, and on top of a chimney. *Secrets merveilleux de la magie naturalle et cabalistique du Petit Albert* (Cologne, 1822). Quoted in: Grillot De Givry, *Witchcraft: Magic and Alchemy* (trans.) J.Courtenay Locke (New York: Courier Dover Publications, 1931), 180-81

the forearm of Álvaro Obregón, general of the Mexican Revolution, whose amputated hand was used to exacerbate the cult of national heroes.[591] We could also recall the case of the guerrilla commander Iván Ríos,[592] whose severed hand was widely presented in the media as proof of the Colombian government's increasing victories against the FARC-EP.

In addition, to those interpretations we can propose one that addresses the enigma installed *in* the panel and in relation to the production of the photomontage. The transparency of the container seems to have been metonymically transferred to the forearm. The panel underscores the forearm as a crystalized fragment of a body. We appropriate here Deleuze's idea of the "crystalline description [as one that] stands for its object".[593] When discussing this description, Deleuze adopted Gilbert Simondon's idea of 'seed crystal' that, when placed within a substance with certain conditions of internal resonance, communicates its shape to molecules of the substance, producing a process of 'individualization'.[594] Of course, the substance of the environment must have a structure that is virtually crystallizable.

We can read along these lines what we have already identified in *Forearm*: a set forearm-jar connects ground and sky, forces the foreground and background to come together, individualizing them. The enigma perceived is exactly the actual 'individualization': apart from the centrality of the set forearm-jar, as a 'radiating' crystal seed, there is nothing else that can help us trace an order of intermediation, and discern the space and temporal order. In addition, it is worth noticing that when looking closely at the hand, we see that as result of Baraya's use of a double mask, his forearm and a skinned forearm painted initially on the canvas, appear out-of-step. Regarding this in terms of an organic

[591] After the battle of Santa Ana del Conde, the hand was amputated, submerged in formalin, bottled, and then carried in a sort of peregrination in Mexico in order to nurture and exacerbate the cult of national heroes. Jorge Luis Marzo, *La memoria administrada: el barroco y lo hispano* (Buenos Aires: Katz editores, 2010), 105.
[592] This top rebel leader was killed in March 2008 by Pablo Montoya, his own chief of security, who gave to the national army the leader's severed hand as proof for claim the US$2.7 million bounty. The hand was proudly shown by the army and the president in all the media. "Colombia rebel who killed boss will get bounty" *NBC News* 3/14/2008 4:11:56 PM ET URL: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/23635626/ns/us_news-msnbc_wire_services/t/colombia-rebel-who-killed-boss-will-get-bounty/
[593] Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 126
[594] Ronald Boguè , *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989), 62

description, we could describe the panel as an anatomist would describe it in terms of a logical transition from outside to inside, and from the hand with skin to skinned hand. On the contrary, the accident suggests the inverted movement, and reinforces the appearance of the panel as a frozen image of a historical process. Paraphrasing Slavoj Žižek's interpretation of Deleuze's crystalline regime, the panel shows a superposition of different temporal strata, where there is no rejection of time. On the contrary, there is a description of time itself as an "image of eternity," and as "the striving of eternity to reach itself".[595]

Figure 80. Reliquary of Saint Dorothea's right forearm, 15th century. Toledo Cathedral

In this direction, *Forearm* and the series in general seems to reveal to us and simulate a 'crystalline regime' of the relics of the martyr-saints, which complements the more familiar photographical description, we have already offered, of the relic as a fossilized trace. This 'crystalline regime' assumes the relic as 'double sided', that is to say, as the relic itself and its reliquary. This regime, which is not meant to be the single regime of relics, affirms the intimate contact between the relic and the reliquary; where the reliquary becomes what it represents, or more precisely, what it presents. By 'crystalline regime of relics' we therefore mean what can be described in the following terms, paraphrasing and forcing Deleuze's interpretation of cinema once more: First, the reliquary doubles the relic not only or not always by mimicking the shape, but actually by becoming a "crystalline description [that] stands for its object, [and almost] replaces it."[596] This is a way we can describe the fact that relics are assumed to be metaphor-metonymy of eternity. [597] Second, the relic, as "seed of life,"[598] doubles itself

[595] Žižek, *Organs without body: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York, NY: Routledge, c2012 2004), 10
[596] Deleuze on "crystalline description". Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 126
[597] Cynthia Han, "Objects of devotion and desire: relics, reliquaries, relation and response", *Objects of devotion and desire. Medieval relic to contemporary art* (New York, NY: Hunter College, 2011), 9.
[598] The "practice of dismembering or breaking the relic, far from being condemned, is cast as a natural act that envisions the relics as a sort of sustenance […] Paulinus tells of an occasion at the tomb of Felix when, «those who had bestowed the nard on the tomb prepared to draw it up to apply it to themselves, they found the vessels miraculously filled not with nard but with a heap of dust which burst out from below». Rather than the dismaying picture this presents to the modern mind, this miracle was an occasion for joy, for the dust that «burst» forth

in the reliquary when the relic is affirmed (i.e., perceived and worshiped) in terms of "two modes of existence […] now combined in a circuit": "the actual" (i.e., the relic) and "the virtual" (i.e., the reliquary) "exchange their roles and become, [up to some extent,] indiscernible"[599] in the miracle. If we attend to Voragine's account of the appearance of the relic of Saint Baptist's head in Marcellus's dream, and the violence and trauma involved in the story (when by means of contact with the pot, the head mutilated the hand of a monk who did not worshiped it, but cured him again by means of contact when the monk worshiped it later),[600] this indiscernibility (between relic and reliquary) can be understood in the following terms. The relic gives its magical power to the reliquary, activating it as container, armature, and medium of tactical transmission and visual communication of blessing and violence. On the other hand, the reliquary gives its physical power and actual appearance to the relic, actualizing the relic's virtual power and authority.

In this order of ideas, we can also understand the relationship between the crystalline description of the relics and the viewer in the following terms. In a sense, the relics-reliquaries "unsettle the viewer," who must find "a particular way to approach them."[601] The viewers become witnesses who "cannot or

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constituted Felix's authentic relics. Paulinus clarifies, «those bones of the saint's body are not choked with the dust of death, but endowed with the hidden seed of eternal life»." Cynthia Han, "What do Reliquaries Do for Relics?" *Numen* 57, no. 3–4 (2010): 295.

[599] Deleuze on the relation between the real and the imaginary or fiction in the "crystalline description". Idem, 127

[600] Voragine said that the head went missing for many years. One night, "in his sleeping" "the blessed John Baptist made revelation of his head to S. Marcellus, monk, that welled in that cave." The next night, in another dream "a fair star" guided Marcellus to a pot where the Baptist's head was kept. Later a monk who, did not believe that the head within the pot was Saint John's head, laid a hand on the pot and it was "burned and cleaved so to the pot, that he could not withdraw it therefrom in no manner." Only after praying he could draw off part of it. Later "Saint John appeared [arguably again in dream] to him and said: When my head shall be set in the church, touch thou then the pot and thou shalt be whole, and so he did and received his health, and was whole as it was before."

Remarkably, the saint-martyr's relic imposes veneration violently and economically. When the head is not worshiped as holy relic, it forces a physical fusion with it as if demanding a body for itself. When not considered a holy relic, the head menaces to and exerts a mutilation. It is as if the fragment repeated a violence previously exerted on it. Nonetheless, it exerts that violence tactically (which also means locally and tangibly) *through* the pot. And the pot is not only affirmed as the head's extensive protection, but also as its weapon (which in Latin is said *arm*). However, when the head is brought to the church and worshiped, it recovers its theological body, that is to say, its mystical union with the body of Christ (which, in this story, is represented by the Church).[600] For this very reason, Saint Marcellus is not mutilated when he recognized in his dream the Saint's body in absentia, but theologically whole and present. Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Leyend of Lives of the Saints*, trans. William Caxton, ed. F. S. Ellis (London: J. M. Dent and Co. 1900), 73-74

[601] Benjamin, "The Work of Art …", 27

will not react"[602] to the actual artificiality of the relics-reliquaries, because "so great is their need" to 'see' a "problem more profound" and "even more pressing" than the situation itself. What the worshipers 'see' or want to see is the enigma of a crystallization that "poses inexplicable differences to the present, and alternatives which are undecidable between true and false to the past."[603] This enigma is the "transcendental form of time" that the worshiper 'sees' in crystallized bodies of the martyr-saints. This enigma is not just the fact of the halted decay, but the fact that the relic-reliquary is a manifestation of a fragmented relation with god,[604] and is theologically speaking a fragment of Christ's absent body, and *tópoi* of mystery and melancholy, as we indicated before.

Relics are *tópoi* of transformation of absence into loss. Nonetheless, the "crystalline regime" also announces a 'structuring process of trauma' in which being crystallized means being an instantiation of the relic *qua* 'crystal seed;' no matter if the relic is theologically speaking something like an instantiation of Christ's passion. Of course, such process of crystallization is only possible under certain conditions of structural resonance, and of 'structural trauma' in the case of the relics. Within the "crystalline regime" of the relics, it is not only the case that historical trauma would therefore be communicated and consummated if transformed into an instantiation of structural trauma. It is also the case that the relic is, paraphrasing Benjamin,[605] evidence of a transhistorical trial/process in which the relic virtually embodies the promise of re-elaboration of history, that is to say, redemption.

Having this in mind, we can recognize that the role of the painted motif of the relic does not exactly correspond to an 'organic description' of an existing relic, nor to a mere representation of an imagined. Remarkably, during the meditation in a dark place, which simulates the dream as womb and

[602] Deleuze on "crystalline narration". Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 128
[603] Idem, 131
[604] María Piedad Quevedo, *Un cuerpo para el espíritu: Mística en la Nueva Granada: el cuerpo, el gusto y el asco*. 1680-1750 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología, 2006), 213
[605] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version," in The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and other writings on media (eds.) Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin (trans.) Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn (London: Harvard College, 2008), 27

'tenebrous space' where the soul retires in order to experience visions,[606] the motif becomes the actualization of the virtual presence of the relic that appears in dreams.

In this order of ideas, Baraya's series not only seems to bring together Baraya's dream-work as it were our vision, and Baraya's relic as it were a baroque motif. The series also suggest that Baraya's dream-working of our vision of motifs is, in fact, an actualization of the virtual presence of the relic. The series places relic and motif as two layers or strata that are actually superimposed and merged in the panels. Moreover, the series can be regarded not only as simulacrum of the 'crystalline regime' of dream of the relics, but also as a dream-working of the crystallizing dreams of the relics.

For this very reason, we should neither read the series only 'organically', nor merely in iconographic terms. In other words, the series evidently distances from the kind of works exemplified by Mayer's *Thanatos* (1992), and the kind of works with which Medina, curator of the exhibition in 1999, placed and connected the series in the exhibition and the catalog-book. In fact, Medina's comment is symptomatic of the sort of imaginary and 'exalted pathos' that, like in Sol Giraldo's observation, 'sees' in the series fragments of a "body [that] has been thrown to mass graves,"[607] or fragments served in "ritual feats" where "Colombians who in the hateful feat turned out winners" are invited to devour the enemy like anthropophagous."[608] These comments, coming from two persons belonging to very different and distanced generations, missed the simulacra, or better said, fell pray of the simulacrum of the enigma, instead of paying attention to the parody at stake. Having pointed out this, we move to the last section of this chapter, in order to close the second part of this study.

[606] Belting, *Antropología de la Imagen*, 91.
[607] Giraldo, *De la anamotía piadosa* ,227
[608] Medina, *Arte y Violencia*…, 52

## (‘Self-)sacrifice and guilt

It is here where we have to pay attention to the title of a series via its invitation to ‘consume’ the body parts *served*. Instead of reading this invitation to a ‘feast’ where we would “devour the enemy,” we interpret it as an invitation to parody of the ‘Feast of Herod’. Notably, the opening invitation card was circular, reminiscent of coasters, with one side showing the head in the plate, and the other the actual text of the invitation. In this sense, let us briefly dwell on two pertinent cases of the iconography of the Feast.

The first is a Renaissance artwork: Donatello’s famous bronze relief, where the executioner kneels in front of Herod and serves the head on a tray. In that panel, made around 1427, we see Herod arguably awaking from drunkenness and realizing his involvement in the killing. This makes sense, since the small bronze panel was originally designed for baptismal font in Siena Cathedral, that is to say, the very place of the ritual of entrance to the Catholic Church; a ritual that ‘awakes’ the new believers and demands them to realize the original and inherited sin, which according to the Council of Trent is actually forgiven and washed out through baptism.[609] Something different happens in Peter Paul Rubens’ Baroque canvas produced between 1635 and 1638, and currently exhibited in the National Gallery of Scotland. It is a large piece with life-size figures, showing Salome serving the head, while the perverse and smiling Herodias offers it to her husband. Rubens depicted an ambiguous reaction, actually an overacted response. Herod is perhaps acting ‘scripted’ role he and Herodias had predesigned.[610] This painting was commissioned by the Flemish Gaspar de Roomer, the “wealthiest merchant and businessman in 17th-

[609] The fifth session of the Council on the “Original Sin”, states: “In renatis enim nihil odit Deus… ita ut nihil prorsus eos ab ingressu coeli remoretur”. Our translation: in the (spiritually) reborn nothing remains that is hateful to God [and…], nothing keeps them from entering Heaven. Joannis Gallemart (ed.), *Sacrosanctum Concilium Tridentinum, additis declarationibus Cardinalium Concilii interpretum, ex ultima recognitione Joannis Gallemart…,* (Matthaei Rieger and Filiorum, 1766), 16.

[610] Rubens was apparently aware of the possibility of representing a partnership between Herod, Herodias, and Salome. For instance, in an inscription on the sheet of the preparatory sketch (now in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art) Rubens identified the figure of Salome incorrectly as Herodias; he added an arrow and the words "«war hooger» to remind himself to paint her «somewhat taller»". Interestingly, while the faces of mother and daughter are very similar, which is understandable, the hand gestures of Herodias and Herod are surprisingly and intentionally similar, suggesting a parallel between both figures in which spouses resemble each other in their habits and *mores*. Anne-Marie S. Logan and Michiel C. Plomp, *Peter Paul Rubens: The Drawings* (New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), 300.

century Naples" and financier to Philip IV, King of Spain. There is no information about where this painting was actually hung, but given the size, and the commissioner's interest in horrific scenes,[611] we can image that this lavish and amazing depiction would suit a dining room where the guests would find themselves, if not eagerly partaking of the feast, then surprisingly witnessing business they should better not criticize.

Interestingly, for the consummation of moral and social rituals in both artworks, is central the acceptance and compliance with what we can call a 'guiltless guilt', or what F. W. J. Schelling described in terms of becoming "guilty without genuine guilt."[612] He thought this in relation to the sublime peak of the voluntary sacrifice or punishment, and the indifference between necessity and freedom.[613] Notably, Schelling identified that the redemptory possibility of this guiltless guilt, could take place in modern art, in no other better example than Calderón de la Barca's *The devotion of the Cross*.[614] Remarkably, in this drama the distressed baroque subjectivity and 'guiltless guilt' (of the incestuous sister and brother conceived by the foot of cross, and who did not know they were relatives) are proper of the dream where Eusebio, the brother and protagonist, returns from death to confess, by the foot of cross, his deeds.[615]

In Baraya's series, the artist invites us to participate in the feast and the ritual of consumption, while Echeverri invites us to participate in the ritual of preparation of the feast. In a sense, Baraya not only performs the role of the sacrificed Baptist and baroque motif of martyr, but also the executioner and the enchanting Salome, who offer us panels that instead of being gruesome, appear enigmatic. He is playing with a motif of both guilt and guiltless guilt. Nonetheless, Baraya also affirms an economy of guilt. The title is anything but capricious: 'service included' is the expression used in a restaurant for

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[611] Idem.
[612] F.W.J. Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art* (ed. and trans.) Douglas Stott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 252.
[613] Simon Critchley, "The Tragical Sublime", in *The Sublime and Its Teleology: Kant - German Idealism - Phenomenology* (ed.) Donald Loose (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 176
[614] Idem, 273-75
[615] Calderón de La Barca, "The Devotion of the cross", in *Three dramas of Calderón* (ed. and trans.) Denis Florece Mac-Carthy (Dublin: W. B. Kelly, 1870), 312-16

indicating that the gratuity has already been added to the bill. The guilt is not only the gift (*gratuitas*) i.e. the plus needed for consummation. As the series ironically suggests, the guilt is also *gratuitous*.

As dream-working, the series not only simulates with a clear sense of artificiality, the baroque articulation of a distressed subjectivity. It not only suggests that mutilations have aesthetic goals, nor describes a violence and others' guilt. It does not seem to pronounce Baudelaire's judgment against his friend who, as we remember, not only 'confessed' having given a counterfeit coin to a beggar in exchange of 40 cents, but also, after disquieting Baudelaire's mind, "interrupted [Baudelaire's] reverie"[616] by saying: "there is no greater pleasure than that of surprising a man by giving him more than he expects." On the contrary, *Service Included* is like the 'counterfeit coin' the friend gave to Baudelaire: a double ironical confession that revealed the gratuitousness of Baudelaire's "nature's gift" of being always concerned with 'looking for noon at two o'clock.'

As of the working of the crystallizing dream of the relics (or seeds of trauma), and the dream-working of the crystalline dream, ironically expresses that the baroque motif of the relic, as an affective and fetishized 'transcendental form of time' has become such a hollowed fossil in the media and in art that "only the imprint of the material shell remains,"[617] and those moved are, paraphrasing Louis Aragon, in a *vague de rêves*, a 'wave of dreams'. "Beautiful sentiments" is how Benjamin would call these feeling of being touched by 'transcendental forms of time' in a *Dream Kitsch*,[618] and of being affected by panels that not only allows us to give a 'surname' to the *tópos*, but also makes clear that we do not need to give them any since, as the series suggests, the motifs may have already become *tópos koinós* i.e. common place(s).

[616] Charles Baudelaire, "Counterfeit coin", in *Baudelaire Rimbaud and Verlaine: Selected Verse and Prose Poems by Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlain* (ed.) Joseph M. Bernstein (New York, NY: Citadel Press, 1993), 119.
[617] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of seeing*, 160
[618] Walter Benjamin, "Dream Kitsch," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and other writings on media* (London: Harvard College, 2008), 237

In this sense, we have to recognize that *Service Included*, a series that has been hardly discussed, was arguably moving in 1997 in the direction of a deconstruction of these baroque motifs, and for this reason it preceded José Alejandro Restrepo's celebrated video-performances, produced since 2000. In these works Restrepo has offered a 'baroque' critical approach to imaginaries and practices of violence by deconstructing the baroque iconographies, which, as it has been indicated here, have served as key references for approaching, imagining, and experiencing trauma.

We can return to the opening of this first part and to Moncada's quote, and insist that the originality of *Family Appetites* and *Service Included*, is neither pointing to classic and ancient rituals, nor denouncing or representing a violence taking place outside of the gallery and registered in the media. Distancing from Moncada's moralistic and conservative inquiry, both artworks interrupt a 'melancholic culture' that have assumed the historical violence as if were onto-theologically grounded on des-historicized and ungrounded structures of sacrifice and its correlated guilt. Both artworks enact an interruption of structures of rituals of sacrifice, by emptying out the rituals or their motifs, and opening therefore an *inter* (see chapter one, second section) within those structures. It is in such inter or 'crack' where they place historical lack/loss in terms of a historical culture that has already enacted or is revealed as capable of enacting resignifications of sacrifice and guilt. Instead of merely affirming a structural trauma, the artworks invite either to historically work through trauma, or to resort to historical worked-through trauma. *Family Appetites* does this by subverting the ritual of preparation of *lechona* as inherited ritual of 'putting together' guilt and sacrifice, while *Service Included* enacts a parody of ritualistic and interiorized Christian ritual of consummation of guilt and self-sacrifice. In this order of ideas, from our perspective, both works may be linked to a decolonial *partage* of the sensible as they attend to the paradoxes of our relation to structural trauma in terms of the *enactment* of either a subversive "re-birth" within an des-historicized structure of trauma, as suggested by *Family Appetites*, or a parodic and interrupting implication in ritualistic structures of trauma, as proposed by *Service Included*.

If *Family Appetites* pertinently pointed to the recovery of threshold experiences that have been assumed and confined to be antiquated traces of classical or mythical rituals, as well as 'innocuous' popular practices of sacrifice, *Service Included* pointed exactly in the 'opposite' direction: it parodies motifs of dream and threshold experiences that, as Benjamin's sarcastic comment stated, seem rather proper of Saint-Pol-Raux, the symbolist poet who, "before going to bed in the early morning [,used to put] up a notice on his door: «Poet at work»."[619] What both artworks affirm is that one thing is transforming dream in a space of creative transformation of reality, and another to ignore history and assume and inhabit dream as a refuge from a depreciated reality. Having said this, we can now move towards the conclusion by retaking what we stated at the end of the previous chapter: *Service Included* suggests that a threshold of creation is also the parody of what incubates the poor abundance and gratuitous gift of our celebrated threshold experiences. In this sense, *Service Included* resonates with *Family Appetites*, *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut* in terms of the actual need of performatively interrupting or allegorizing melancholic dreams, as well as form and structures of trauma. Instead of assuming trauma as structural wound and as beginning and end of our relation to violence, these artworks assume trauma as a critical tool and subverted structure for perception and for addressing and meditating on our historical relation to and experience of violence.

[619] Benjamin, "Dream Kitsch," 237

# CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we have ourselves distanced from existing interpretations and critical commentaries on these artworks. We have shown how these artworks attend to social and cultural dynamics and cultural mechanisms of memory, and appropriate them in order to critically rearticulate the way historical traumas have been problematically assumed as instantiations of structural trauma, and losses/lacks have been crystallized into transhistorical absence. These rearticulations betray the political edge and critical aspect of these works that thematize the complexity of violence and people's (and nation's) historical complicity with it.

In the photographic series and video-installations, photography and video images become tools for critical reflection with attention to detail of 'visual space', or better say, details of mental landscapes: memory' details, 'schemes' or motifs that served as references of perception and emotion, whether in the field of social or cultural uses of botanical plates (vg. *Flower Vase Cut*), media images (vg. *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Service Included*), painting and ritual (*Service Included* and *Family Appetites*), or collective imaginary. For example, while in *Flower Vase Cut* bones have been arranged and registered as dissembling ensembles of human remains turned into floral shapes subverting a 'natural order', in Baraya's series body parts have been inserted in photomontages that simulates the crystalline regime of relics and their motifs, turning the later into items to be consumed in an parodic ritual of consummation. On one side we have the image as simulation of the traces left in memory by the news about mutilations, and on the other, we have the image as a simulation of the 'immemorial' motifs present in the news.

It is worth underlying that these four artworks distance from Hans Belting's idea that "since images traditionally make visible what is absent, the [contemporary] uncertainty about the body is compensated with its presence in image."[620] Contrary to Belting's anthropological analysis, which ignored images *of* violence, mutilations are evidently images-bodies of violence. Hence the challenge the artists have, is neither the aforementioned, nor the one Belting recognized for Gary Hill's work, namely, to raise doubts "about the capacity for the body to be image." On the contrary, and as it has been identified in this study, the challenge is how to make visible the visible, that is to say, how to transform and redistribute the visibility of violence, while recognizing and rearticulating the fact that "violence always makes an image of itself," and violence is world-making. Appropriating Ranciere´s notion of distribution of the sensible, the challenge that is at satke for artists is neither ethical nore merely political responsibility, but basically aesthetic responsibility regarding violence and coloniality.

For this very reason it is no coincidence that each of these works refer to key elements of the baroque as both local tradition and international reference. In particular, we recalled the baroque as both culture and problematic tradition for rendering the experience of historical crisis of modernity. And yet, the appropriation of the baroque cannot be uncritical if we want to account for a historic crisis, rather than assuming a structural trauma and affirming the inevitability and permanence of violence. This is how the artworks as discussed in this study, place themselves in a problematic space understood in two interrelated senses. First, in a theoretical and practical sense, the works meet the need of considering 'universal' myths and structural trauma as references that can give to them a 'universal' scope, while meeting the need to understanding and critically articulating a particular and historical reality. The second, in a historical and practical sense, the works are meant to affirm and open a space of crisis, which we understood in the first chapter as a place of self-relating, transformation, transculturation, and transvaluation within imposed and self-imposed conditions of coloniality. In this regard, and as we have shown in this study, this double return to the baroque and to the past is meant to cause "the emergence of

[620] Belting, *Antropología de la Imagen*, 138.

the new [that not only] changes the balance between actuality and virtuality in the past," but also and above all seeks to change that balance in the present.

In this double sense, it is important to emphasize, even if briefly, the use or reference to intercultural and transcultural images, practices, and motifs: the engraving of 'musa paradisiaca' made in France, the botanical plates of expedition to New Granada where converge anatomical interests, demands of European public and science, techniques of Baroque painting in New Granada; the rite of *lechona* brought by the Spaniards and adopted and rearticulated as both ritual of communication and immunization; and the baroque motifs of martyrs-saint's relics inherited from Catholic Europe and copied and reinterpreted in Colombia and in the media. Cross-cultural images, practices, and motifs can be regarded as palimpsests and mosaics, as well as a sort of 'crystals' that cast a different light depending on the angle from which they are observed. These images are rich in possibilities, offer links between different cultures and break through the problem of identity, particularly the problematic project of a 'Latin American' and 'Colombian' identity (both political projects of "the creole-mestizo elites")[621], and the uncritical denunciations of (neo)colonialism. In addition, these intercultural and transcultural images offer and even demand a critical approach that understand them as historic constructions and mechanisms that, when deconstructed, reveal the contradictions and offer political possibilities for a decolonial redistribution of the sensible —which in tune is more pertinently accessible by attending to the paradoxes of the enactment of capacities, in terms of subversion and parody.

We opened this study by setting out a couple of questions regarding the challenges contemporary artworks face when dealing with issues of violence and trauma. We have been interested in understanding how artworks may thematize and give visibility to the wounded body without repeating the homogenizing and spectacular strategies used by the media. We have sought to understand how artworks could actually

[621] Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel, *El giro decolonial*, 14

move beyond denunciation, and aesthetically and historically name and rearticulate current bodily violence without uncritically resorting to myth and structural trauma.

We believe we have shown that the selected artworks not only offer key elements and insights for such important challenges, but they also articulate and put those elements and insights 'into movement'. This is what we have intended to compile in the following 'diagram,' which can be regarded as conceptual map that charters some key dynamics for the main problem of this study, and possible tendencies suggested, if not present, in the artworks discussed. This diagram has been built by creating a set of coordinates defined by two axes: parody-subversion, and myth-ritual.

The axis parody-subversion is meant to be affirm a *relative* opposition. For instance, parody (*pará*: beside, *ōidḗ*: song) is 'charted' in terms of its characteristic as an imitation that, even if adopting external aspects as well as internal element (included 'substantial' elements) of what is parodied, 'publicly' distances from the latter in order to stand 'outside' and besides it in order to counter it. In this sense, the parody can be described as 'external' to what is parodied. This is of course an analytical description, and it does not mean indeed that parody is actually external, for instance, of social or collective system and memory, or a tradition it refers and counters. On the other hand, we underline subversion in terms of the sort of 'secrecy' and subtle undermining actions or gestures that the term as well as subversive practices involve. In this sense, we describe subversion as 'internal' to what it is meant to subvert and even erode.

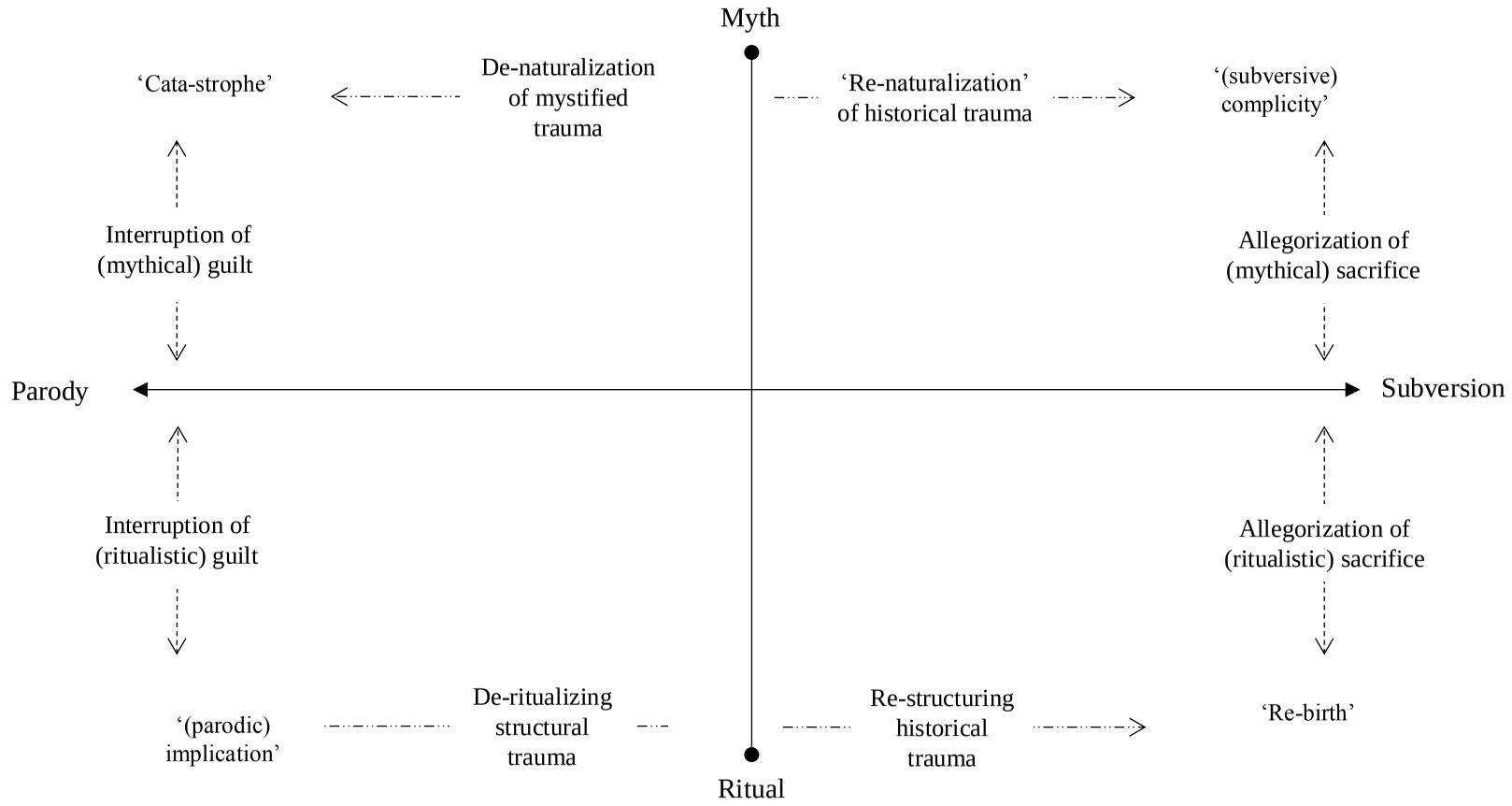
Regarding the second axis, it is worth recalling there has been a long discussion about the actual relation between ritual and myth. While some 19th century classicists and religious scholars suggested that ritual arose from myth (Vg. rituals of commemoration of Passover among Jews, Christmas and Easter among Christians, etc.), other 19th century anthropologists argued that myth actually emerge from rituals. Durkheim's approach, which was undoubtedly influential in Girard's understanding of ritual of sacrifice

*'Floral forms of violence'*

(From trauma as transhistorical absence to trauma as historical loss)

*Musa Paradisiaca*

*Flower Vase Cut*




(From structural trauma to historical trauma)

*Service Included*

*Family Appetites*

*'Consumption/communication of violence'*

(mentioned in Chapter 3), affirms an inseparability and equality between myth and ritual.[622] During the 20th century, many scholars have argued against such inseparability and equality. Anthropologist and sociologist have arguably shown that in the religion of ancient Rome existed rituals without myths;[623] an idea that actually informed Lygia Clark's latest work where she "explored sensory perception and psychic interaction of various sorts"[624] in order to healing pain and trauma though meditation. On the other hand, scholars have also recognized that "myth has often come loose from ritual,"[625] and have become for instance a sort of literary narrative. This possibility may have one of its first evidences in Aristotle's *Poetics* and his rather technical understanding of myth as plot and story line;[626] granted it retained the structural character of ritual.

Whatever the case, the axis myth-ritual is not meant to reject any of the former possibilities, and particularly the interdependence of ritual and myth when dealing with transference and subversion of rituals and myths, as well as the enactment of ritual *qua* performative communication. In this sense, the second axis rather 'represents' tendencies or emphasis in the way trauma is assumed. In this regard, we followed LaCapra's analytic approach to historical loss and trauma, transhistorical absence and structural trauma, and have appropriated Rappaport's analytical interpretation of ritual as structure. We have first identified as conceptual references against or within which parody and subversion respectively take place, an interrelation between structural trauma and ritual *qua* communicative structure. This interrelation was pointed out in both communicative rituals uncritically assumed as instantiation of de-historicized structural trauma, and de-historicized ritualistic structures of communicating and acting-out trauma. We have intended to render this interrelation in the lower half of the diagram. On the other hand, we have also

[622] "It is clear that there can be no myth without ritual; as a ritual necessarily implies that things are represented as sacred and this representation can be only mythical." Émile Durkheim, "De la definition des phénomènes religieux," in *Année sociologique*, vol. II, (1897-1898): 14 fn. 1
[623] Mario Perniola, *The Sex Appeal of the Inorganic: Philosophies of Desire in the Modern World* (trans.) Massimo Verdicchio (London: Continuum, 2004), 55
[624] Guy Brett, "Lygia Clark: In search of the body," in *Art in America* Vol 82, no. 7 (July 1994): 57.
[625] Robert N. Bella, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 136.
[626] Stephen Halliwel, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 23.

identified that natural forms work as "iconic" and conceptual references of "perdurance" and "invariance in [the ritual's] mode of transmission,[627] against or within which parody and subversion respectively take place. This is what the upper half of the diagram attends to and intends to render.

Following our analysis in the previous chapters, we have 'placed' in this set of coordinates, the two parts and the four artworks; in all cases written in cursives. The cursives are meant to suggest that this placement does not mean that each artwork (or part) fits perfectly or is limited to be an 'instantiation' of each quadrant (or half of the 'plane'). On the contrary, each part and artwork has offered various emphasis and problematizations of trauma and violence, and the actual constellation the artworks form has helped us to produce the current diagram. Nonetheless, the diagram and the placement of the artworks (and parts) do not force on the latter the inverse relation, that is to say, we do not assume a one-to-one relation between the diagram and the constellation.

Having said this, the upper area of the diagram (corresponding to myth), and the horizontal and vertical arrows within, render key issues we have discussed and summarized at the end of the first part; and particularly describe the move (by means of parody or subversion) from trauma *qua* transhistorical absence, to trauma critically understood in terms of historical loss or lack. This is how at the end of the first part, we identified in *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Flower Vase Cut*, the possibilities of either historically working-through trauma, or taking advantage of historical worked-through trauma. In the first case, we identified a parodic "de-naturalization" of mystified trauma and myth (of sin), that is to say, a parodic way of critically distancing from the apparent "invariance" of a colonial trauma. In the case of *Flower Vase Cut*, we recognized elements of a subversive re-'naturalization' of historical trauma and violence through the appropriation of botanic plates. In other words, we acknowledged that the photographic series appropriates "iconic" scientific representations of floral forms, and transforms them into allegories of natural-mythical (no matter if 'devilish') sacrifice (identified by Taussig); allegories that introduce and

[627] Rappaport, *Ritual and religion*…, 53.

reveal a "subversive complicity" with imposed and apparently invariable orders and dynamics of violence.

The lower half of the diagram (corresponding to ritual) and the vertical and horizontal arrows within, render what we identified at the end of the second part of this study: a move from -the uncritical assumption of- trauma as structural trauma, to trauma as historical and transformable 'communal' event. In this direction, we underlined in *Family Appetites*, the gesture of allegorical subversion of an inherited or transferred ritual of guilt and sacrifice, and we pointed out in *Service Included* the interrupting parody of ritualistic motifs used for communication of –and making common– de-historicized guilt and sacrifice.

In addition to this, we have inserted two pairs of notions we identified in the artwork (placed in cursive in the respective quadrant). They are meant to name the sort of transformation proposed of one's relation to violence and trauma. In the first case, we have the couple 'cata-strophe' and 're-birth', the former denoting a critical understanding of –what was considered to be– mythical violence and transhistorical trauma, and the latter a meditation-guided structural differentiation within the historical violence of our being-with. Since the upper and lower part halves (referred to myth and ritual) are not opposites but two 'sides' at times hardly dissociable one form the other, the second couple made by '(subversive) complicity' and '(parodic) implication' runs along the first. This means that according to the logic behind the diagram, parody (as identified in *Musa Paradisiaca* and *Service Included*) could be understood in terms of a 'parodic implication' in a 'cata-strophe' that "destabilizes the power of a single interpretation"[628] of violence and trauma. On the other hand, subversion (as identified in *Flower Vase Cut* and *Family Appetites*) could be understood in terms of a 'subversive complicity' in a 're-birth,' or

[628] Gutiérrez, *Cruces : Arte : Artista,* 57.

transformative resistance "able to resignify hegemonic" [629] forms and structures of violence and trauma, from the point of view of subaltern subjectivities.

We do not mean that these Colombian artists (necessarily) think about or produce their artworks having in mind the logic behind this chart. In his 1919 doctoral dissertation titled *The concept of criticism in the German Romanticism*, Benjamin considered that the Romantics' thinking "lets itself be *related* to systematic thought processes, that it in fact allows itself to be brought into a correctly chosen system of coordinates, whether or not the Romantics have fully provided this system themselves."[630] From Benjamin we adopt the idea of something "letting be related to systematic thought processes"; idea that neither forces us to assume the correctness of a system of coordinates. Noteworthy, while Benjamin was interested in proposing a system of *Dialektik im stillstand*, with ontological implications, we rather opt for an analytical diagram that is less understood in oppositional terms.

Moreover, it is worth underlying that we do not intend to render visible a hidden transhistorical and logical structure of artistic 'representation' of violence, as if we followed Lévi-Strauss' anthropological structuralism (from which we distanced in chapter 3). As indicated in the introduction, the diagram systematizes the results of the present study, and may serve as heuristic chart for future approaches to and critical studies of artworks dealing with trauma and violence. Yet, contrary to the logic behind Krauss' essay "Sculpture on the expanded field", we are neither assuming that the artworks fit the gramassian (semiotic) square, nor advocate all-comprehensive and logical system like hers. If our study is related to art criticism, it is not only because we intend to propose an analysis of artworks and identify elements for future critical work, but also to comparatively nuture the historical and critical study from

[629] Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel, "Giro decolonial, teoría crítica y pensamiento heterárquico", *El Giro Decolonial: Reflexiones para una diversidad epistémica más allá del capitalismo global*, (ed.) Santiago Castro-Gómez and Ramón Grosfoguel (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, 2007), 20

[630] "[…] daß ihr Denken sich auf systematische Gedankengänge b e z i e h e n läßt, daß es in der Tat in ein richtig gewähltes Koordinatensystem sich eintragen läßt, gleichviel, ob die Romantiker selbst dieses System vollständig angegeben haben oder nicht.". Walter Benjamin, *Der Begriff der Kunstkritik in der deutschen Romantik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2008), 44

the artworks themselves. We neither inted to systematize the artworks, nor force the principle of noncontradiction on them. Notably, while Krauss worked in terms of problematic logical negations and historical assumptions (Vg. sculpture as no-architecture and no-landscape), we have rather opted for assuming, in limited and positive terms, what the artworks actually offer in order to try to make sense of how they both follow and challenged a tradition. The constellation may be, like in Benjamin and Krauss, a place for systematization or like in the present study, a way of a systematic thinking that makes room for the artworks' ambiguity and mobility regarding their stance against transhistorical and structural trauma.

Finally, the diagram not only registers a certain proximity between *Service Included* and *Musa Paradisiaca*. It also suggests that, as it has been the case, Restrepo's video-performances, produced since 2000, have moved in a direction similar to that of *Service included*, offering, a parodic appropriation of imaginaries and practices of violence by deconstructing baroque ritualistic toponymy and iconography of martyrs and relics. That is particularly the case of Restrepo's series *Iconomy*, produced and exhibited since 2000, and part of a future editorial project of this study. In addition, we should underline that Baraya's most famous work, *Herbarium of artificial plants* (2002-2006), is a playful series of plates (video, drawings and photos) where by collecting plastic plants used for decoration in many places in the world he has visited, not only "parodies and questions the objectivity" and consume interests in the development of 19th-century botany.[631] This latter interpretation has not only been unanimously affirmed, but has also obscured the fact that *Herbarium of artificial plants*, even if not dealing with violence and trauma, is a 'parodic implication' with (and enjoyment of) artificial plants and their uses, intended to destabilize the traditional and internalized interpretation and assumptions of iconic forms and motifs of life, death, and nature.

[631] José Roca, "Alberto Baraya", *Frieze* 108 (June-August 2007). http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/focus_alberto_baraya/

On the other hand, it is interesting that Echavarría and Echeverri have gradually moved since 2000, towards the inclusion of victims (and perpetrators), their testimonies and the latter's contents and structures, in order to reveal and approach sometimes known, sometimes anonymous cases of resistance against and resilience after long and traumatic violence in Colombia. That is the case, for instance, of Echavarría's *Mouths of Ashes* (2003), *NN Requiem* (2006), and *Novena in standby* (2012), and Echeverri's *Exhausted, [It] still can fight* (2000), *Voice-Net* (2003-2005), and *Spontaneous testimony* (2011), which will be addressed in a future study.

The works we have discussed in the present study inaugurated ways for critical reflections on violence, for recovering witnessing in and with transformed rituals, and for performing complex approaches interested in revealing different aspect and the different faces of violence. As if anticipating anthropologist Alejandro Castillejo's comment, according to which in Colombia "there is not only an exchange of bullets but [also] an intersection of meanings and roles within a system of meanings [...where] death is a product of exchange of meanings and symbols,"[632] the artworks discussed critically attend to social and cultural dynamics and cultural mechanisms of memory, and appropriate them in order to critically rearticulate the way historical traumas have been problematically assumed as instantiations of structural trauma and losses crystallized into absence. This rearticulation betrays a political edge and critical aspect of these works; artworks that recognize and thematize the complexity of violence and people's complicity with it, without resorting to ideological divisions that hardly realize democratic and historical possibilities. Future research projects move in that direction, with particular attention to photography and video in the period between 2002 and 2010 in Colombia, and having as conceptual references the notion of trauma here adopted, and decolonial redistribution of the sensible here identified and proposed.

[632] Alejandro castillejo, *Poética de lo otro: antropología de la guerra, la soledad, y el exilio interno en Colombia* (Bogotá: Icanh, 2000), 23

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# ANNEX

## Notes on the 'Mutis style' botanic plates

Scholars have suggested, apparently with a feeling of disappointment, that flatness is owed to local artist's limited education in European art,[633] and more exactly, due to the lack of naturalistic, nude, and anatomic studies.[634] Instead of adopting an approach that would suggest that these plates would be a sort of derived and unskilled artworks, we could look at the flatness under a less Eurocentric, and more positive light. Noteworthy, as Daniela Bleichmar reminds us, Mutis was less interested in requiring painters to have already experience with tempera, but demanded from them "genius and application."[635] He also preferred to provide "through training the skills [the local painters] lack at the beginning, and in this way compensate for the lack of docility of the Spanish artists, who always perform poorly in America."[636] In fact, the Expedition to New Granada was the only one outside of Europe that hired local artists and in a large number. More than 30 painters were part of the team.

Unfortunately, Bleichmar's timely research does not problematize Mutis' preference for "docility", which is a way he presented himself as master of a discipline he did not learn –noticeably, none of the plates was signed by him. It may be the case that Mutis interpreted painters' willingness to

[633] See for instance: Antonio González Bueno, *José Celestino Mutis (1732-1808) y la expedición botánica del Nuevo Reino de Granada* (Barcelona: Real Jardín Botánico C.S.I.C., c1992); Ma. del Pilar de San Pío Aladrén (comp.) *Mutis y la Real Expedición Botánica del Nuevo Reyno de Granada* (Bogotá: Villegas Editores, 1992); Marta Fajardo de Rueda, "La flora de la Real Expedición Botánica, primera Escuela de Arte en el Nuevo Reino de Granada," *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* No. 13/14 (1985-1986): 41-61; Germán Arciniegas et al. *Esta es Colombia: expedición botánica 200 años* (Bogotá: El Greco Impresores-Editores, 1983); Marta Fajardo de Rueda and Paula Maldonado Currea, *La Expedición Botánica y la ilustración* (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2005); Beatriz González, "Los Pintores de la Expedición Botánica," *Revista Credencial Historia* No. 74 (Feb. 1996): 4- 5.

[634] Marta Fajardo de Rueda, *Los Pintores de la Flora de la Real Expedición Botánica: Exposición Intinerante*, (Bogotá: Cidar and Facultad de Artes, 1990) http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/

[635] Mutis, *Archivo Epistolar* Vol. 1, 313

[636] Mutis, *Archivo Epistolar* Vol. 1, 330

participate in the expedition, in a way that echoes other colonialist and contemporary descriptions of "ingenuous" natives and "docile" black slaves that the European scientist and his *criollo* assistant, Francisco José Caldas, thought could civilize.[637] It may be also the case that Mutis interpreted the actual pictorial tradition he found, in terms of the development of the European art. In this direction, we do need to remember that Mutis not only hired painters who were already part of the so-called schools of Quito and Bogotá,[638] whose secular and religious works were part of a tradition that had already reached, in 17th century, an idiosyncratic way of representational art —This way was neither pre-Columbian, nor could be described as 'mestizo' or 'hybrid' art; being the latter two problematic terms scholars use when describing 16th-century art in the region.[639] We also need to approach the plates as product of negotiations and at times felicitous coincidences between Mutis and painters.

Seeing flatness under a positive light, we have to consider the possibility that it is owned to a methodology used by painters and known as *rompecabezas*.[640] The term *rompecabezas* can be literally translated as 'head breaker/tearer'.' The traditional English translation 'brain teaser' clearly misses a sense suggested by the verb *romper* central for the technique. It consisted firstly of cutting out heads, hands, trunks, and feet of figures from several engravings and prints mostly produced in Europe, or tracing the figures on a paper sheets held momentarily on the print or painting that was to be copied.

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[637] Santiago Castro-Gómez, *La Hybris del Punto Cero* (Bogotá: Universidad Javeriana, 2005), 260, 265

[638] A list of artists can be found in: Beatriz González and José Antonio Amaya, "Pintores, aprendices y alumnos de la Expedición Botánica" *Revista Credencial Historia* No. 74 (Feb. 1996): 6-15. URL: http://www.banrepcultural.org/blaavirtual/revistas/credencial/febrero1996/febrero2.htm

[639] Good example of artworks that "entwine both European and Andean signs and sign-systems" are the portraits of Inka nobles commented in Carolyn Dean, Inka Nobles: Portraiture and Paradox in Colonial Peru," in *Exploring New World Imagery: Spanish Colonial Papers from the 2002 Mayer Center Symposium*, (ed) Donna Pierce (Denver: Frederick and Jan Mayer Center for Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art, Denver Art Museum, 2005), 80-103. The term of mestizo very popular in the 19th century, not only suggest a mixture (between white Europeans and native Indians) that blurs the actual and important differences at the time, but is also a racial notion that emphasizes the nationalist idea of 'criollismo' that is still attached historical legitimation of the elites and an exclusion of populations. Hybridity is at times problematic as it suggest impurity and abnormality, in the 19th-century sense of the word. Yet, Nestor García Canclini has used in order to suggest the idea of 'impure' contrasted to purity or canonic. For a brief reflection on the term 'hybridity,' see: Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review*, 5-35.

[640] Armando Montoya López, "Vásquez Ceballos y La Estética de la Contrarreforma," *Artes, La Revista* 8, Vol. 4 Julio-Diciembre (2004): 47.

Latter the cutouts and copies would be reorganized, transferred to the canvas or wood, and later illuminated and varnished. Instead of creating a pictorial space where the figures would be drawn or painted, painters created compositions with the cutoffs and copies; being this a very particular way of rearticulating European iconography.[641]

A single illustrative example may be needed, even if this example does not show the higher achievement of creating a new iconography; there are better examples that would demand a lengthier introduction. Gregorio Vásquez's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (ca. 1670) was probably created having before his eyes a copy or print of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (ca. 1657) and Abraham Bloemaert's *Adoration of the shepherds* (1612). Notice the similarities between the figure wearing a blue garment on the left side of Bloemaert's canvas, and the shepherd wearing a red garment on the right side in Vásquez's canvas.

Vásquez transformed a female figure into a male one, displacing it from the margins and foreground of Bloemaert's painting to the center and middle ground of the composition, and stressing the symbolic function of the right hand's gesture known as *neotericis orditur*. The gesture suggests that shepherds talk about or consider recent events, i.e., the birth of Christ. Noteworthy this male figure wears a read garment that echoes the Virgin's clothing. Not only Vásquez gave a more protagonist role to the virgin than Bloemaert did, but also he suggested that the now male-shepherd evokes a happy and new-mother talking about her child while also contemplates him. This would be a way of both complying the rules of modesty associated with the Virgin, but also suggesting a second and less evident layer of narrative that emphasizes house life in the New Granada, if not intended to be comic since the baby re-veiled by his mother, poses and looks at the shepherd as if he were modelling.

[641] Cécile Michaud, *De Amberes Al Cusco: El Grabado Europeo Como Fuente del Arte Virreinal* [Catalog exhibition] (Lima, Perú: Centro Cultural of Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2009).

Figure 81. Esteban Murillo, Adoration of the Shepherds ca. 1657 oil on canvas

Figure 82. Abraham Bloemaert, Adoration of the Shepherds, 1612. Oil on canvas

Figure 83. Vásquez, Adoration of the Shepherds, ca. 1670. Oil on canvas

This technique was perhaps what defined in large part the 'copying' process that painter apparently followed in the Expedition: Mutis or his assistants "collected the material in the field and brought it, fresh, to the workplace," and "painters elaborated a plate in a largest folio sheet by making the general outline of some details, copying the shapes of leaves and registering the colors of the material on part of the painting."[642] Notice for instance something that is easily found in many plates produce by the

[642] Santiago Díaz, "Dimensiones de la Expedición Botánica y legado de Mutis, 2008 (fragmentos)," *Ciencia y la Expedición Botánica en la Independencia*, Santiago Díaz Piedrahita (comp) (Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2009), 58.

Expedition: in Sánchez's *Epidendrum* (Figure 10) it seems that those green leaves in the lower part have been forced and probably pressed on the folio in order to copy them — Practice also found in the production of late 18th-century anatomical waxworks in La Specola (the museum of Natural sciences in Florence), where the organs from several corpses takes from the Santa Maria Hospital were used for abstracting an exemplary image of the body,[643] much in the vein demanded by the sciences in the age of Enlightenment.

Pressing and copying would help painters to work fast and outline a large amount of specimens and therefore producing more than 2000 plates, and could partially help us explain Mutis' complains about the slow pace of work of Spanish painters.[644] The technique known as *rompecabezas* was undoubtedly helpful to copy fast, to treat specimens as elements to be rearranged and forced to fit a particular sort of composition, and why not, this technique could also help the painter develop a particular iconism.

Figure 84. . Gautier, [La tête renversée et vûe de côte sans la mâchoire inférieure], 1745

A second aspect we have to take into account, is related to tendency among scholars to uncritically assume Mutis' botanic plates as fundamentally defined by botanic practices current at the time. In other words, scholars have tended to dismiss Mutis' educational and professional background as physician and priest, and with it they tend to dismiss the possibility that such education and work invested him with a particular and crucial way of approaching visual representation in Botany. Between November 1749 and February 1752, Mutis studied in the College of Surgery founded in 1948 in

[643] Belting, *Antropología de la imagen*, 131.
[644] Mutis, *Archivo Epistolar* Vol. 1, 330.

Cádiz by Pedro Virgili, one of the most prominent Spanish surgeon at the time.[645] Virgili introduced in the medicine program in Cádiz, the study of anatomy on corpses accompanied by the use of Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty' impressive plates.[646] Gautier was a recognized engraver who produced plates not only for the books *Essai d'Anatomie* (1745) and *Myologie Complete en Couleur et Grandeur Naturelle* (1746) written by famous anatomist Joseph-Guichard Du Verney, but also for his own books, among them, *Observations sur l'histoire naturelle pur la physique et sur la peinture* (1752) and *Observations physiques «dédiées au Roi par M. Gautier»* (second edition, 1753). The latter two were part of Mutis' personal library used for the Expedition.[647]


Figure 85. Gautier, [Tulipes], Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, 1752

It is remarkable that Gautier' large size and colorful plates not only depart from the classicism and 'distanced' type of representation found in contemporary anatomy and natural history, which followed the Italian Renaissance approach proposed by Andrea Vesalius' paradigmatic *De Humani Corpore Fabrica* (1543). Gautier's luxurious plates also depart form the idea of representing what is canonical: in his *Observations physiques*, dedicated to and enjoyed by the French King Louis XV, Gautier was manly focus on explicit depictions of hermaphrodites' sexual organs, which were regarded as representation of what breaks natural rules and even infiltrates order.[648]

[645] Juan Manuel Núñez Olarte, El hospital general de Madrid en el Siglo 18: actividad médico-quirúrgica (Madrid, Editorial CSIC - CSIC Press, 1999), 212
[646] Diego Ferrer, *Un siglo de Cirugía en España* (Barcelona, Editorial Pentágono, 1963) 76.
[647] The library included book Mutis borght with him from Spain, and book he acquired while living in New Granada. It is about 4.600 volumes about natural history, medicine, biology, astronomy and geography. Catalogue of Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, Fondo Documental José Celestino Mutis. http://www.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/
[648] Luis XV's interest in what breaks natural rules and even infiltrates order may find no better example than in the figure of Chevalier/Chevalière d'Éon: the androgynous person that, it is said, was secretly hired by the King as spy, and was sent to Russia. This action of the King, if true, would contradict official policies within his own reign, and international treaties with the European powers, particularly with the Habsburg monarchy in England. Charles d'Éon

This said, it may be the case that Mutis thought that depicting a New World's exotic flora that breaks and expands botanic preexistent taxonomy, would deserve beautiful and impressive plates that, in a sense, emulated Gautier's. Noteworthy, Gautier subtly renounced to the classical-bent and obsession with cannons and perspectival correctness found in the other illustrators in France, England and Spain. In order to emphasize body parts and offer 'realist' details, he opted instead for subtly combining three- and two-dimensionality, which is something it shares with the plates of the Botanic Expedition.

Gautier was pupil of painter and engraver Jacob Christoph, and was even rival of the latter regarding the privileges for using in France a method of a color-printing known as mezzotint engraving.[649] The method made him able to produce paradigmatic color plates for anatomy and natural history books, [650] without using line- or dot-based techniques like hatching, cross-hatching or stipple; effects that undoubtedly affected detailed rendering of images. This technique not only made it possible to avoid the current practice of painting plates manually. Mezzotint also became known for the luxurious quality and fine gradation of its tones, and for producing images that look washed, smoky and wooly. When we look at these plates, we can easily wonder if Gautier's flat images representing muscles, bones, flora and fauna were initially influential, and probably an important reference for Mutis interest in creating his idiosyncratic design. We could also wonder if Mutis' rejection of the water colors, currently fashionable for botanic plates, and his adoption of tempera (with its longer life, and denser and opaque tones), was influenced by the mezzotint technique and the smoky and dense color it produced. — If that was the case, it is evident that tempera would be a comparatively less expensive and more practical substitute that could help him to produce exclusive plates and faster pace without resorting to a technique that was exclusive even in Europe at the time, and could not be imported to the small and provincial city of Santafe de Bogotá.

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De Beaumont, *The Maiden of Tonnerre: The Vicissitudes of the Chevalier and the Chevalière d'Éon* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)

649 *The Surrealist Anatomic Plates of Gautier d'Agoty - 1741-1775* (Leopold Publishing, 2014), 5

650 M.ª Rosa Vives Pique, "El Arte del Grabado Auxiliar y Testigo del Arte de Curar," *Materia* 6-7, (2008): 134

Apart from Gautier's possible influence, we must address more decisive issues in Mutis' education and work. Like many of his professors and colleges, Mutis lived and worked at time of transition from medievalist to modern medicine in Spain. This includes not only Virgili, who was director of the College of Surgery and apparently invited Mutis to assist him in his new role of physicist of the chamber of King Ferdinand VI.[651] It also involves Andrés Piquer, who apparently examined Mutis for the grade of Doctor in 1957, [652] and was regarded as the most eminent physician at the time and leading figures in the modernization of medicine in Spain. It is significant that in his book *Modern Physics* (1745), also part of Mutis' library, Piquer himself recognized his way of understanding the 'modernization' of sciences, and medicine in particular, had to be guided what he summarized under the term of "eclectic philosophy," from the Greek word "ἐκλεκτική, that means selective": "I follow eclectic philosophy, that is to say, a way of philosophizing that does not insist on defending any system, but rather takes from each what seems more in line with the truth" while also attending to experience.[653]

In a similar guise, a sort of eclecticism characterizes Mutis' program proposed in 1801, 1804, and 1805 for redesigning the studies of medicine at Rosario College, the first university in New Granada. Emilio Quevedo and Camilo Duque have pertinently compared Mutis' programs with those proposed and applied in Spain and France at the time, in order to understand the actual 'modernity' of Mutis' legacy. Their findings are interesting. For instance, it is significant that whole program had a clear bent towards

[651] Mutis, "Informe sobre el estado de la medicina, la cirugía y la farmacia en el Nuevo Reino de Granada y forma de remediarlo." This report was sent to the Spanish Viceroy Pedro Mendinueta, on July 3rd, 1801. Mutis is quoted in Emilio Quevedo and Camilo Duque Naranjo, *Historia de la cátedra de medicina en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario durante la colonia y la República, 1653-1865* (Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2002), 56. It is interesting that Quevedo and Duque's archival research did not find any document that could confirm Mutis' affiliation to group of physicians of the King's chamber, no matter if there are documents supporting the affiliation of some of his colleges and Virgili's students. (Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra*, 57 fn.86).

[652] Mutis, "Informe sobre el estado de la medicina, la cirugía y la farmacia en el Nuevo Reino de Granada y forma de remediarlo." This report was sent to the Spanish Viceroy Pedro Mendinueta, on July 3rd, 1801. Mutis is quoted in Emilio Quevedo and Camilo Duque Naranjo, *Historia de la cátedra de medicina en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario durante la colonia y la República, 1653-1865* (Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2002), 56.

[653] Andrés Piquer, F*ísica Moderna* (Madrid: Pascual García, 1745), Trat. 1, chap. 1, IV. I am indebted to Antonio Jiménez for pointing to this important notion of eclecticism in his article: Antonio Jiménez, "Andrés Piquer y la filosofía española del siglo XVIII (A propósito de un libro del P. Mindón)," *Revista de Filosofo* 3a época. vol. V (1992). Núm. 8, 429- 439.

surgery, and first year of studies had a Vesalian-bent: it was to be completely to build the foundations of medicine by focusing on human anatomy, accompanied by comparative anatomy and zootomy, a and strong interest in the use of plates accompanied by dissections of human corpses, [654] as it happened 50 years before in Cádiz. No dissection of animals is suggested, and apparently executed. [655] Instead of resorting to treatises produced at the end of the 18th century, Mutis surprisingly suggested the use of books produced during the first half. [656] Notably, the latter were already outdated by 1805, given the fast development of medicine in the late 18th century.

In addition, Quevedo and Duque arguably affirm that Mutis was still attached to some of Herman Boerhaave's baroque ideas, according to which "anatomy and physiology are intimately connected in each of the functional systems of the body." [657] It is remarkable that apart from the fact that Boerhaave's books abound in the Expedition's library, [658] *El Arcano de la Quina* (The Arcane of Quinine), Mutis sole publication in a botany-related area, is inspired by the latter's herbalist method. Not by chance, in this book Mutis judged the Dutch physician as "the immortal reformist of medicine."[659] This sort of 'immortality' does not seem to be merely rhetorical, since Mutis stated in his program of 1805, with a clear Boerhaavian tone and Vesalian-bent, that physiology studies the mechanisms of the "organs of human body", and as such physiology was intimately connected with anatomy, and lay "on the solid foundation" the latter provided.[660]

[654] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 106.
[655] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 113.
[656] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 113.
[657] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 115.
[658] *Index alter plantarum quae in horto academico Lugduno-Batavo aluntur* (1727), *Praxis medica, sive, commentarium in aphorismos Hermanni Boerhaave : de cognoscendis et curandes morbis* (third edition, 1738), *Traité de la matière medicale : pour servir a la composition des remédes indiqués dans les aphorisms* (1739), *Hermanni Boerhaave... praelectiones academicae in proprias institutiones rei medicae* (1742), *Hermanni Boerhaave libellus de materia medica et remediorum formulis* (1747), *Elementa chemiae : quae anniversario labore docuit, in publicis, privatisque scholis* (1752), *Opera omnia medica : quorum series post praefationem subjicitur*(1766), *Aphorismos de cirugía de Herman Boerhaave* (1774, and 1786), *Hermanni Boerhaave institutiones medicae. Pars I. Physiologia* (1796).
[659] José Celestino Mutis, *El Arcano de la Quina* (Madrid: Ibarra, 1828), 28
[660] Mutis is quoted in: Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 115.

Anatomy, clearly assumed by Mutis as human anatomy, was not only the 'area' he was appointed as chair at the General Hospital of Madrid before leaving to New Granada in 1760. Anatomy was also what, 50 years later, he still wanted to be taught in strong relation to surgery, anatomical plates and human dissection, and was still fundamental for his way of understanding chirurgical medicine. Even if this sound a platitude, it is not only the case that Mutis considered anatomy (i.e. the study of body's structure, the situation of its parts and their interrelation) to be fundamental for a knowledge and practice of medicine interested in healing by means of operating (cutting, dissecting, and reassembling) the human body. It is also the case that for Mutis, anatomical knowledge would not be better understood, and would not be better practiced and reproduced than chirurgically.

Another couple of findings I will finally mention from Quevedo and Duque's archival research, is that Mutis' programs tended to place pathology in a sort of secondary role, and he did not he even dare to mention anatomic pathology developed during the last third of the 18th century. It is worth mentioning that anatomic pathology is not only central to Illustrated medicine, but notoriously important for 19th-century medicine, because it understand illness as an anatomic alteration of the organs and their functions,[661] instead of imbalance of the whole body seen as unity. Remarkably, for the third year of studies, Mutis proposed to study pathology following Sauvages' taxonomy of illness, which is famous for recalling Linnaeus' taxonomy, since the former is also interested in identifying classes, orders, and species of illness. *Yet*, in this regard we must underline an implication that Quevedo and Ruiz did not identify, or at least did not discuss explicitly: the classification of illness, as Mutis understood it in his program, is grounded and framed by the Hippocratic notion of balance and imbalance. This means that he understood taxonomy of illness, firstly, as the study and identification of the way in which different illnesses are related by putting them in groups, and secondly, as the study that assumes, as fundamental ground of anything to be classified, an structural balance.

[661] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 120

Not by chance, Mutis considered that fourth and fifth year students should read the doctrine of "the Prince of Medicine," since they should be prepared for their future practice by finding, in Hippocratic aphorisms, the most "solid bases of [medicine] profession."[662] The reading, which would be guided by Piquer's comments,[663] was not merely related to ethical rules of medicine, but also to the idea of systematically understanding the body as structurally balanced (Of course, this balance was not understood in terms of humors). This is why, instead of proposing anatomic treatises specialized on systems, Mutis pointed to compendiums,[664] and he started to discuss anatomy with the whole skeleton, rather with the hand, against Vesalius's advice.[665] The ethos in the core of Mutis' very eclectic understanding of medicine, was probably the idea that medicine had to be at the same time analytical and synthetic. Medicine would be originally grounded by the structural balance that allows the analysis of the body. Medicine would also synthetically recover the unity and balance. And as 'corollary', we would add: this ethos affirmed that this double and mutually implicated labor could be better practiced and instructed visually (which includes plates and visual experimentation). For Mutis, the texts written by a Vesalian hand do not capture the totality of the body as the anatomist-surgeon's eyes do.

All this said, we can go back to the plate showing the quinine. In the center there is a branch of which two small branches emerge. With a high attention to detail, the plate clearly indicates the main branch was cut off from a plant. On this main branch there are nine leaves and an inflorescence. The small branch on the left side has two leaves, and sixteen elements. Some are easily identified as flowers. The branch on the right side has a more complex and symmetric structure than the former. Here, one identifies four leaves and more than two dozen flowers. On the bottom left of the plate there is a group of three flowers, perhaps cut from the secondary branch on the right. Next to the three flowers are also three flowers depicted in what seems to be three different stages of development, guiding the viewer to identify

[662] Mutis is quoted in: Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 120.
[663] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 108.
[664] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 113.
[665] Quevedo and Duque, *Historia de la cátedra,* 102.

all the elements in the left branch as incipient flowers. On the lower right side of the plate, and following the same direction left-right, as if meant to be read, there is depicted with *precisión de cirujano* ('surgeon's precision'), as the Spanish expression says, a flower and the parts of flowers, among them the stigma, the wide-open corolla, and the stamens. [666]

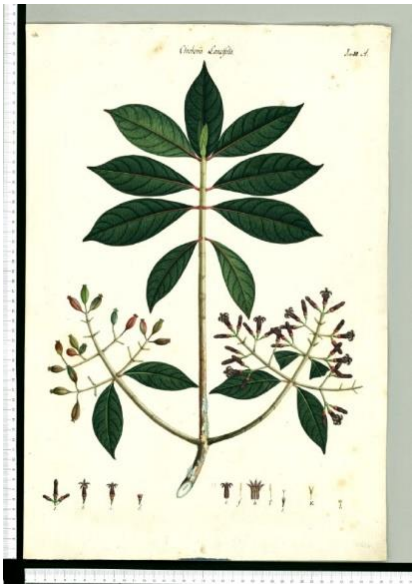

Figure 87. (left) Anonymous, Cinchona lancifolia, ca. 1800. Tempera. Royal Folio. DIV. III A-2850 (Royal Botanic Garden,

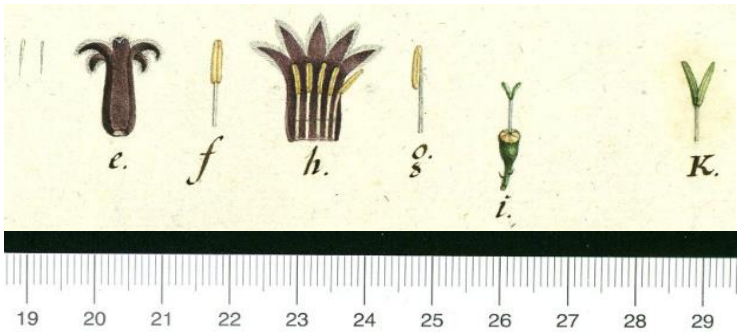


Figure 86. Anonymous, Cinchona lancifolia (detail). Reference in centimeters

By looking at the plate the viewer has been guided through different layers or levels of dissection and flower's development all in a single plate. The plate not only analyses the branch but also shows the way of mentally assembling the different parts and times in this plate, so we see with the imagination the species, the *Cinchona lancifolia* or quinine with spear-shaped leaves. In this sense, plates are emblematic

[666] In the plate depicting the *Cinchona lancifolia*, we see, on the bottom left, a group of three flowers with the label 'a'. This trio suggests that flower grow always in trios. Next then are three flowers depicted in what seems to be three consecutive stages of development (from 'older' to 'younger'), and consecutively labeled 'b', 'c', and 'd.' On the lower right side of the plate, and following the same direction left-right, are depicted a complete flower, and parts of flowers in what is suggested as a consecutive order of dissection: the corolla, a stamen as seen before opening the corolla, the wide-open corolla with the stamens inside, a stamen with an anthem ('head') more detailed, the female organ, the upper part of it (made of the stigma and the style), and the lower part of it (the ovary).

images, not exact registers of specimens that happily happen to show symmetry, and have all the stages of development and the parts or organs of the plant. Rizo's representation of *Mutisia clematis,* does not just look like a heraldic motif. The specimen is curved in such a way that it can be seen all, neither merely due to an excessive eagerness for registration, nor for just "pushing conventions of European natural history imagery to extremes."[667] As Bleichmar has expressed. The dissecting plates, do not just offer an exemplary specimen, but also instruct the viewer how to dissect and classify. The plates of the Expedition seem to appropriate the aforementioned ethos, but this time in the sense that they are intended to instruct botany, and perhaps transform the viewer into a botanist –One should not forget that the production of the plates was also meant to be instructive for painters.

If we accept what we have indicated until now, it may be clear that there are strong implications to the way Mutis understood botany, and of course, the use of plates. Bleichmar calls attention to an entry in Mutis' diary where he recognized having written the description of a specimen without examining the flower, since it was not depicted in the plate, only the fruits. As Bleichmar correctly says, this was clearly a "misdeed for a Linnaean,"[668] because the Swiss scientist based his system on the identification of female and male sexual organs of the flowers. Mutis, who called himself a follower of Linnaeus, and called the latter 'Prince of botany,' was not exactly following the Linnaean practice of writing the description by studying the specimen. Why? Bleichmar notes that Mutis frequently "compared plants and images as equivalent objects," and she affirms, as main thesis, that "plates not only were substitutes for specimens, but also constituted natural objects in themselves."[669] We can agree with the first part of her thesis, but the second part is problematic. How would a plate be a 'natural object' in itself when it is obviously a painting? In other words, what did Mutis understand for 'natural object,' and in what sense this term would bring together the specimen and the plate? Bleichmar does not explain her idea, and she seems to suggest that it follows from the fact that the plates are idealizations of the specimens.

[667] Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*, 110
[668] Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*, 100.
[669] Blecihmar, *Visible Empire*, 101.

Figure 89. Rizo [attributed], Antonio José Cavanilles, ca. 1801. Oil on canvas

Figure 88. Engraving in his Monadelphiae classis dissertations decem, 1785

There is a very interesting painting attributed to Salvador Rizo portraying the leading Spanish taxonomic, botanist, and priest Antonio José Cavanilles. The painting was probably made as a gift, celebrating his appointment as new director of the Royal Botanic Garden in Madrid in 1801. Cavanilles founded and became editor of the journal *Anales de Historia Natural* 1799, which was re-baptized in 1801 as *Anales de Ciencias Naturales* and where he was the most prolific author. Remarkably, in this canvas, the new director of the Botanic Garden, who never left Europe, points (Lat. *indicare*) with his left hand to the plate while writes a description or an article based on the plate, not on a specimen! This painting shows what the Expedition intended to be the use of plates, and beautifully accompanies the first part of Bleichmar's thesis. However, we must notice that Cavanilles is not studying the plate, as if the latter were a natural object in itself. In fact, it may be the case that he looks away not only look because the painter copied a profile found in Cavanilles' book published in 1785, and part of Mutis' library. If we pay attention to the his left hand, we recognize the gesture that in 18th-century was commonly meant to suggest *indigitat*, which meant authority, in this case the sitter's authority, and the action of invoking i.e., to indicating something in an attempt to make people have a certain idea in their mind.[670] At stake is not an examination of a specimen

[670] John Bulwer compiled many of those gestures and the meanings according to usage and fashion during the first half 17th century. John Bulwer, *Chirologia, or, The art of Manual Rhetoric*, 41-42. This text was actually published as part of the book *Chirologia, natural language of the hand*, (London: Printed by Tbo. Harper, and are to be fold by RWkitake, at his shop in Pauls Church-yard, 1644). The book includes a text with the same title of the book and the text I quote from. Both texts are independently paginated

or a natural object per se, but rather the idea of the plate as a sort of emblematic or exemplary image of the 'botanic gaze.'

More important than relying on a supposed Enlightened 'objectivity' of who was actually a pre-Illustration scientist and priest,[671] or on his local painters' dexterity to copy the exactly the real, we should pay attention to the fact that Mutis' and the painter's eclectic approach assumed that plates (and the painters' instructed by making plates) would exercise and represent the analyzing and synthetizing 'botanic gaze' or, as Mutis himself called it, "botanic eyes."[672] The latter is not an accidental term: it supposes a sort of secularization of Augustine of Hippo's problematic idea of the 'eyes of the mind.' It is worth underlying that with this terms we neither affirm a secularized interpretation of a mystic and instantaneous perception of God, nor recall Walter Benjamin's secularized idea a profane illumination. On the contrary, recalling the fact that Mutis himself recognized the Expedition had taken years to develop and configure the so-called 'Mutis style,' the term 'botanic eyes' seems to affirm a sort of looking (not mere perception) that, as Roland Teske's arguably affirms in his interpretation of Augustine, may be regarded as an insight that has demanded a long meditation.[673] By the way, would not Mutis expect Cavanilles, who was also a priest, to understand the implications of the notion of 'botanic eyes' and therefore ask Rizo to represent Cavanilles as if meditating rather studying the plate or a 'natural object'?

A partially good example of the sort of secularized gaze that takes time to produce images and learn from them is found in the moralizing books of emblems, which were still referential in Spain and New Granada for moral instruction (especially among priests), and had also served as reference and

[671] Nieto states that most of the times "drawings were not produced in the field, and generally speaking, were made having the samples as exemplar models collected and separated for their natural habitat. This means that the enlightened botanist neither had to see the plant in it natural habitat, nor a complete plant. A well-chosen fragment was enough." Mauricio Nieto Olarte, *Remedios para el Imperio*, 65.
[672] José Celestino Mutis, Diario de Observaciones de José Celestino Mutis (1670-1790) Vol 2, (trans. and prol.) Guillermo Hernández de Alba, 2nd ed, 2 vol (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1983), 65
[673] Robert Teske, "Augustine on seeing with the eyes of the Mind," *Ambiguity in the Western*, (ed.) Craig J. N. De Paulo, Patrick A. Messina, and Marc Stier (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005), 87.

source for painters' secular work in both sides of the Atlantic even in the late 17th-century. As if in a sort of baroque interpretation of what is called *cuerpo* or 'body' (i.e., the arranged and planed image or *imago*) of an emblem, we could suggest that the plate, arguably constructed by using the technique *rompecabezas* that breaks and reorganizes parts of bodies, was regarded as both product of a process of meditation, and product that incites meditation and instruction of the soul. Yet, contrary to the book of emblems were the image is still submitted to the text, in our case the image or 'body,' a product of a chirurgical process of botanic reorganization, became protagonist. In this direction, we could propose that the ethos in the core of this very eclectic understanding of botanic plates and botanic eyes was probably this: botany was, at the same time, analytical and synthetic, was grounded by a structural balance of any botanic species, and should analyze specimens in a way that would synthetically recover that balance of the specie. And as corollary: this analytical-synthetic task would be better practiced and instructed visually.

If we accept that his experience and understanding of instruction in medicine, and that the technique *rompecabezas* still influential in the work of painters significantly defined the way of understanding and practicing iconism in the Expedition to New Granada, we can conclude that the images or 'botanic bodies' increasingly became the new text. In this direction, we should have to value under a positive light the fact that Mutis promised to publish *Flora Bogotana*, but his "manuscripts do not contain any evidence that the author seriously wished to establish a classification"[674] in the Linnaean sense. Yes, Mutis promised several times to publish his finding in botany, but only published the text about the quinine. *However*, when we say that he did not keep his promise, we are perhaps looking for something that we may suspect increasingly became secondary for the director of the Expedition. It may be the case that the idea of botanic classification he had gradually defined in his mind, would be one where we not only identify the way in which different species are related by putting them in groups, but also one where

[674] José Antonio Amaya, *Mutis, Apóstol de Linneo. Historia de la botánica en el virreinato de Nueva Granada (1760-1783)*, Tomo 1, (Bogotá: ICANH, 2005), 73.

we do such placing by assuming that an structural balance —sometimes obsessively addressed in the plates by symmetry— is a fundamental ground of each species to be classified.

The thesis here proposed does not rule out the questionable possibility that other texts in botany, apart from the one titled *El Arcano de la Quina,* are lost. The thesis neither rejects the possibility that Mutis' health made him difficult to produce texts,[675] nor dismisses the idea that Mutis ended more interested in profiting with quinine that writing a classification. It rather suggests felicitous coincidences in the Expedition's production of what I call 'botanic bodies'. It also suggest that Mutis became increasingly committed with the production of the plates because he started to regard them as the scholar production of the Expedition. Perhaps this was a way in which he ended reinterpreting Boerhaave's famous motto *simplex sigillum veri*, which can be translated as 'the simple is truth's discreet seal.' Noteworthy, *sigillum* not only recalls (Sp.) *sigilo* and with it a discretion and secrecy of which Francisco José Caldas apparently complained, [676] but also means (Lat.) *signum* and (Gr.) *sfragízo* (to seal, to stamp), and basically (Gr) *túpos*. [677] –A short reminder: Alciato regarded the images of emblems as *tacita nota*, silent notes.

[675] Mutis not only wrote a short text on hypochondria, but he also self-diagnosed as a hypochondriac. José Celestino Mutis, "Sobre los hipocondríacos," *En Escritos Científicos de Don José Celestino Mutis*. (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica and Editorial Kelly, 1983), 121 – 122.See also Federico Gredilla, *Biografía de José Celestino Mutis y sus observaciones sobre las vigilias y sueños de algunas plantas* (Bogotá: Plaza & Janés, 1982), 159.

[676] *Sigillum* seems to also suggest secrecy. This could be a way of interpreting, partially indeed, Mutis' silence and secrecy. In this regard, Francisco José Caldas complained that "many times [Mutis] told me verbally and in writing, that I would be his worthy successor, I would be his political confessor and the repository of all knowledge, all his manuscripts, all his books and all its riches. How many times I was flattered called the *lucky Caldas*! But his mysterious and cagey character, he could not do without, always kept him in his silent retirement. He never began his promised confession, he never lifted the veil, nor let me in into his sanctuary. I was always kept in ignorance of the state of his things, and I have only come to know the superficially after his death" Francisco José Caldas, [1808]. "Del influjo del clima sobre los seres organizados," *Semanario del Nuevo Reino de Granada* Tomo i (Bogotá: Biblioteca Popular de Cultura Colombiana, 1808, c1942), 143.

[677] *Túpos* means 'a blow and the result of a blow', 'pressing and impression,' 'mark,' 'example,' 'aspect' (in the sense of *eidos*), and 'type.' See: Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (revised and augmented by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940). Online version at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/

In the botanic plates of the Expedition to New Granada transpires the idea of creating and instructing an eclectic 'typography' of "never-ending" flora.[678] Each plate not only represents (copies and illustrates) a taxonomical type, that is to say, a specimen "on which a taxonomic species or subspecies is actually based".[679] More importantly, the series of 'botanic bodies' or plates is a series of *túpoi* (plural of *túpos*) a series of impressions, copies, dissections[680] and artistic images and montages that faithfully register natural objects as if having a kind of 'arcane' structure. And it is so because the series also affirms that the *ichniographos* has become a sort of *iconographos*, or better said, a *túpoi-graphos* i.e., maker and user of *túpoi*. Remarkably, and contrary to Linnaeus's preference for text over illustrations, it seems to be the case that Mutis thought that the botanical description and the name given to the species were secondary, derived from, or basically grounded in the plate. It may be the case that Mutis wanted the plates to present a visual language (of representation) inherent to a classification proper of a nature (assumed as) visually and structurally balanced. In this sense, the incredibly large series of plates would not be exactly interested in creating a classification as final product, nor should be regarded merely in terms of style. The series is over all a *túpoi*-graphy of nature in the double sense of the genitive: *túpoi* produced by a practice of identification and classification of taxonomical types; types that in turn are revealed by "botanic eyes," which faithfully 'imprint' nature's forms on the mind, by means of plates or 'botanic bodies.'

[678] "If currently botanic luxury proves amply the need of a *certain degree of luxury*, provided it does not degenerate to the extent of one copying the other [as if floral specimens were just to become an aesthetical motives], and if plates from the Old World –which have been seen and examined for hundreds of years— are illustrated with increasing frequency, how much more important is to work out well, *once and for all*, the never-ending botany of the New world on all its parts?" Mutis, *Archivo Epistolar* 1, 439. Emphasis added.

[679] See entry in *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, accessed December 12th, 2013 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/type

[680] See: Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (revised and augmented by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940). Online version at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/