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Ressurrection Within Postmodernism By Colm Henry

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Research on Western Modernism by G. H. Wang

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Department of Art in Candidate for the Degree of

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Contents.

List of plates.....	Page No. 1
Introduction.....	Page No. 4
Chapter One: Modernism: The modernist period and the idea of modernity.....	Page No. 7
Chapter Two: Postmodernism: Examining the postmodern condition through the contrasting viewpoints of Frederic Jameson and Andreas Huyssen.....	Page No. 12
Chapter Three: The Italian transavantgarde: Examining the work of Francesco Clemente and the rest of the Italian transavantgarde in light of postmodernism.....	Page No. 22
Conclusion.....	Page No. 33
Bibliography.....	Page No. 41

Contents

list of plates Page No. 1

introduction Page No. 4

Chapter One: Introduction: The historical period and the role of advertising Page No. 7

Chapter Two: Postmodernism: Examining the postmodern condition through the contrasting viewpoints of Friedrich Schlegel and Arthur Schopenhauer Page No. 12

Chapter Three: The Italian Renaissance: Examining the work of Francesco Giordano and the text of the Italian Renaissance in light of postmodernism Page No. 22

Conclusion Page No. 32

Bibliography Page No. 41

List of Illustrations.

- Plate No. 1: 'Semen', Francesco Clemente 1983 page No. **3**.
- Plate No. 2: 'Seated woman (nude)', Pablo Picasso 1909/10 page No. **8**.
- Plate No. 3: 'The voice', Edvard Munch 1893
'The scream', Edvard Munch 1893
'Inca mummy from Peru' page No. **10**.
- Plate No. 4: 'Three flags', Jasper Johns 1958 page No. **13**.
- Plate No. 5: 'Red plant', John McCracken 1967
'Genghis Kahn', Philip King 1963
'Untitled', Robert Morris 1970 page No. **14**.
- Plate No. 6: 'Untitled No.188', Cindy Sherman page No. **16**.
- Plate No. 7: 'Dynacism of a dog on a leash', Giacomo Balla 1912
'Speeding auto', Giacomo Balla 1912 page No. **18**.
- Plate No. 8: 'Colony 1986', David Salle 1986 page No. **20**.
- Plate No. 9: 'Ring', Francesco Clemente 1978
'Story of my country', Francesco Clemente 1979
'Self portrait without mirror',
Francesco Clemente 1979 page No. **23**.
- Plate No. 10: 'Paintings of precious fires', Enzo Cucchi 1983 page No. **25**.
- Plate No. 11: 'Self portrait as a garden', Francesco Clemente 1979
'Story of my country', Francesco Clemente 1979 page No. **27**.
- Plate No. 12: 'Untitled', Francesco Clemente 1983 page No. **29**.
- Plate No. 13: 'Three out of nine', Francesco Clemente 1988 page No. **33**.
- Plate No. 14: 'Everything I know', Francesco Clemente 1983 page No. **36**.

Page No. 1: [Faint text]

Page No. 2: [Faint text]

Page No. 3: [Faint text]

Page No. 4: [Faint text]

Page No. 5: [Faint text]

Page No. 6: [Faint text]

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Page No. 9: [Faint text]

Page No. 10: [Faint text]

Page No. 11: [Faint text]

Page No. 12: [Faint text]

Page No. 13: [Faint text]

Page No. 14: [Faint text]

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Page No. 16: [Faint text]

Page No. 17: [Faint text]

Page No. 18: [Faint text]

Page No. 19: [Faint text]

Page No. 20: [Faint text]

Plate No. 15: 'Oblation', Francesco Clemente 1988/90

page No. ~~38~~

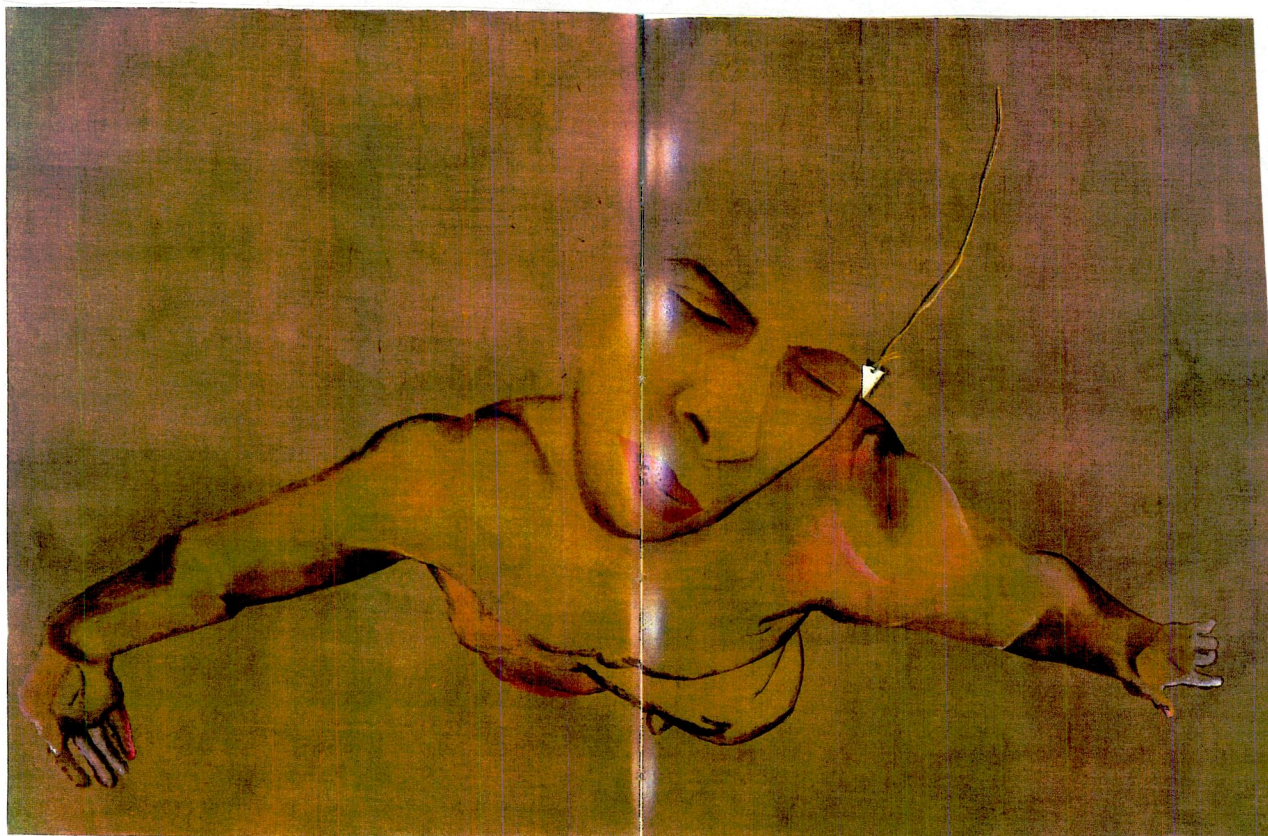
Plate No. 16: 'Heart', Francesco Clemente 1983

page No. 40

Page 10 of 10

Page 10 of 10

Plate No. 1.



SEMEN 1983.
Guache on linen 7'9" x 13', Francesco Clemente

Plate No. 1



SEMIN 1982
Crotch on linen 7 1/2" x 12", Francisco Clemente

Introduction

"Perhaps the central problem for postmodernism in the visual arts is that, although we live in a culture of proliferating images the future has no image." (Newman, Michael @86 ICA documents institute of contemporary arts.)

This statement was made during the heated discussion that took place in the eighties about postmodernism. The term postmodernism cannot be avoided when discussing contemporary visual art. However more often than not the term is used in a negative manner. Through postmodernisms use of parody and pastiche it is often portrayed in a regressive light. The result of pastiche and parody is seen to be despair and isolation in the arts. For some however postmodernism is the renaissance. It is the shift in cultural sensibilities that can bring about change. postmodernism is seen as a form of liberation for the arts, leading eventually to celebration of pluralism in the planets culture.

As the term postmodernism implies, it is related to modernism. Postmodernism is not however another stylistic change in aesthetics, within the parameters of the modernist period. The term postmodernism refers to a cultural shift indeed it is described as a condition rather than a stylistic shift. Since the final reductive stage of the modernist period was arrived at in the sixties with pop art and minimalism, although the term was first used in architecture postmodernism was applied to all visual expression or representation after the modernist period. The term expanded past the small section of the visual arts throughout all cultural spheres to be regarded as a condition faced by all.

Extending this discussion to the visual arts, in particular painting, it seems that critical theory and art became divided. Previously in the period of modernism theoretical discourse aided and supported artistic practice. The modernist period left many traditions and formulae's for change. Such as reacting against the norm of the time. The trend was upwards and forwards. Modernism was the story of heroism and change. The result lay ahead in the future. The aesthetic divergence displayed in the modernist period however led only to despair or rejoicement for the contemporary artist or critic. It seems as if anything goes in contemporary art. This can be an extreme advantage or disadvantage for the artist and critic today.

Previously artistic discourse in the modernist period had been a series of actions and reactions against the accepted aesthetic norm of the time. Cubism for example was a deliberate stylistic change questioning the frame and validity of two dimensional representation or imagery of the time. Those who led these reactions were the avant garde, so called due to their insights into the future image. The avant garde were supported and spread around through critics and dealers who valued their work. The time for this stylistic rapid change accompanied the economic and industrial upheval of the time. The Italian futurists would be a clear example of this as their images directly supported the technology of the time.

The modernist period according to critic Habermas created an answer, however this answer lay in the future. Thus the pattern of renewal and reduction progressed into the future. However as modernism

Perhaps the central problem for postmodernism is the visual arts. It is, although there is a history of postmodernist thought, that it has been the most important area of postmodernist activity. (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 10)

This statement was made during the heated discussion that took place in the mid-1980s about postmodernism. The term postmodernist cannot be avoided when discussing contemporary visual arts, however, and often the term is used in a negative manner. Through postmodernism the arts of the past have been portrayed in a negative light. The result of postmodernism and theory is seen to be despair and isolation. In the end, for some however postmodernism is the reassurance that the world is not as it once was, but that it is changing. Postmodernism is seen as a form of liberation for the arts, leading eventually to a reevaluation of the status of the visual arts.

As the term postmodernism has taken hold, it is related to modernism. Postmodernism is not however another artistic or creative change in aesthetic. Within the parameters of the modernist period, the term postmodernism refers to a cultural shift which is described as a condition rather than a stylistic shift. Since the final creative stage of the modernist period was achieved in the arts with pop art and abstract art, although the term was first used in architecture, postmodernism was applied to all visual expressions or representations after the modernist period. The term expanded past the early years of the visual arts throughout all cultural spheres to be regarded as a condition of all.

Regarding the discussion to the visual arts, in particular painting, it seems that critical theory and art became divided. Previously in the period of modernist theoretical discourse aided and supported artistic practice. The modernist period left many traditional and formalist's for change. Seen as reacting against the boom of the time, the trend was to look to the future. Modernism was the story of decline and change. The result lay ahead in the future. The aesthetic discourse developed in the modernist period however led only to a desire or yearning for the contemporary artist or critic. It seems as if anything goes in contemporary art. This can be an extreme advantage or disadvantage for the artist and critic today.

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The modernist period according to critic Habermas created an answer, however, this answer lay in the future. (Habermas, 1987, p. 10)

progressed upwards and forwards reducing the forms it created, the answer still lay ahead, in the future. This pattern continued. The modernist period became tunnel visioned and the vision pointed always to the future. The subversive were celebrated as genius and it was the avant garde that would reach the imaginary goal at the end of the tunnel. This according to Habermas was how the modernist period eventually had to recede upon itself thus remaining incomplete. Their work however opened up possibilities and created a huge aesthetic divergence to work from.

Interrupted by world war two art resurfaced noticeably in the United States. The avant garde unlike those of dadism and surrealism neglected the politics and concentrated on the aesthetics. As time wore on more and more the forms and 'styistic decoration' of art was stripped bare ending at minimalism. Pop artists had already opened the audience up by taking popular culture as their roots for image making. Their imaginary goal sought in the future had been grounded. In the sixties the counter culture seemed to start off on a subversive note. However as time passed many of the ideas raised in the counter culture were consumed and commodified. Although there was much divergence in the sixties it seemed as though they were unified and labelled under the ideology and its institutions. The sixties is now an era of 'flower power' and 'free love'. It has been and gone.

Many of the advantages and disadvantages of postmodernism stem from its prefix post. By detaching itself from contexts and defining narratives it creates a vacuum of decision in which seemingly anything goes. Indeed we value postmodernism through its prefix. In the advent of anything goes the artist is free to pursue whatever form his or her career takes. This does leave critical discourse traditionally the artists supporter or decipher undecided on which textual discourse to pursue. Meanwhile the artist is free to pursue his or her work but with the threat of indifferent acceptance over his or her head. From such a wealth of theory formed out of social political and scientific schools, postmodernism must not be allowed to become negative isolated and repressive within the field of visual and textual discourse.

By examining the contemporary criticism on the modernist period and the idea of modernity the distinction between modernism and postmodernism may be better understood. Evaluating how philosophies of science aesthetice and politics merges into theory it will make clearer that through this blurring of distinctions the idea of modernism came to be so confused.

Examining the history of modernity has changed will also aid in the discussion. The eventual outcome will be to show the modernist periods downfall was,

- a) The prognation of the myth of the new, that an imaginary goal lay in the future.
- b) By its self critical reductive nature the modernist period receded in on itself through its own limitations.

Using the text of Jurgen Habermas 'Modernism , an incomplete age ?' it will be possible to clarify the shortcomings of the modernist period and pave the way for an approach to the postmodern.

Taking Fredric Jameson and comparing his view of the postmodern condition with that of Andreas Huyssen it will be possible to point out the shortcomings of Jamesons marxist beliefs to do with also capitalism and the positive aspirations of Huyssens alternatives. Using both their discussions will offer textual pathways through the postmodern. At the end of this pathway Francesco Clemente and the transavantgarde can be mapped onto the postmodern.

Having looked at the pros and cons of both modernism and postmodernism it will be possible to apply these theories to the Italians in particular Clemente. Staying within the field of painting chapter three will look at what Clemente has to offer to contemporary art and how he relates to the postmodern condition today, thus showing how postmodernism can be conceptualised positively.

By promoting the work of Clemente and other artists working in the postmodern the conclusion of this thesis will be concerned with investigating the seemingly growing cultural sensitivity which is also important in the idea of the postmodern. Taking sensibility as a mode of percipitation and response this thesis will conclude on the question of change within the cultural sphere.

Taking the above in consideration the view of the postmodernist condition with that of Andrei Belyanin it will be possible to point out the characteristics of Jameson's Marxist dialectic to do with state capitalism and the positive application of this dialectic. Using both these dialectics will offer a critical pathway through the postmodernist. At the end of this pathway Jameson's dialectic and the transvaluation can be applied into the postmodernist.

Having looked at the past and some of our modernist and postmodernist it will be possible to apply these theories to the dialectic in particular. Jameson, staying within the field of painting chapter three will look at what Jameson has to offer to contemporary art and how he relates to the postmodernist condition today, then showing how postmodernism can be represented in a postmodernist.

By presenting the work of Clemente and other artists working in the postmodernist the concepts of the dialectic will be concerned with investigating the dialectic growing out of a sensitivity which is also present in the idea of the postmodernist. Taking essentially as a mode of presentation and response the dialectic will conclude on the question of change within the cultural sphere.

Chapter One - Reviewing modernism and its shortcomings.

When discussing the term modernism it must be acknowledged that the term dates back through history due to its renewal the idea of modernity covers quite a range of thought. Often the phrase is used and confused covering complex relationships of language. However it is not always the case that something is regarded as modern because of the ideas of modernity it is supposed to contain pieces of music and other works of art quickly termed modern and often this term does not apply to them. It is difficult to be precise but using Habermas text points to the first use of the term was in the Christian and Roman period to be modern was a way of reviewing the transition of old pagan beliefs to the new christianity. Jurgen Habermas sees no need to trace it further. The common ground he sees for modernity in those times was to be part of the changed sensibilities of the time.

Following Habermas discussion artistically speaking the term was reshaped in the Renaissance the term was taken beyond its antique reference and christian mode into the domain of nature and the sensual. He goes on to tell us how with the arrival of French enlightenment once more modernisms meaning altered. Referring to the ancient philosophies for inspiration, the french enlightenment school believed that the arts and science would evolve moral and social betterment. Modernism proposed evolution and advancement in the human condition, the problem once more is that the better way always seemed to lie ahead in the future.

Modernity came to the twentieth century meaning a break with the previously established norm. Radical modernity gained great momentum in the modernist period ending in the nineteen sixties. According to Habermas when the spirit of radical modernism came into being it freed the term modernity from the past. The artists of the modernist period such as Braque, Picasso, Max Ernst and Marcel Duchamp were all reacting against the establishment. They were taking the work of the institutions and attacking it and the basis of art museums of the time, Duchamp exhibited a painting signed R.Mutt attacking tradition and mocking the gallery and the art institutions. Picasso questioned the painted surface in cubism. The surrealists and questioned and tried to change the levels on which a work of art belongs albeit aesthetic, political or therapeutic. These artists were the avant garde of the time change perspectives and viewpoints of the art object. They were innovative and brought the new and different outlook on the artworld. The idea of modernity became one of progression and change. In this period there was a lot of technological and economical growth and change. As the avant garde worked within these historical conditions their work grew and altered alongside the economic change. Modernism became progressive and reductive in its form. Picasso questioned representation on the two dimensional surface. Pollock questioned representation completely turning to the emotional current. Warhol questioned the culture that we question ourselves, in with each evaluation of art came a reduction of form and 'decoration' of an image was stripped away ending eventually in minimalism. Modernism was a process of self criticism and reduction. The idea of modernity pushed the artwork into an imaginary goal in the future.

The problem with the modernist periods process of renewal was that

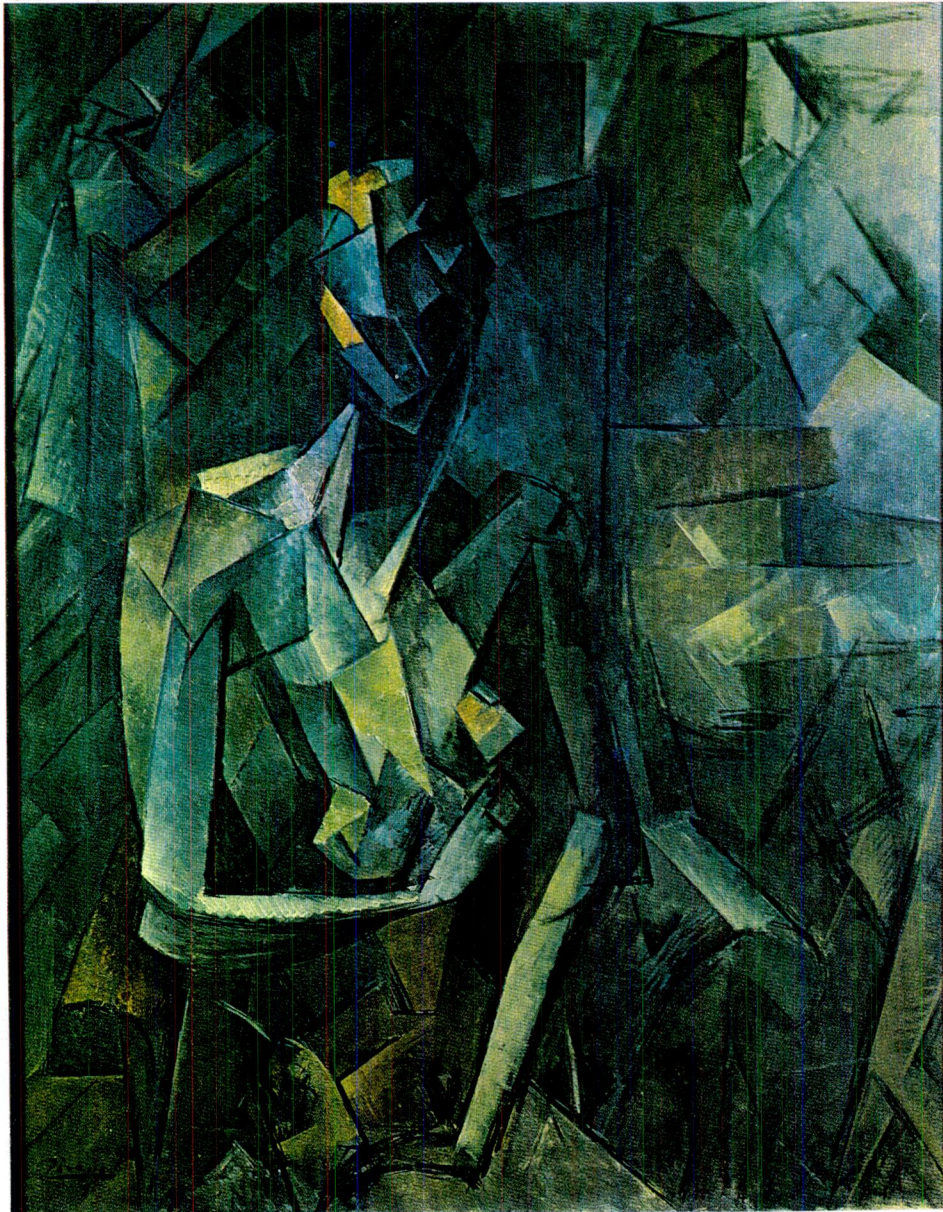
with drawing the term modernism, it was no acknowledgment of the fact that the term had already been used in the past. Modernism was a term of thought, not a term of fact, and it was not applied to the work of modernism in the past. It was not applied to the work of modernism in the past because of the ideas of modernism. It was not applied to the work of modernism in the past because of the ideas of modernism. It was not applied to the work of modernism in the past because of the ideas of modernism.

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Seated woman nude 1909/1910, Pablo Picasso.
This painting is one of the earlier analytical cubist pieces. Cubism was later to become a highly stylised way of painting. Because of this it was dropped as more and more modernism moved away from the colours of Cezanne and the forms of cubism.



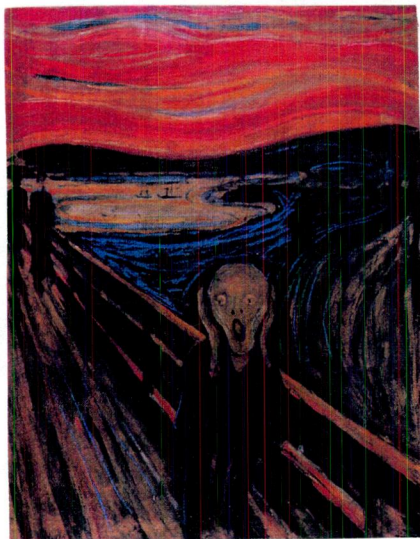
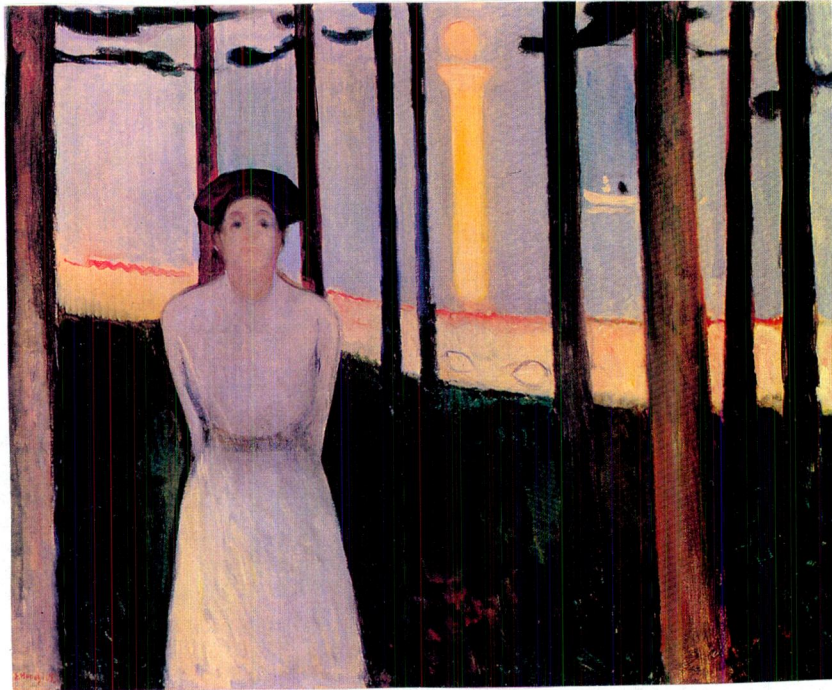
Seated woman nude 1903/1910, Pablo Picasso.
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each new style tended to wipe out the ideas and values of the old style. Expressionism vited impressionism and so on. Therefore in keeping with rapid developments of the economic and industrial growth the changes in artistic styles came fast and furious. According to Habermas this made it harder to place each style into its historical context which is vital in the bearing of modernisms evolutionary context. Through hindsight each body of work within the modernist period contained valuable social context specific to the period. The futurists in Italy portrayed a love of the war machine whereas the dadaists were clearly politically unsure about events of the time. They questioned the activities of the state and the culture. So it can be seen how although the answer or the solution lay in the future for the artists of the modernist period, their work was confined to specific economic and social issues of their era. Although their images were supposed to be of what was to come their images were in fact reflective of the time they were made. This problem gives rise to a conflict in their images for contemporary art debate.

Through hindsight a pattern may be observed the avant garde being the vanguard of modernism reacted against the given norm of the period. Fighting bourgeois ideology and consumer quality of capitalism the avant garde pushed back the boundaries of visual communication and imagery on one level. On another level though, through their tunnel vision the artist if the modernist period caused their own downfall. By stripping away the decoration and emotion from their images they reduced the imagery to barren emotionless forms. This is what is meant by their process of self critical reduction. They were extremely self critical of their work. If they weren't content with one aspect of their work it was removed. This meant that quickly the images were reduced through a process of self evaluation until eventually ending up in minimalism. Both on the left and the right politically speaking, modernism flourished at the time of the industrial revolution in Europe. This was sharply interrupted by the second world war to later be imported by the U.S.A.. However a lot of the political and social ramifications of the modernist period was not imported to America. While this took place the institutions and dominant patriarchal ideologies adopted the creations of the modernist period. Acceptance can be another form of dominance as Robert Hewison argues in his book 'Art of the Nineties' Hewison, raises this issue in respect to questions of sexual identity. Indifferent acceptance is although subtle, another form of control. By tolerating the actions or work of the artist still means the person or body of people such as the institution, are still the controllers of the situation.

"Modernity revolts against the normalising function of tradition: modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative". (Habermas, Jurgen 1984 'Modernity an incomplete project' page 4).

On this point modernism receded upon itself. Modernisms revolt became subjected to indifferent acceptance and eventual support and promotion. The subversiveness of modernism which gave it its energetic push, was engulfed and consumed by the ideology, joining the totalising timeless system of the grand narrative. Its historical and cultural significance was consumed and the modernist period became the norm. Modernism became lost in the scientifically



(Top) The voice, oil on canvas, Edvard Munch, 34.5" x 42.5".

(Bottom left) The Scream 1893, Edvard Munch, oil on cardboard 36" x 29".

(Bottom right) Inca mummy from Peru.

The references the expressionist took from were those of newly viewed forms of other cultures. Yet their concern was in the physical form. Munch and the other expressionists worked in this manner until the arrival of the industrial age when concern shifted away from emotions to the machine.



(top) The voice, oil on canvas, Edward Munch, 34.5" x 12.5".
 (bottom left) The scream 1893, tempera on cardboard
 36" x 29"
 (bottom right) The woman from Peru.
 The reference the expressionist took from these three newly viewed
 forms of other cultures. Yet their concern was in the physical form.
 Munch and the other expressionists worked in this manner until the
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 to the machine.

dependable rational norm.

Modernism never fulfilled its potential of change and renewal within the accepted norm. As Habermas puts it modernism became an 'open incomplete cycle'. Habermas raises an interesting relationship between the avant garde and history, using a reference to Walter Benjamin's *Jetztzeit* he presents a different view on the avant garde *Jetztzeit* means that the present is a moment of revelation, "A time in which splinters of a messianic presence are embellished." (Habermas, Jürgen 1976, 'modernity an incomplete project') The past that it reacted against was historically specific the history they attached was part of the grand evolutionary narrative structure of western time. Through hindsight we know that history as a source of valuable concrete reference can be deceiving due to the patriarchal dominant structure running throughout. The questioning of this relationship of history with the avant garde anticipates the role of transavantgarde into postmodernism.

In the small cultural sphere of painting and the fine arts modernism within the modernist period has been reductive. By discussing the previous style for the merits of the new and by deconstructing aesthetics in a very self critical manner, image and concept were separated. The artwork was stripped bare of all sensory stimuli and logical rational discourse replaced excited revelation. Modernism not only receded in upon itself visually but audience wise it also isolated the various recipients and consumers of the artwork. The divide became apparent between high and low culture as the art industry emerged consuming all remains of communication left in the cultural sphere. Art was losing in the battle of commodification within capitalism. Visual and literal discourse on the image separated into isolated cultural identities. Nostalgia became the mode of reception for the artwork.

Modernism for some is the tale of western evolution through its progressive structure of change it accelerated our sense of the present into the future. Through its format it raised much change and difference discovered by modernism was accepted by the cultural ideology pertained to unity. Art according to Habermas was grouped into an autonomous sphere where modernism was consumed and institutionalised it became the norm. Art was left to its own devices and could call upon any laws or views on aesthetics to support itself. The ideas of artists were grouped into the institution which accepted indifferently their subversiveness. The feeling of anything goes became apparent and art was as Habermas puts it grouped into an autonomous sphere.

Modernism was left incomplete when the avant garde was overtaken and co opted by the triumph of capitalism. After world war two however, this sense of consumer commodification supported by the dominant (patriarchal ideology) was now globally compounded in the postmodern condition.

Chapter Two - Frederic Jameson and Andreas Huyssen.

Raising the question of postmodernism with reference to the writings of Frederic Jameson and Andreas Huyssen will hopefully illuminate the previous chapter and expand on the concepts of time raised by modernism and the modernist period. Also it will help define a clearer position for Clemente and the Italian Transavantgarde in their relation to femininity, history, matriarchial cultures and humanity on the whole.

The postmodern condition came into being due to the inadequacy of the term modernism to describe the artwork that began to appear in the seventies. Because of modernisms shortcomings the prefix post was added to denote the position historically of this phase of artistic evolution. The prefix can often cause confusion to the proper understanding of both modernism and postmodernism. However it also aids in distinguishing the two. Postmodernism is a broad cultural Phenomenon which takes many forms. Taking its artistic context Andreas Huyssen and Jameson offer clear guidelines to the postmodern territory.

"Specific reaction against the established forms of high modernism... the university, the museum, the art gallery network and its foundations..." (Jameson, F 1982, 'Postmodernism and consumer society' page 111 postmodern culture edited by Hal Foster)
Secondly there is,

"Transformation in western societies, a change in sensibilities for which the term postmodernism is actually at least for now wholly adequate." (Huyssen, A 1986, 'After the great divide' page 180)

Postmodernism has come under greater scrutiny in recent years. It seems that three issues continuously surface. It has been proposed that postmodernism is just an easily out moded style and that modernism is a more valued form of aesthetics. Postmodernism secondly is populist whereas modernism is elitist. Finally postmodernism means that anything goes, which according to Jameson's marxist conclusion means that caitalism has succeeded consuming all aspects of culture and because this nothing works.

Part of the problem in analysing these teachings according to Huyssen is that our own modernity encloses codes of being classic. The established gap between modernity and classicism has been lost in historical context and therefor there is a form of classical modernity existing today. Historic reference again crops up in the arguement. The problem with assesing postmodernism is that many of the postmodern works of art must be deconstructed by starting with the work of art itself. Other works of art can be approached with, the information known about the era or the medium or content the postmodernist piece mixes these codes of knowledge. Art from Papa New Guine can be recognised because of its pigments style or form along with a sense of history about the place with regard to its culture. The postmodernist piece can come from anywhere and uses myth and reference from a broader cultural sphere. The same could be said for a piece from the expressionistic era although that would be recognisable through hindsight. The point being is that the postmodern piece must be taken and assesed on face value to formulate an opinion. It is not time specific or rational. It is a cross referenced mixing of imagery. Therefor, a certain amount of

...the question of postmodernism with reference to the writings of Friedrich Schlegel and Andreas Huyssen will hopefully illuminate the various chapters and expand on the concepts of time raised by Schlegel and the modernist period. Also it will help define the various positions of Schlegel and the Italian Translators in their relation to modernity, history, satirical culture and poetics on the whole.

The postmodern condition was late being due to the technology of the time according to the author. The author that began to appear in the 1960s, because of modernism's structure, the postmodernist period was added to denote the period's history of the phase of cultural evolution. The postmodernist phase contained the postmodernist understanding of both modernism and postmodernism. However, it also aids in distinguishing the two. Postmodernism is a broad cultural movement which takes form. Taking the artistic context, Schlegel's system and concepts often refer back to the postmodernist condition.

Specific reading against the established forms of high modernism... the university, the museum, the art gallery, the book and the "literary canon" (Schlegel, 1988). Postmodernism and postmodernist page 11 (Schlegel's culture edited by Helmut Peckol).

Transition in western modernism... change in the 19th century for which the term postmodernism is usually at least for now which indicates... (Schlegel, 1988). The great divide page 100.

Postmodernism has come under greater scrutiny in recent years... years that have shown a tendency to... it has been proposed that postmodernism is not an easily defined term and that modernism is a more varied form of aesthetic. Postmodernism actually is a political, aesthetic, modernism in itself. Finally postmodernism means that aesthetic and aesthetic consumption all aspects of culture and to create this modernist work.

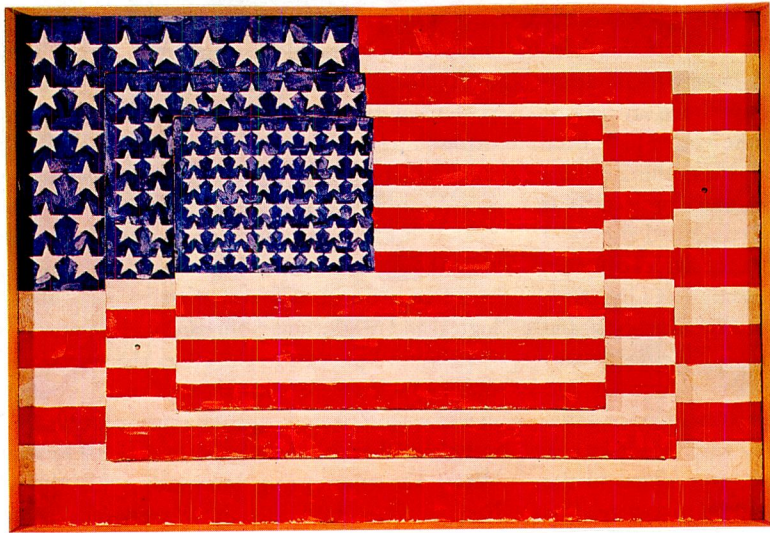
Part of the problem in analyzing these techniques according to the... is that in an aesthetic sense of being classic, the... established a new aesthetic and classical has been lost in... historical context and therefore there is a loss of historical...

modernity existing today. What is reference again to the... in general, the problem with existing postmodernism is that any... the postmodern work of art may be distinguished by starting with... the work of art itself. Other works of art can be approached with...

the historical context about the art or the author or context the... postmodernist place among these codes of knowledge. Art Critique has... found can be recognized because of its fragmentary style in form along...

with a sense of history about the piece with regard to its culture... The postmodernist piece is not from anywhere and uses style and... reference from a broader cultural sphere. The same could be said for...

reference from the postmodernist era although that would be... recognizable through their... the postmodernist is that the... postmodernist piece must be taken and assessed on its own value as... an aesthetic. It is not the specific or rational. It is a... inherent ability of history. Therefore, a certain amount of...

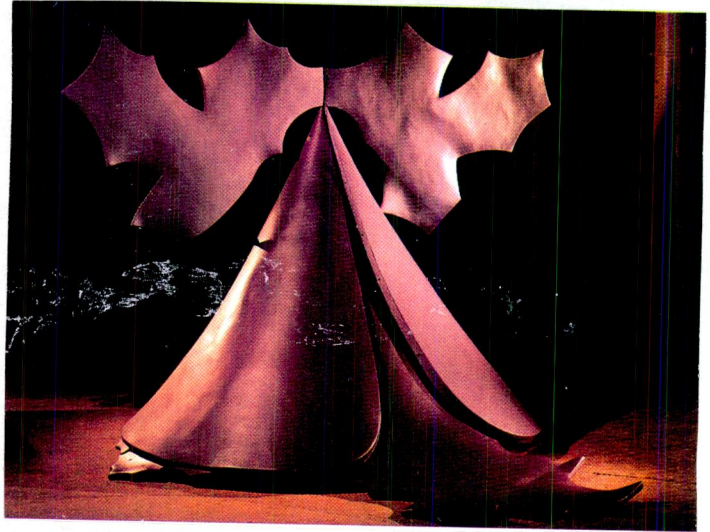


Three flags, Jasper Johns, 1958, encaustic on canvas.
The questioning began the American dream and the emblem of America is challenged by Johns work. Taking a cultural symbol its clear to see how the counter culture was almost begining, and that its message was 'change'.

By contrast, he [the artist] has been
of bourgeois intellect
es without saying that
these voices have been
work is nothing if not a
creative project. It is
of structured argument
that the names of Lenin
years forced into one
Stalin, Coehheli, and
out in the present con-
is also asserted in art.
the Russian avant garde
Klucis, Lasovky —
are, committed to the
art on to society. The

is routinely assumed, but the more obvious
implication is that they brought it on themselves.
By overestimating the avant garde's cultural
post-revolutionary influence, the Left project
made intellectual, so they "naturally" took
some artists left for more congenial pastures in
the West. The revolutionary artists who stayed
behind became human fossils, burned to a fire
they should never have joined in the first place
— namely "the mass appeal of art." It is clear that
legal and revolutionary transformations were
An elliptical passage in the essay that the avant
they had now been "carried away" and "expatriated
in a new land" sounds like the counter-art histor-
ical claim that the avant garde was swept by the
West. Far from being innovative, this group
has whiskers. Ironically, it was the standard

Three Glass, Jasper Johns, 1958, encaustic on canvas.
The question began the American dream and the emblem of America as
challenged by Johns work. Talking a cultural symbol into a new to see
now the counter culture was almost beginning, and first his message was
'change'.

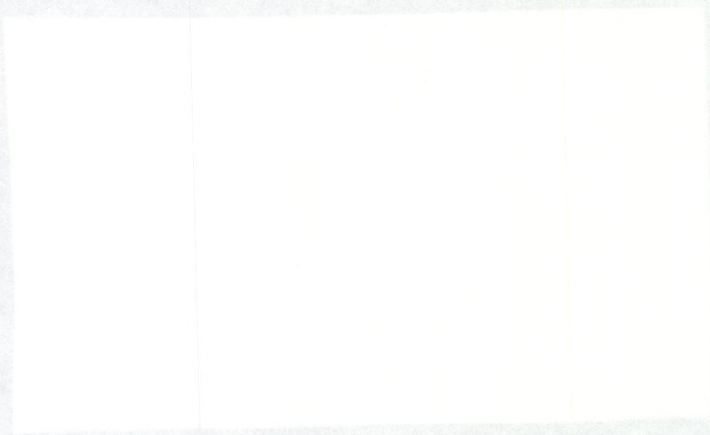


(Left) 'Red plant', John McCracken 1967, painted plywood.

(Top right) 'Genghis kahn', Phillip King 1963, plastic.

(Bottom right) 'Untitled', Robert Morris, 1970, mixed media.

Some examples of minimalist work the final result of the reductive process of modernism. It's clear to see how the form has been stripped of all decoration through a process of self-criticism. At this point it seems that modernism could go no further.



(left) 'Red plant', John McOrken 1957, painted plywood.
 (Top right) 'Gentian's form', Phillip King 1963, plastic.
 (Bottom right) 'Untitled', Robert Morris, 1970, mixed media.
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 of all decoration through a process of self-criticism. At this point
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'openness' must be used when regarding the postmodern piece.

According to both Jameson and Huyssen postmodernism dawned in the sixties with the beginning of the counter culture. For Jameson, "The nineteen sixties are in many ways the key transitional period in which the new international order (neocolonialism, computerisation and electronic information) is at one and the same time set in place and is swept and shaken by its own external resistance." (Jameson, F 'Postmodernism and consumer society' 1982, postmodern culture edited by Hal Foster page 111).

This feeling of resistance was contained briefly in the form of 'Cage-Warhol-Duchamp, axis' according to Huyssen. The sixties was a time for counter cultural art in the form of anti authoritarionism and on the other side it was the boom time and consolodation period of capitalism. These are two very conflicting streams of cultural perspective. Maybe it was due to this conflict that the optimism of the sixties never fulfilled its potential ?. This would be reflected in the return to conservatism in the mid seventies and eighties.

Huyssen guages the fall of the sixties with, "It was felt to be the apocalyptic desperate strain and the visionary celebratory strain." (Huyssen, A 1986, 'After the great divide' page 189)

Enterring the seventies according to Huyssen, postmodernism took the shape of negative revision of modernist aesthetics. The seventies carried a sense of abandon. Refusing the past and denying the present coupled with the abandonment of the future left despair within the 'state of the arts'. The postmodern condition was ascribed certain symptoms. They were those of 'pastiche' and 'schizophrenia', referred to both by Jameson and Huyssen.

The process of fragmentation ascribed to postmodernism stems from both the above symtoms and is also a key to understanding the postmodern condition and eventually the position of the Italians.

Jameson's description of pastiche is quite clear. He refers to by comparing it with parody. Parody he says makes fun or capitalises on the traits of a distinctive style in a positive or negative way, with constant referral to a grounding norm. However due to diversity in modernism the parody has become restricted to one of the fragments of each individual style. So due to the huge diversity of styles and no reference remaining to a norm because of fragmentation 'a blank parody' as Jameson puts it, is left. This form of ungrounded parody is known as pastiche. Artist like David Godbald take images from the high renaissance and place them alongside Disney characters. The image could be of 'Madonna with child' and 'Goofy'. This form of pastiche is an example of the postmodern condition. Another example would be the artist David Salle who in his painting 'Colony 1986' appropriated images from the serrealists combining it with imagery from Gericault and with a evocotive image of a young woman.

The use of schizophrenia is another form of the postmodern condition of image making, the image being part of the fragmentation of identity for the self. The schizophrenics identity is linked to his/her reading of signs in language. We as Jameson puts it read a sentence, as a sentence to gain its meaning. We also use historic references to guage our sense of time in the sentence by using

... must be taken when regarding the postoperative phase

... to part of the ... and ... postoperative phase ...
... with the ... of the ...
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'Untitled No.118', Cindy Sherman, 1989, cibachrome.
In this image Sherman calls on codes of sexuality engrained in our society, simply by trapping an inflatable doll in a mechanical world. She uses the horror movie format of the fifties to create a sense of doom. It is in fact a very intense present for Sherman, one of the symptoms of Jameson's schizophrenia in the postmodern condition.

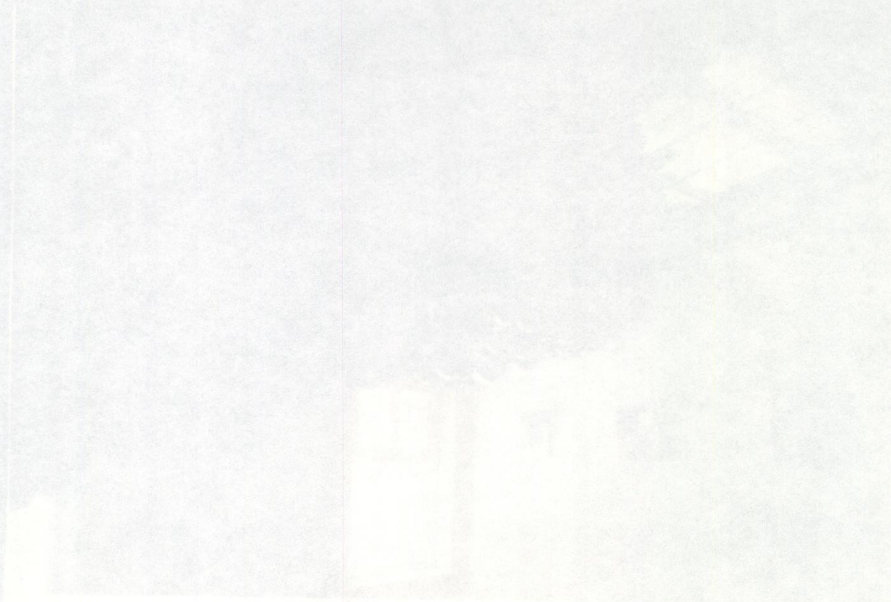


Figure 1: A photograph of a small, white, rectangular object, possibly a toy or a piece of equipment, sitting on a dark surface. The object has a slightly irregular shape and appears to be made of a light-colored material.

through repeated pattern reading
of the low and the normal range
to find the words which look a little
more like writing for when children
begin to write the first of their
words. *How to Use the Key to Read and*
including words and Elizabeth Newman
that work that bring a small range in an

of the low and the normal range
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Unlabeled No. 118, Cindy Sherman, 1989, et al. chromo.
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symptoms of Jameson's schizophrenic in the postmodern condition.

tenses. Our identity is formed out of our personal reference to us and time and experience of context. The schizophrenic however has no identity through his/her inability to read the signs (as in a sentence) collectively. The schizophrenic is therefore unable to relate to these sign groupings as it were and also he/she is unable to relate the signs to a time context causing further problems for their own personal identity. Rather the schizophrenic experiences very intense moments in the present.

"Our present is always part of some larger set of projects"(Jameson, F 1982, Postmodernism and consumer society', page 119).

The schizophrenic therefore has no commitment to continuity over time and so suffers on.

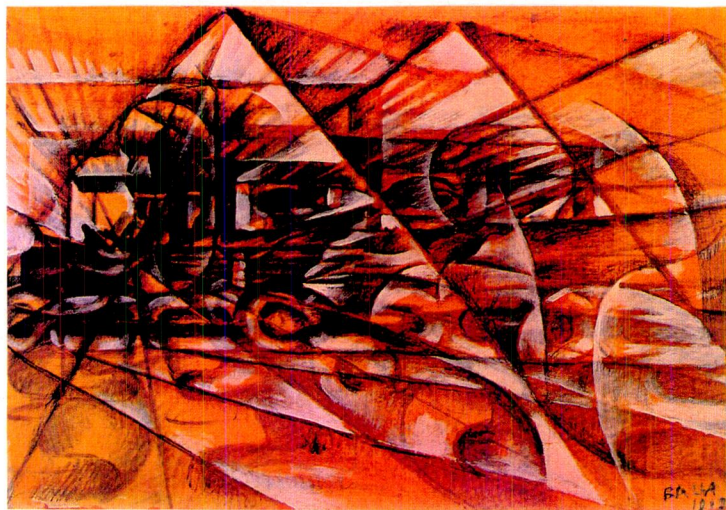
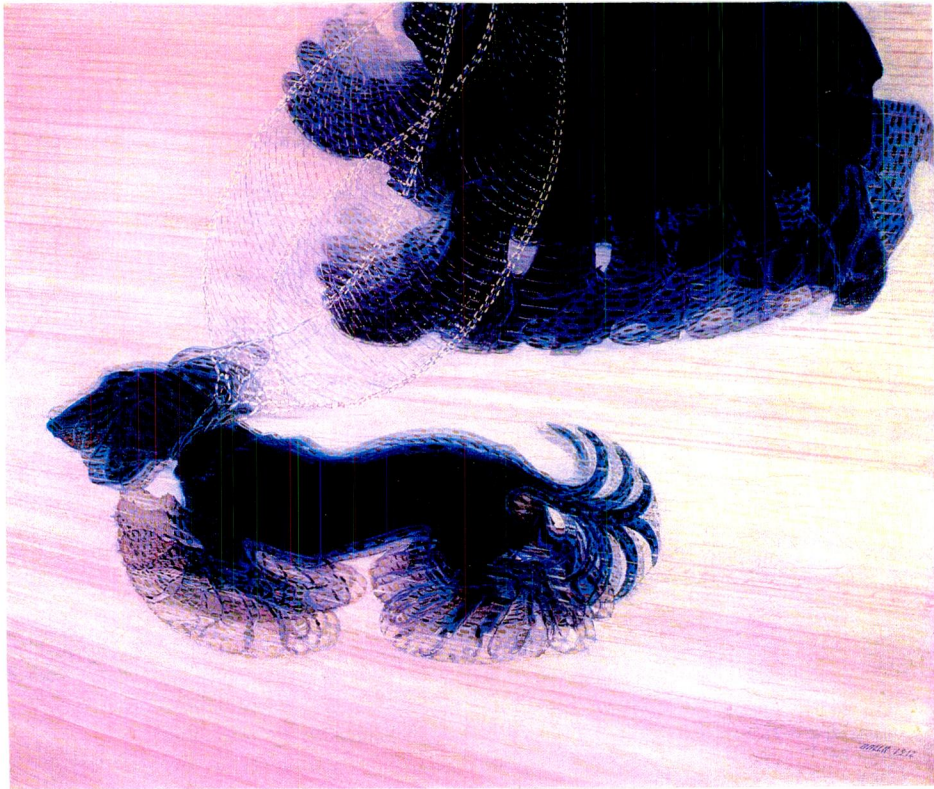
"Undifferentiated vision of the world in the present"(Jameson, F 1982, 'Postmodernism and consumer society' page 120)

What Jameson takes out of this interesting comparison is the intensity of the individuals signifier on a sensory level. By using Beaudillards work 'sign culture' Jameson argues that the images of the postmodern are merely images of images. They are without a signifier such as history and thus some collective set of references. These images bombard the viewer with some form of unity behind them when in truth the unity is deceptive as it is from another sphere or time. In the work of artist Cindy Sherman she often presents the viewer with startling images. These images are mostly to do with male and female objectification of the female body and her place within society. These images tend to be shown through stereotypical images of a woman amid contemporary society. However a lot of the time she uses themes and emblems of mass culture to underpin the real implications of these everyday images. In a series made between seventyseven and eighty using small black and white photographs she draws on the genre of the fifties B movie. She herself is cast as a stereotypical social type such as a prostitute or the girl next door the point being that she uses the sense of time of the fifties to evoke a contemporary awareness of how women are seen in the modern mass consciousness. There is unity in the images but the unity belongs to another era. This unity is only as a device to emphasise the present. The story and idea is emphasised by the over artifice of these images. Therefore by combining these images and sense of time of different eras she presents the issue of the contemporary woman. This is what Jameson refers to as deceptive unity.

Jameson's analysis of schizophrenia tends to come across as pessimistic for the future of image makers. He holds some hope for change though. His determination for the postmodern symptoms stems from the marxist view that we are reaching monolythic global capitalist economy which privileges practicability and profit in a world market economy. In this market economy there is no such thing as society. Its easier now to see from where his pessimism stems.

Huyssen embraces the positive and negative prospects of postmodernism. It is through his reading of postmodernism that will allow for associations between the transavantgarde and the cultural phenomenon of postmodernism.

"The logic of modernism advocated by those critics has become a critical dead end, to the extent that it has been upheld as a rigid guideline for further artistic production and critical evaluation." (Huyssen, A 1986, 'After the great divide' page 197).



(Top) 'Dynamism of a dog on a leash', Giacomo Balla 1912, oil on canvas.

(Bottom) 'Speeding auto', Giacomo Balla 1912, oil on card.

The futurists clearly show how modernism was fueled by the economic and industrial advancements of the time if photography sparked impressionism then the industrial revolution spurred the futurists. Postmodernism however came into being due to the dissatisfaction culture experienced as a result of these advancements.



(Top) 'Dynamism of a dog on a leash', Giacomo Balla 1912, oil on canvas.
(Bottom) 'Speeding auto', Giacomo Balla 1912, oil on card.
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The resistance to postmodernism stems from postmodernisms animation through the market generated consumerism of the first and second worlds. The identity of the postmodern condition lies in the resistance and indifference to the consumer commodification of art. It plays on the axis of high and low culture. The split between the artwork and theoretical discourse has led to indifference on both sides as to the correct development of artistic culture in the postmodern. This measure or split has led as Huyssen puts it, to a reduction in the mode of production. In saying that he means that artist will stop producing work as 'anything goes' or 'nothing matters' because everything worthwhile has been done. It will also mean the critics will cease to aid the artwork. In the visual arts mode of production is the key to evolvment. The more work an artist produces insures that he or she may develope their work. There can be no change without the work being made so that change may take place. Instigating indifference hampers the project of postmodernism. Huyssen continues,

"The problem surfaces when their (the artists of the modernist period) greatness is used as an unsurpassable model and appealed to in order to stifle contemporary artistic production." (Huyssen, A 1986 'After the great divide' page 205)

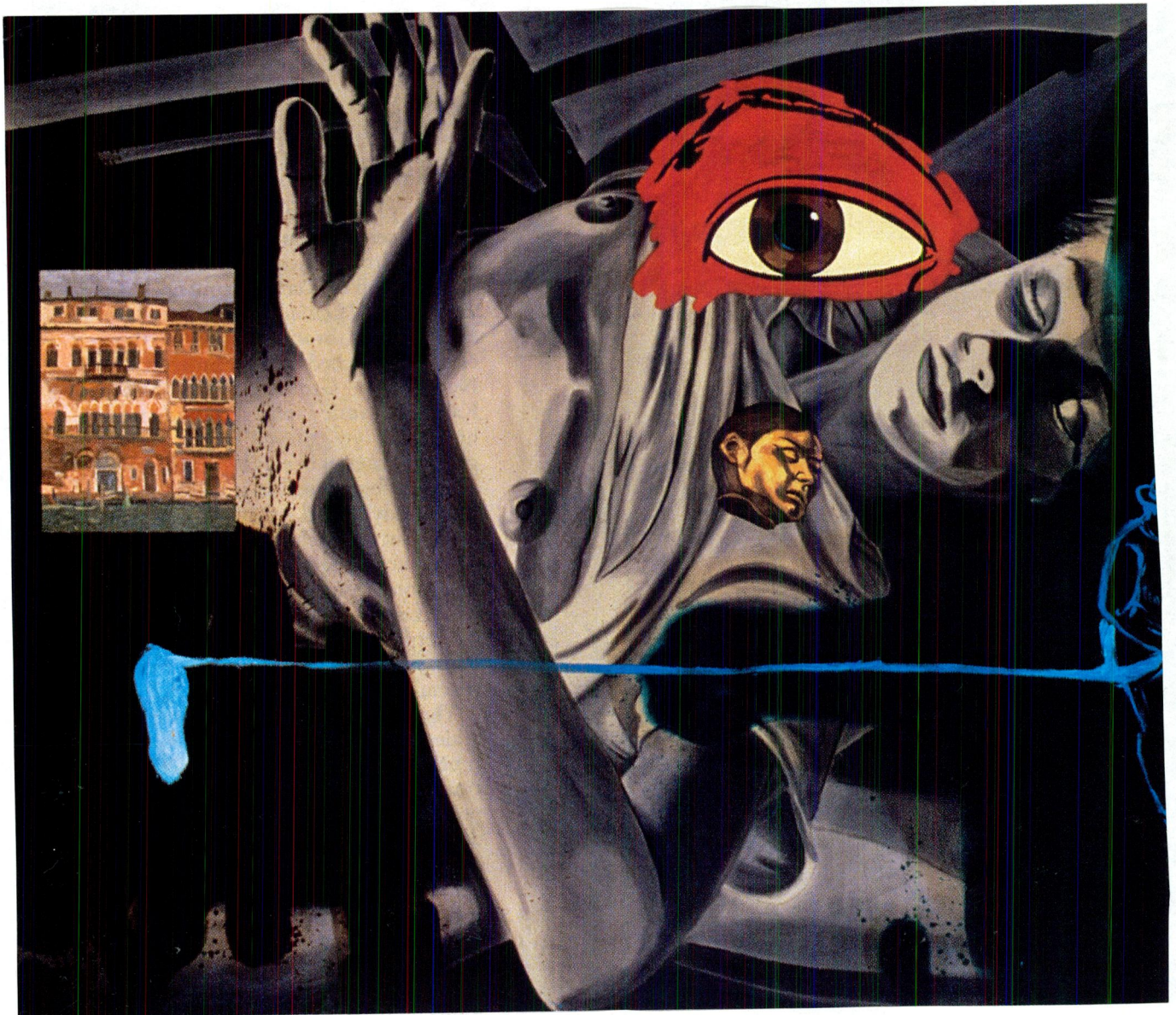
This is applicable to the artist and critic who become complacent or uninterested and give in to the indifference.

Huyssen raises post structuralism as some form of new theory on 'modernisation', however he himself agrees it is still confined to the aesthetic level. It seems modernism in its reductive progress has been stifled in its negation of some styles such as cubism over others such as impressionism. Huyssen goes on to say,

"Such heroic visions of modernity as a force of social change (for that matter resistance to undesired change) are a thing of the past, admirable for sure but no longer in tune with current sensibilities except perhaps with an emerging apocalyptic senesibility as the flipside of modernist heroism." (Huyssen, A 1986, 'After the great divide' page 217).

Art as it were does not has have to play out the end of modernism nor is confined to an apocolypse or blind irrationality and fear. Currently according to Huyssen and others such as Suzi Gabilik there is a growing sense of cultural liberation going on. This liberation is not confined to the spere of high art. This turn around is due to the changed sensibilities of our time. It is the artist albeit from whatever form or background in all cultural spheres, that is expanding the field of experience as a new cultural sphere or otherness (as Huyssen calls it) evolves. It is taking many forms. This new sensation operates within the tensions aroused by the postmodern condition. Change is apparent in the form of favouring some ideas over others. Huyssen raises the issue of race, class, sexuality and other cultural concerns. This is contrary to Jameson's arguement which promotes that despite resistance, capitalism is succeeding. Huyssen's issues illustrate resistance to commodification by capitalism. Embracing difference and not becoming indifferent gives new hope for cultural developement.

Huyssen Titles his arguement under four headings For him the most noticable fields of change are feminism (sexual identity), ecology, other cultures and the end of imperialism. By juxtaposing images and styles from the past and bombarding the cultural sphere with these



'Colony 1986', David Salle 1986, mixed media.
The image of the elizabethian praising of the late Albert Ayler is appropriated from Picabins loeil cacodylate 1922, one of the serrealists and dadists colaborations. The severed head is lifted from a painting by Gercault. For Thomas Lawson Salle was the last possible exit painting could possibly go Salle's fragmentation and use of pastiche is clearly seen. The evocative naked woman is purely for badness its images such as this that premete despair in the postmodern. Salle's work offers no solutions.

combinations of pastiche and parody postmodernism creates a new cultural space. In this space where anything goes image wise, there is room for a serious line of enquiry into the subjects raised by Huyssen. In the postmodern the values and tradition of modernism are being questioned by the artist. Also more importantly alternatives are being offered, taking postmodernism away from the modernist era. These alternative come from the changed interests of the culture in the subjects raised by Huyssen. Some artists of the postmodern are addressing these issues directly. For Huyssen postmodernism is, "Our problem and our hope" (Huyssen, A 1986, 'After the great divide' page 221).

Postmodernism limits itself with its ties to modernism but it has also broadened and expanded possibilities through fragmentation. Postmodernism has created a tension of issues and opened the cultural awareness along with revitalising the individual in his/her cultural sphere which is one of the positive outcomes of this phenomenon. The transavantgarde are useful to discuss the postmodernist expansion. Through their imagery they (along with the other neoexpressionists) brought the visual art painting to the fore. They professed a new awareness of the issues raised by Huyssen and worked along these changed sensibilities. Implied the change they have provided more room for change. They still produce, aware of the negative dogma and yet continue to defend their place. Their merits can be found to be the merits of the postmodern condition and hence they must be looked at in order to promote within postmodernism the idea of a resurrection (further).

Chapter Three - The Italian transavantgarde.

In his essay on this group of painters, Italian critic Achille Bonito Olivia remarks,

"Finally pictorial pictures are taken up as an affirmative movement as a gesture which is no longer one of defense but of active, daytime fluid penetration." (Olivia, Bonito 1981, 'The Italian transavantgarde', page 5).

While the art market theory and image was engaging the cultural debate the transavantgarde were embarking on an alternative journey.

Briefly taking Italy as a country it is possible to see how such a move was more easily facilitated here. Italy is a country not unlike Ireland which has a tradition of blurring its past. Within this cultural amnesia Clemente, Cucchi, Chia, Mimmo and Paladino were able to embark on their own strand of postmodernist imagery. Although Italy home of the renaissance has a strong artistic tradition, these painters were able to once more rebirth or resurrect the painted image, but with a more contemporary outlook. Italy is a country with the capacity to disconnect itself from the past becoming a place where events can pass through to the burden of other countries and times an example would be its part in world war two. Italy just does not draw the same attention in the mind as Germany, Poland, U.S.A. or England does. Italy although it has a strong religious and political past has an openness to change this is important to show how it has been a breeding ground for events such as the seventies rebirth of painting while minimalism and conceptual work was strangling the body from art in the rest of Europe.

The transavantgarde looked inward and disregarded the external search for something new and different. They could be regarded as dealing with the 'now' of everyday experience, promoting the humanisation of art in the face corporate capitalism and fragmentation of the individual by artistic and sociological groupings of visual and linguistic discourse. Most arguments launched against the transavantgarde are launched from a progressive modernist stand point promoting the need for change to re-enmesh the artist and critic for the evolution of the artwork. Using the transavantgarde, in particular Francesco Clemente as a stand point for the painting tradition, it will be possible to evaluate their importance in the postmodernist condition. Relating to Clemente to Huyssen and Jameson's essays will produce a positive argument for the future of painting as not being dead to ideas. The visual tradition has yet to be fully revived due to the regressive attitude of modernism towards colour and form in other words reviving painting away from traditions that led to minimalism. Through this discussion the need for change in awareness through the cultural sphere maybe be made clearer.

The issues of feminism, ecology and other cultures is applicable to the work of the transavantgarde. Huyssen's hopes are clearly illustrated in their imagery. They embraced a respect to other cultures and sexuality. Clearly 'a wider vision' of cultural sensibilities is applicable to their work they mixed codes of history and time opening a line of enquiry into the symptoms of pastiche and schizophrenia raised by Jameson. Their work is not a reaction against modernism rather it neglects the modernist dogma of change. Through their use of history coupled with the content of their work, they

In the early to mid-1960s, the field of behavioral psychology was dominated by the study of the rat and the pigeon. The study of the rat was particularly prominent, and it was in this area that the most significant advances were made.

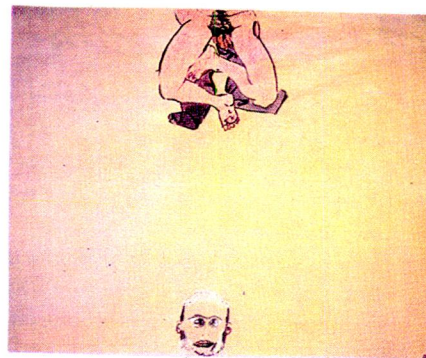
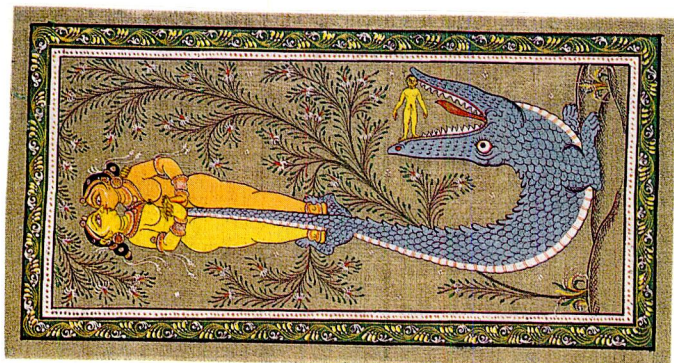
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(Above) 'Ring', Francesco Clemente 1978, tempera on paper.

(Bottom left) 'Story of my country', Francesco Clemente 1979, guoache on silk.

(Bottom right) 'Self portrait without mirror', Francesco Clemente 1979, guoache on paper.

Clemente's diverse use of imagery takes many forms it is amid these forms and visual signifiers Clemente finds his identity not necessarily in the imagery depicted but in the thought pattern via there references.



(Above) King, Francesco Clemente 1978, tempera on paper.
(Bottom left) "Story of my country", Francesco Clemente 1979, gouache on silk.
(Bottom right) "Self portrait without mirror", Francesco Clemente 1979, gouache on paper.
Clemente's diverse use of imagery takes many forms. In its said these forms and visual signifiers Clemente finds his identity not necessarily in the imagery depicted but in the thought pattern via their references.

have created a space. However the transavantgarde because of this have been accused of merely celebrating the body such as the futurists had previously celebrated the machine.

For Clemente History is a false norm. This belief stems from Eastern philosophy. History is only the account of the victors and is therefor only part of the story. Although in his work Clemente attempts the impossible task of presenting 'the whole story'. Doing this he sees himself as never completing his output. He accepts the indescrpeny of the past. This is very unlike the Western pre-occupation with conclusion and logic. Clemente is in flux. The imagery moves in and out of the field of day to day experience there are always spaces created for the external viewer to make their own connections, to complete the image. These spaces also provide the same for Clemente. The connections and gaps between his imagery for him, grasp at some form of identity and resolution of the image. This is a more 'honest' present (open to external and internal change) than a preconcieved edited present created through the history of the victors dominant ideology. At the moment capitalism is the victor. Jetztzeit is very relevant. In his work moments of messianic presence are enmeshed and moved to revelation for himself (Clemente) and the viewer.

Jameson regards the enmeshing of past and present images, as ungrounded in some form of tangeable historic reference. This for Jameson leads to confusion and dislocation from the normative conception of time (past, present, future), and leads to isolation. This could be true from the point of world dominance by consumer capitalism, where the individual does not exist and the person is an isolated 'subject' at the hands of the ideology. However for the Italians the space created by postmodernism, is a space for self realisation and the act of engagement of the individual. By using the hyper stimuli of the senses and enmeshing myth, legend and the ideology of the past a new space is created.

This space is removed from the progressive modernist trend. When questioned about fragmentation Clemente replies.

"It is a strategy that has to do with what we were just talking about (the question of who can make the last great piece of art ?, Clemente regards it as a return to the idea of Western conquest which is a glorification of the Western way, the ultimate perversion since modernism took that self righteousness away in the first place) fragmentation has to do with shifting the attention away from the way things look to the way things are made and inventing a territory inbetween that doesn't belong to any known taste or device." (Auping, Micheal 1987, 'Clemente' page 60).

Fragmentation clearly helps Clemente expand his language. Clemente talks of attention (territory) which ties in with Huyssen's future hopes for the artwork.

The art of the seveties has,

"Done away with the emotional, moralistic rigidity, bringing creativeness back into the mobile territory of an experience which is no longer rhetorical but fragmentory and metaphysical." (Olivia, Bonito, A 1981, 'The Italian transavantgarde' page 42)

This issue of fragmantation surrounds Clemente. Through the vehichle of self portraiture he reintergrates art, artist, life and nature back together. The life world is something that can be shared and



'Painting of the precious fires', Enzo Cucchi 1983, oil on canvas. In this work Cucchi conveys his sense of physical being when painting. The painting also refers to emblems of spirituality, Cucchi paints via a set of references and a black whole. His sense of being is felt in the painting but also there is almost a sense of a black whole being present also the image eludes to a mystical otherness.



Painting of the previous year, 'Buddha' (1983), oil on canvas.
In this work, Gochi conveys his sense of physical being when
painting. The painting also refers to emblem of spirituality, Gochi
presents a set of references and a black tone, his sense of being
is lost in the painting but also there is a sense of a black
white being present, also the image refers to a spiritual domain.

percieved. The artist is an active part of the life world. Clemente when asked about his working process, whether it is rational or intuitatively based, replied, "If you fall out of a window do you fall rationally or emotionally ?, a lot of life is like falling out of a window." (Kent, Sarah 1989, 'Turtles all the way down !' artscribe interview sept/oct page 54). The simplicity behind the process is presented honestly. His canvas's are laid bare, and through his work a sicerity supports him. Statements about his work are never complicated or underhanded. This is not to say that his complicated work is wrong. All it points to is that Clemente's perception of the artist and his work is inkeeping with the changed sensibilities aroused in the postmodern condition. With the growing tension created by the feeling that 'anything goes', indifference and isolation are the probable results. However to act against this uncertainty one of the most important factorsa for the artist in the postmodern is his/her sincerity.

Clemente's relationship to the life world comes from his Eastern belief to always remember that death is the end result of life. Indeed he views himself as painting life from the side of death this opinion is shared by some of the other members of the transavantgarde. Foucalt refers to story telling as a protection against death (postmodernism, 1986, I.C.A. documents 4 & 5, page 39). Clemente tries to promote the sacrifice or murder of the self and Derrida claims that representation is death itself (postmodernism, 1986, I.C.A. documents 4 & 5, page 39). Clemente as has already been stated regards himself as painting from the side of death, that way intensifying the living in his work. Clemente himself proposes that art is the last great oral tradition of the Western world. Therefor can it be said that Clemente and company are the emerging new story tellers ?. With the media and television the art of story telling has almost vanished. However going on Foucalt's belief, by using the images as a form of story telling Clemente is ensuring his 'stories' (paintings) keep their emotional intensity, just as the tales told by story tellers do. The story teller takes unreal images afterall and charges them with real emotion. Clemente takes unreal and unrelated images and charges them with emotion and presence through the picture frame. Going on what Foucalt, Derrida and Clemente stated its clear to see that visual representation in the form of painting still carries enough weighted ideas that it cannot be disgarded by contemporary art practice.

The body often becomes the centre stage for the story. Using the body, Clemente uses one the most assesable signifiers of the life world. Doing this he mixes codes of sexuality and meaning for the individual.

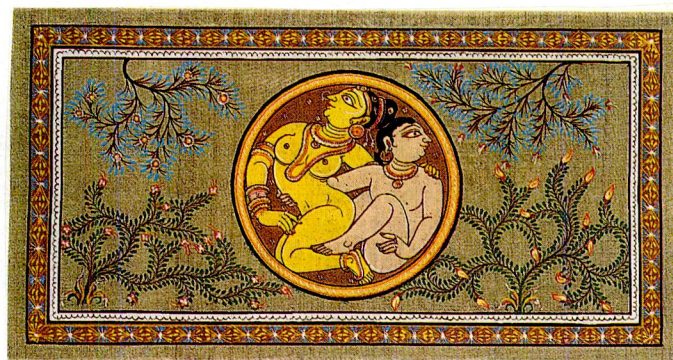
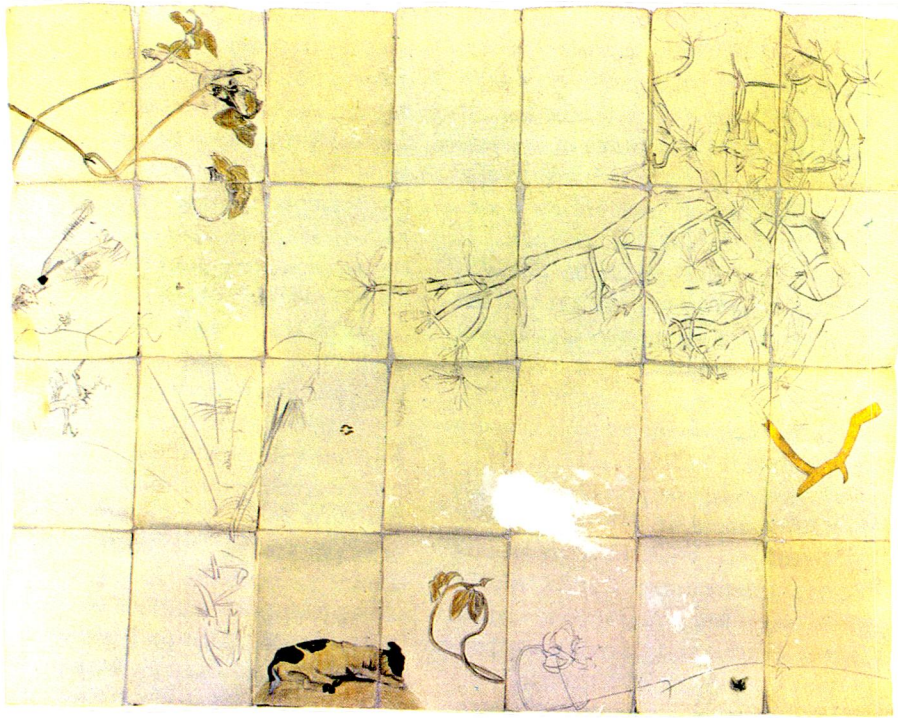
According to Lacan the subject, "Is born in so far as the signifier emerges in the field of the other but by this very fact this subject which was previously nothing if not a subject coming into being solidifies the signifier." (postmodernism 1986, I.C.A. documents 4 & 5, page 39) This comment might be better explained by Althusser's words, "Interpellation of individuals as subjects, the subjects recofnition of each other individually helps the subjects recognition of himself." (postmodernism 1986, I.C.A. documents 4 & 5, page 39)

...the first is an active part of the life ...
...the second is a passive part of the life ...
...the third is a ...
...the fourth is a ...
...the fifth is a ...
...the sixth is a ...
...the seventh is a ...
...the eighth is a ...
...the ninth is a ...
...the tenth is a ...

...the first is a ...
...the second is a ...
...the third is a ...
...the fourth is a ...
...the fifth is a ...
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...the seventh is a ...
...the eighth is a ...
...the ninth is a ...
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...the first is a ...
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...the tenth is a ...



(Above) 'Self portrait as garden', Francesco Clemente 1979, twentyfour sheets of hand made paper.

(Below) 'Story of my country', Francesco Clemente 1979, guoache on silk.

Clemente mixes spiritualism, nature and sexuality in his work the images are a celebration of being and nature. By showing himself as the garden he combines the artist and nature into one experience contained within the frame. There is no ego.



to understand it. I'm doing the opposite: I'm suggesting the possibility of making whole.

Q: You have said that you thought forms could heal. Are you religious?

A: Yes, in the etymological sense -- of bringing together all these bits and pieces. Religion comes from a word that means to come together, to unite.

Q: You often use imagery that has a relationship to such things as



(Above) 'Self portrait as garden', Francesco Clemente, 1979, twenty-four sheets of hand made paper.
(Below) 'Story of my country', Francesco Clemente, 1978, fresco on silk.
Clemente mixes spiritualism, nature and sexuality in his work. The images are a celebration of being and nature. By showing himself as the garden he combined the artist and nature into one experience contained within the frame. There is no ego.

By using the body Clemente initiates codes of assurance or anxiety for himself and the viewer. Referring to Lacan's reading on the Oedipus complex reveals and exposes some of the basic acceptance of societies ideology. The visual language can also trip the switch of enquiry. Questioning identity through the figure, Clemente starts to reset previous accepted roles.

Cucchi says of his work,

"One has to be able to feel the body in history. That is why I continuously refer to the earth through things that have to do with the body, if you have no sense of physical being you can't paint."

He develops this to say,

"Painting is both a movement via references and a black whole, what is important is that one follows the direction of matter." (Cucchi, Enzo 1987, 'Testa' page 54)

Although this is quite narrow in opinion it bears the importance of the physical and the life world in the work once more Clemente can be referred back to the Oedipus complex on his use of imagery.

According to Lacan the self is governed through reference thus a sense of otherness is felt by that subject who gains an image of him/herself through reference to others. The perception of the self therefor is mirrored image of oneself and is subsequently false. Clemente's image is inward and not outward, although this inward reflection is through outward associations. However some images are solely internal. Nevertheless by linking external signifiers the same sense of otherness is recaptured. This quest to comprehend the sense of otherness is mobile and in flux. Thus there is a point between vision and tension of otherness that Clemente seeks. This for him is like Joyce's process of the impossible task of including everything. "A dogmatic attitude, led artists to consider nature as a symbol of liberation and regeneration in contrast with a repressive artificial social sphere." (Olivia, Bonito, A 1981, 'The Italian transavantgarde' page 38)

Through his experience and methods of communication Clemente turns away from the Western industrial age. For Clemente fragmentation is not a process isolation and breaking down of parts to their constituents. For him it is a device to present the whole. Nature and art are both communicative to Clemente. The time for change is apparent when sensibilities such as those raised by Huyssen, change. The period of modernism ran with the industrial age. Postmodernism is fueled by the result of industrial and economical modernisation. Suzi Gabilik (1991 Reinchantment of earth) extends this point when she concludes that needs to return not to modernism but before modernism back to the ancient shamans of old.

"The artist/semigod in harmony with the powers of myth and nature has been replaced by the artist who takes nature back into being a convention of art. The artist who discovers in art is one colour." (Olivia, Bonito, A 1981, 'The Italian transavantgarde' page 39)

Gabilik's stance tends to veer off into the irrational reprogramming of the culture. However the issues of concern are the same nature and sexual identity. These concerns were the foundations of primitive cultures Clemente's response to the position of an artist is a lot more rational.

"Art is an aspect of communication that has been going on since the beginning of our time and is relative to our functions one with the

the fact that the only element... (text is mirrored and difficult to read)

... (text is mirrored and difficult to read)

... (text is mirrored and difficult to read)

... (text is mirrored and difficult to read)

... (text is mirrored and difficult to read)



'Untitled', Francesco Clemente 1983, oil on canvas.
"Representation is death" (Derida)
"Painting from the side of death" (Clemente)
"Storytelling is protection against death" (Foucault)
"Painting is the last oral tradition in the western world" (Clemente)
Clemente's continuous representation of the self enmeshed with sexual
and confrontational signifiers.



Painted by Francesco Clemente 1989, oil on canvas.
"Representation is death" (series)
"Protecting from the side of death" (Clemente)
"Protecting is protection against death" (Clemente)
"Painting as the last oral tradition in the western world" (Clemente)
Clemente's continuous representation of the self combined with sexual
and confrontational elements.

contributes to it in the simplest possible way. There is nothing mysterious about it." ('Clemente' 1989, artscribe Nov/Oct page 58) Clemente's ability to change and alter his work so much coincides emergence of pluralistic postmodern conditions. Clemente however unlike other artists of the postmodern does not attack modernism. It is the position of the dilettante as Michael Auping puts it, to experience many areas denied by modernisms progressively exclusive path.

"We live in a time when we're about to wipe out 90% of the diversity that has been built up. Like everything in nature culture is based on diversity I'm a partesian of diversity. You don't have to be an idealist to want more than a scientific diet." ('Clemente' 1989, 'Turtles all the way down' artscribe Nov/Dec page 53)

Painting has by some been considered to be a dead art yet through the hope represented in Clemente's work and through his diversity new prospects are opened to the painter. Not only is there observation but also association is aroused by the juxtapositioning of imagery.

Clemente's process of working avoids the logical construction and deconstruction of ideas. For him forms appear and grow through him, Clemente's images represent the issues raised by Gabilik and Huyssen. "You have all these nice notions and they are part of experience but experience is there without these notions though the notions are not there without the experince." (Auping, Michael 1987, 'Clemente' page 34)

This comment by Clemente may sound anti intellectual he is responding to the modernist dogma of progress for him,

"The basic assumption of the work is that there is no progression, it is more a matter of being." ('Clemente' 1989, artscribe Sep/Oct page 55)

"Change yes progress no. I believe in the existence of change and influence but not movement upward or forward"... "I see change reoccurrence and disappearance in any work but not progress." ('Clemente' 1989, artscribe Sep/Oct page 58)

His work he claims is firstly for himself. He has remarked that forms can heal he is talking in an etymological sense his work tends towards the change in sensibilities raised by Huyssen. His work relates to the inner spiritual experience. These experiences are excluded by Western logical catagorisation. Clemente and company have been accused of narcissism and self indulgence refusing to aid cultural progress on the whole. However this arguement does not apply when we look at the global issues raised by Huyssen, therefor can their work be criticised as being not applicable ?.

In renaissance times the world was seen as a sensual place relative to the body. After the great industrial age according to Huyssen once more the culture is becoming disatisfied with its 'lot'. It seems that Clemente and company are very relevant to these issues of sexuality and ecology. Somewhere a rethinking of the direction of the visual arts, must take place. Paintings importance anyhow must be reassessed. It is a language after all expansion and communication of this language is the end goal of image making. It seems that if the postmodernist condition can relate so strongly to painters like Clemente who are in touch with current sensibilities and they can produce within postmodernism, it is necessary to pursue its outcome.

"The picture of the world that history gives us is the picture of a dead person who looks over his life. It is as if we are all dead, and we are looking at the world in glass case. How can we get away from this I have no answer." (Auping, Micheal 1987, 'Clemente' page 62)

Clemente reconstructs history and time through a grounding spiritually and firm belief in a more emphatic Eastern understanding of the planet. Clemente unlike the realisation of the modernist avant garde, has a realisation set in the present in the life world. The postmodern space referred to by Jameson is for Clemente and company 'the now' of daily experience.

Using the surface as Clemente and Chia Do empowers the image on many levels. Their images are not confined to the intellect, but reach to the senses and irrational emotional side. They open the viewer to engagement through their many sided imagery.

Pastiche and schizophrenia are formal symptoms of postmodernism that can apply to Clemente and the transavantgarde. However unlike Jameson's postmodernism which is characterised as a submission to the tidal wave of capitalism and consumer society, the transavantgarde represents a resistance to that ideology. It stands as a resistance to the consumer/victim complex illustrating the individual and the components of life that form the individual. For Clemente the individuals bearing on life is all important.

"The ideology is an imaginary relation required by capitalism to position individuals as subjects in the division of labour." (postmodernism 1986 I.C.A. documents 4 & 5 page 40)

Olivia puts it,

"The motherland of protection and paternal embankment that indicates catagorical imperatives which we must obey." (Olivia, Bonito, A 1982, 'The Italian transavantgadre' page 32)

Jameson's indifference to the work of some of the postmodernist artists stems from the relationship of capitalism and ideology. For him the patriarchal based structure of capitalism is slowly becoming a global control scheme however in this light although there are many examples of this, such as multinationals and others, on the flipside we have Huyssen's growing concerns already mentioned. Compacency can be a form of dominance also but if artists such as Clemente are addressing concerns such as a more emphatic 'embracing of life', and in doing this are reflecting the growing concerns of Huyssen's world then obviously there is resistance to the consumer way. Resistance and communication are beginning to surface. It seems that the patriarchal structure of imperialism is no longer able to deal with the issues raised by current sensibilities. In this tension Clemente's art is most valid for the postmodern resurrection.

Conclusion.

In the closing chapter of his book 'Future Tense' Robert Hewison raises the issue of pluralism in the postmodern condition. He relates it to the contemporary debate sexual identity and roles within Western society. This comparison of dominance and male and female roles can be broadly taken to represent the culture. Hewison supports pluralism due to its support for the minority. However he warns that this acceptance should not fall into the trap of complacency or indifference. The dominant ideology which pretends to be unified can merely be indifferent to cultural pluralism. This complacency has held the conservative right wing ideology of capitalism despite the counter culture of the sixties. The sixties were merely brushed over and eventually consumed through indifferent acceptance. Their rebellion was filtered through humour and commodification of their ideals.

The grand narratives of the twentieth century have given a sense of universal meaning to the groupings (sociological/cultural) of our time. Accepting pluralism has seemingly led to loss and uncertainty. Thus Jameson's 'anything goes' despair. If we were to drop the grand narratives under pinning much of confrontational modernism, accepting pluralism would not be so difficult. Resisting the grand narrative according to Hewison would allow us to accept the grand dialogue created in the postmodern condition. Celebrating this dialogue of uniqueness, of minority would expand the field of communication. Thus isolation and despair and the negative associations of the postmodern would disappear.

Society is once more turning towards sensuousity and the unpredictable world of experience. Dick Hebdige argues, "Acknowledgement of an unstable flux frees artists and their allies to engage more directly in the moving equilibrium of competing forces." (Hewison, Robert 1990, 'Future tense' page 158) It is now time to open the communication between these diverse subjects of pluralism, as in Clemente's work where the dialogue between the images creates a sense of being. It is not a case of celebrating the disruptive forces better nor is it a case of celebrating the marginalised. It's a case of celebrating the identity they have formed themselves as a means as Hewison puts it of coping with the dominant ideology. This can lead to a resistance and debate which would celebrate the multicultural aspects of pluralism.

Artistic discourse has yet to free itself from the masculine separatist mode of the modernist period where the artist worked and changed at the fringes of society. Now also there is a more feminine emphatic mode encouraging the engagement of art, artist and society. Already artists are exploring this avenue.

"It is no longer a question of good art but serious artists."

(Hewison, Robert 1990, 'Future tense' page 99)

Pluralism has prompted such statements. There are as many gains to receive from artwork as there are minorities to experience them.

"The crisis of values in culture turns on the plural meanings of value itself: the value of art is not exclusively monetary nor is it in that sense useless; its value lies in its use not exchange. Uses that are social in terms of pleasure, emotional release, identity and self expression." (Hewison, Robert 1990, 'Future tense' page 170)

In the opening chapter of the book, Robert Merton
 traces the roots of pluralism in the postwar condition. It relates
 it to the contemporary decline of social identity and value systems
 in the United States. This condition of anomie and value vacuum
 is broadly taken to represent the condition. Merton suggests pluralism
 as the support for the identity, however in some cases this
 response should not fall into the trap of conspiracy or
 nihilism. The dominant ideology which prevails in the postwar con-
 dition is indifferent to others' interests. This conspiracy has
 held the conservative right with ideology of capitalist desire. In
 contrast to the status, the status was widely shared over
 and eventually contained through indifference about their
 condition was filtered through racism and commodification of their
 interests.

The second half of the twentieth century have given a sense of
 individualism in the struggle for technological, cultural, or moral
 freedom. According to Merton, this has led to loss of moral identity.
 This Merton's "conflicting goals" despite. It was not to drop the goal
 but rather to find a way of conceptualizing moral, political, and
 religious values not be so difficult. Restoring the good narrative
 according to Merton would allow us to accept the good dialogue
 in the postwar condition. Contrasting this dialogue as
 a way of identity would expand the field of communication. This
 includes the status and the negative association of the postwar
 we do disagree.

Identity in some ways relating towards authority and the unresolvable
 field of authority. This Merton argues
 the development of a variable like their status and their action
 to vary and identity in the way of pluralism of competing
 forces. Merton (1990, Merton, 1990, page 155)
 it is not to see the communication between these forces
 as a matter of pluralism, as Merton's work shows the dialogue
 between the status and the status. It is not a case of
 relating the negative forces between them. It is a case of
 containing the pluralism. It is a case of containing the identity
 they have found themselves as a means as Merton says. It is a case
 with the status. This can lead to a dialogue and dialogue
 which will elaborate the field of pluralism.

Article however, we get to find that from the condition
 regarding some of the moral condition were the status would
 changed in the context of society. However, there is a more positive
 condition which would allow the movement of art, culture, and society.
 It is not to see the condition as a case of containing the status.
 Merton (1990, Merton, 1990, page 90)
 pluralism has included which status. There are some cases to
 involve this status as they are related to the status.
 The status of values in culture on the plural condition was
 to be that the value of art is not exclusively status. It is
 in that sense, the value of art is the status and exchange. In the
 the status of pluralism, emotional, identity, and art
 condition. Merton (1990, Merton, 1990, page 150)



'Three out of nine', Francesco Clemente 1988, pigment on linen. The grand dialogue created in Clemente's image between the mythological forms here celebrate each form within the image. The colours and shapes unite through a sense of 'otherness' generated between them it is a dialogue as Hewison puts it that will provide a solution to the postmodern condition.

The following information was obtained from the records of the
Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the
Inspector General, Washington, D.C., on 11/20/15.
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The potential and divergence raised within the sixties and seventies has yet to come to the fore because of the trend of 'objective purpose' laid down in modernism. To some the reintroduction of painting in the seventies was a return to the modernist tradition of objectification. This opinion does not seem to hold up when the content of these neoexpressionist painters is examined. The dominant objective stare does not exist in Clemente's work. His work is not just to be looked at, it engages active participation between the viewer and creator from a neutral unheroic stand point.

Thomas Lawson in his essay 'last exit painting' regards pluralism as the last hold out of modernism regarding art only existing insulated from the real world or as unreasonable babble.

"Modern art as it were has begun to lose its standing." (Lawson, Thomas 1984 'Last exit painting', art after modernism page 154)
This opinion is far too dismissive.

"For some years now its rejections have been ritual repetitions, rebellion has turned to procedure criticism into rhetoric, transgression into ceremony. Negation is no longer creative. I'm not saying that we are living at the end of art I'm saying we are living at the end of the idea of modern art." (Lawson, Thomas 1984 'Last exit painting' art after modernism page 154)

Again the discussion returns to the meaning of the word modern to believe that modern art is over is again giving in to indifference yet the above statement is a good definition of most recent art. The eighties was a transitional period. It was believed that the last great period of change was the sixties with pop art and conceptual work. Already stated though the sixties ideal seemed to peter out. Importantly a political return to conservatism was led by a cultural awareness for change. Thatcherism in Britain led England almost back to Victorian times culture was shocked back into action. The complacency had to be dispelled. In painting people like Kiefer and Clemente reinvested the image with communication of ideas. Painters like David Salle who for Lawson was the last radical exit for painting led to comments such as the above on the state of the arts. Hewison however upholds an alternative to being modern and defends the visual in painting.

"The acknowledgement that reality is constantly shifting and that it is always necessary to reach beyond reality opens the way to the sublime he goes on to refer to Lyotard.

"It is in the aesthetics of the sublime that modern art including literature finds its impetus and the logic of the avant garde finds its axioms." (Hewison, R 1990, 'Future tense' page 175)

He then talks of courage and commitment to their work. They try to mark those points that are unrepresentable by marking certain points and by marking certain points these realities may become clear through the making of absence of these new realities. He himself (Hewison) regards this as being utopian but nonetheless courageous. In the face of dogma and indifference this point of 'production of work' lends a more positive assessment of paintings validity.

"To overcome the loss and fragmentation in postmodernism we need to recover not modernism but a sense of modernity, the consciousness of a new epoch is a source of positive connections not negative comparisons." (Hewison, R 1990, 'Future tense' page 173)

Negation can cause the value of the artwork to be discarded to nothingness and despair. On the other hand blind acceptance is not the answer either. Now that there is so much going on, the audience must be made active to validate the image. Art therapy and community art are but some of the changes that show how pluralism has given the chance for active engagement in the renewal of artistic effort.

The advantage of postmodernism is that while it can hold modernisms adversarial stance it is also aware through hindsight of the closure it can impose on itself. This leads to a resurrection of effort in avoiding the pitfall of modernism by creating an alternative for artistic endeavor. The alternative veers away from indifference and isolation by embracing identity and nature, Clemente finds a universal subject which can generate widespread interest the divergencies of these has tended to slip into indifference as we approach the turn of the century the rebirth of nature based concerns can fulfill the projects started in the sixties. Expanding the acceptance of such paintings and actualising the awareness to the work can lead to active engagement for the viewer from whatever background.

For Suzi Gabilik the answer lies in premodern and nature. Yet through the points she raises via the shamen lifestyle of old have the same concerns of sexuality and nature, her alternative appears too drastic. To fall back into the credo of ancient cultures steeped in magic and myth may be too much to ask of contemporary post industrial culture. It seems though that postmodernism cannot be translated into a textual practice ?. It cannot be simply ascribed to a logical format and discourse without sounding trite or indifferent indeed textual writers would be those such as Beckett or Joyce who Clemente refers to. The sense of otherness generated by postmodern images can lead to indifference or irrationality. Criticism cannot be negated in the field of postmodernist pluralism, everything counts and adds to the communicative network.

Hal Foster elaborates on postmodernist systems, "Postmodernism a system calling for corrections; translations, openings and negations is more usefull than an unformulated absence of a system." (Foster, Hal 1984, 'Re post, art after modernism' page 200)

This is a more usefull direction that Gabilik's premodern outlook. Removing the past is no solution to the present. Eventually maybe, through this change we will return to Gabilik's premodern time, however modernism is too much in the recent past to make such a huge leap.

Kate Liniker along with Hewison are closer to some form of critical discourse for the postmodern.

"Art history has turned although belatedly to confront the marginalisation of women and the defintion of creativity as male." (Liniker, Kate 1984, Representation and sexuality, 'Art after modernism' page 393)

Tracing the roots of language reveals its symbolic order. Language itself through its definition is constant forming and reforming of the subject. Because of this its transition, its flux has important implications for ideology. The postmodernist image celebrates this flux and transition. The image does not associate itself with some



'Everything I know', Francesco Clemente 1983, pastel on paper. An unheroic approach one of vulnerability and uncertainty are repetitive traits of Clemente's work. Clemente uses tangeable uncomplicated imagery to communicate his own vulnerability. Clemente's approach is both open and shy.



Everywhere I know, Francesco Clemente 1980, pastel on paper.
An unheroic approach to vulnerability and uncertainty are
repetitive traits of Clemente's work. Clemente uses language
uncomplicated imagery to communicate his own vulnerability.
Clemente's approach is both open and shy.

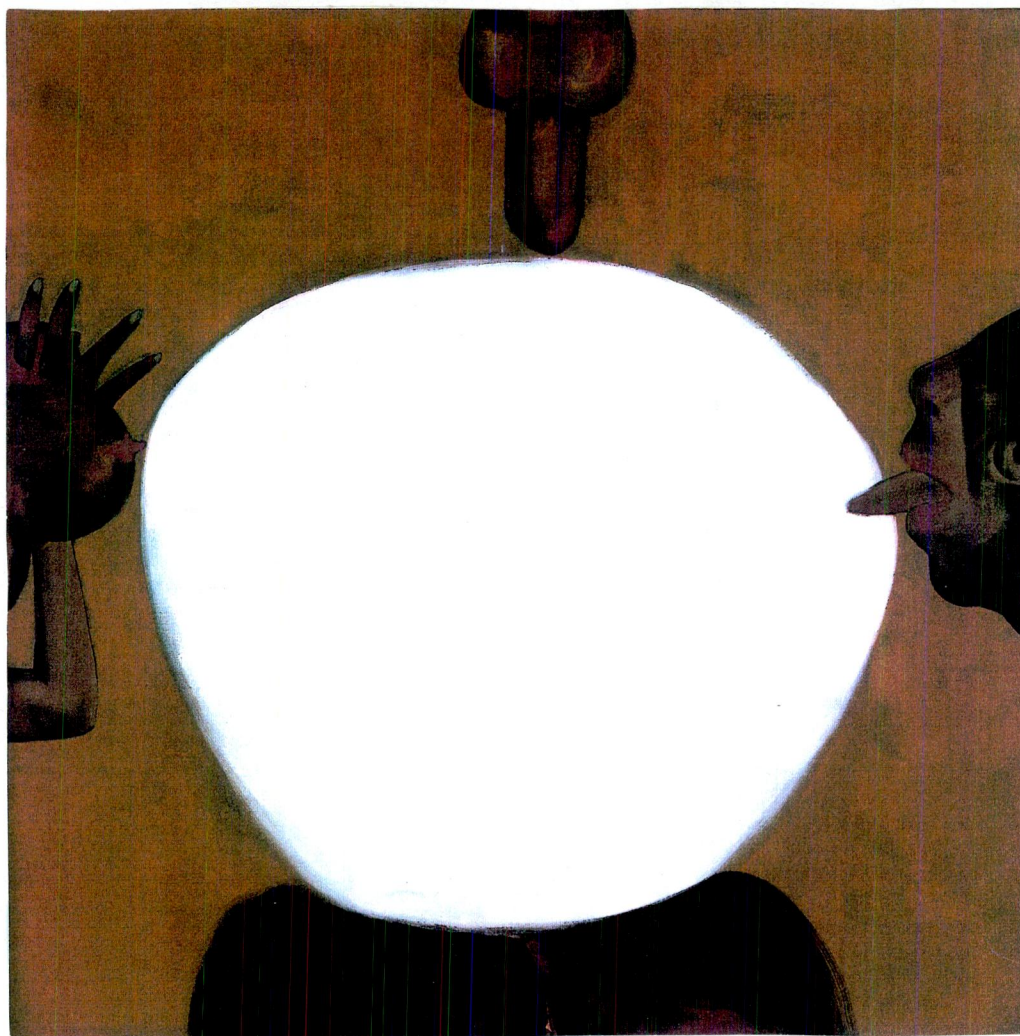
unified structure such as the grand narrative or dominant ideology. Rather its unification is found in the sense of otherness that refers to the transitory aspect of day to day experience. The postmodern image possesses its own manoeuvrability just as each individual has a multitude of thoughts fears and emotions moving forward and backward within them.

Due to the dimension of subject and object Kelly regards the art representation as fetishistic in nature. Once again by representing what is representable what is unrepresentable may be somehow more easily specified. Using Lacan, Kelly (a theorist referred to by Liniker) goes on to develop the idea of representation as part of the network that through assertions and movement of the symbolic code, these images can spread throughout cultures imagery. For painting once more Clemente may be applied. He compares his work to Chinese calligraphy. A piece of bamboo represents a chair. The image conjures associations and through its movement bamboo begets chair. The danger is not to acknowledge associations. However in an age where image bombardment is intrinsic to our culture its difficult not to let these associations overload us making us deal with them indifferently.

If the individual uses references in language to unify and validate his/her own identity, by resisting commodification and caustic smothering of that identity the individual may become more assured of his/her identity. It is better to celebrate fragmentation and the transition of identity than to succumb to the consumer/victim complex. By communicating the self image through dialogue with others and resisting this commodification a more open network of relation may come into being.

Suzi Gabilik suggests that we have lost our sense of divine of, imagination dream and vision. Too much of a scientific diet has reduced our field of communication. She claims that we have become addicted to linear rational knowledge assurance. What is missing is any form of dream body and the magical world of images. Alienation is a form of rational detachment, one of the most negative symptoms of the postmodern. Science has a tendency to banish the oddities that won't fit in a formulae to the realms of mysticism or quirkiness. That is of course until it can safely encompass them. Science strives for the attainable based on what it has achieved. It is the tale of success and progress some of the most important changes made in science have been through revision. The light bulb for example, Scientist worked endlessly to try and produce something that would burn continuously under an electric current it wasn't until Thomas Edison reworked the idea by removing the oxygen from the glass bulbs so that the element wouldn't burn due to the lack of oxygen previously no answer could be found until Edison discovered that by creating a vacuum the bulb would shine much longer. However science is also a reductive process. Through our belief in science and science being approved in the ideology we have become inactive consumers, depending only on the proven.

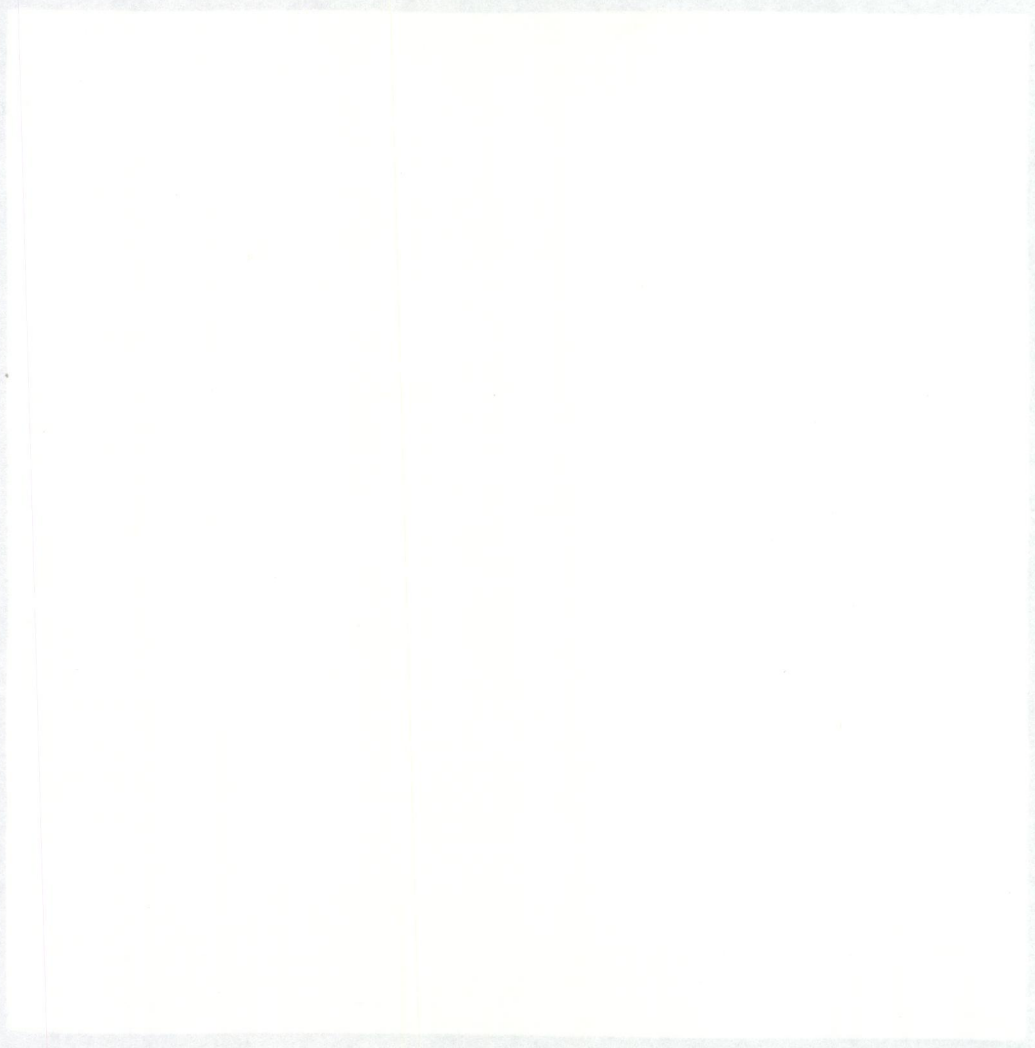
Myth and imagination are resistors to that dominance. Gabilik's interests are not too much out of context for a changed sensibility. At least to some degree our sense of the unknown should be more accepted and not dismissed cynically.



'Oblation', Francesco Clemente 1988/90, oil on canvas.

Clemente plays on the religious themes of offering eucharist once more he combines images of vulnerability and offering mixed with images of sexuality that are both confrontational and vulnerable at the same time. Using these representations Clemente invites us into both truth and fantasy.

The series 'Testa' is a meditation on spirituality, 'testa coda' means dramatic reorientation, for Huyssen he would be an artist who courageously works inspite of dogma. It is only through his risk taking and constant change that he remains vulnerable. Clemente's work is many sided it is wholely personal experience it represents the heartbeat of life.



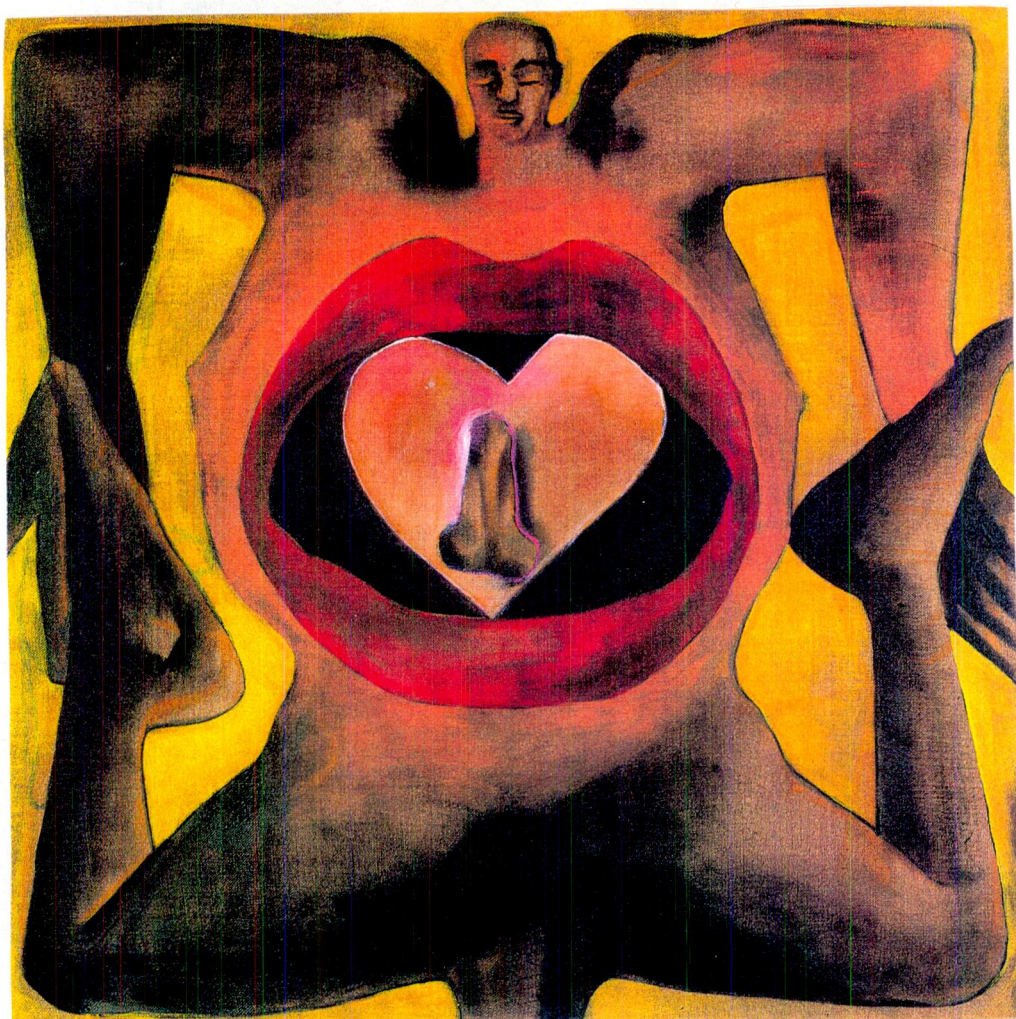
'Optimism', Francesco Clemente 1988/90, oil on canvas.
 Clemente plays on the religious theme of offering eucharist once
 more he combines images of vulnerability and offering mixed with
 images of sexuality that are both confrontational and vulnerable at
 the same time. Using these representations Clemente invites us into
 both truth and fantasy.
 The series 'Tears' is a meditation on spirituality, 'Tears, cobalt'
 means dramatic reorientation, for Duvvuri he would be an artist who
 consciously works despite of doom. It is only through his risk
 taking and constant change that he remains vulnerable. Clemente's
 work is many sided in its wholly personal experience it represents the
 heartbeat of life.

Turning now to other cultures, their interest for us is not simply on a visual level as it was for Picasso and others in the early twentieth century, the interest now lies in the roots of spirituality in such work. There is a feeling of coming to terms with the planet in a sacred way especially when ecological concerns are added to the discussion this is the way the planet was thought of in ancient tribal times. The feminine qualities of nurturing growth and empathy characterise the new emphasis. A natural rather than industrial emphasis through revisitation of the modern ways is not just a regressive plunge for Gabilik. Rather, "We are all being drawn to the multisensory phase of evolution." (Gabilik, Suzi 1991, 'The reenchantment of art' page 59) By using the word evolution again optimism is the prospect for the future.

The consumer system is quickly being outmoded by vaster realities created outside the industrial addiction race for example unless the ecological concerns of the planet are worked on, such as the ozone layer, there will be no planet around for these technological advancements to exist in. The value of art in this context can be one of healing along with its other possibilities. Art that lets go of the ego (such as Clemente's), lets go of the separate self. By not withholding some promise of perfection within the work is a way of acknowledging the present and signifying it as meaningful and worthwhile.

The heroic ego contained in modernism must leave and a system of communication/interaction rather than isolation can arrive. The artist cannot be the nomad at the fringe of society. Society cannot be at the fringe of the artist. Integration and communication will lead to active participation of art and society.

By examining the issue of dominance contained within sexual identity and also by examining the grand narrative structure and the ideology that we have created new disclosures for change would become apparent. It would be possible that our tradition and progress has been a scientific and logical one. It has been a story of negation of outmoded styles and sensibilities and a continuous search for the new. Our culture at some point has been through experiences of extreme emotion and yet we have tended more to rely on the scientific and logical. However now with the planet under threat from ecological concerns and we ourselves threatened by economic fears and emotional fears of isolation, change is necessary. This change cannot surface without action and questioning of the structure that have led to a need for changed sensibilities they are beginning to be examined through Huyssen's issues of feminism, other cultures, ecology and the end of imperialism. Questions are arising to do with political/territorial if not economic attitudes. The gulf war and the European common market are both issues that challenge the individual to active or passive acceptance. The eighties have been a period of re-evaluation that to the way beyond the negative hurdles of the progressive structure of the modernist period. Postmodernist pluralism has created a space for change and a way out of the postmodern. Investigating this space will lead to a broader, more sympathetic awareness that will let culture evolve once more. It will appeal to the sensuous and rational being. The only dilemma will be what name to give it.



'Heart', Francesco Clemente 1988/90, oil on canvas.



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