



## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

### ABOUT EVA

#### Forms and events of the feminine

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#### Introduction

We are pleased to include in this issue, dedicated to contributions on cultural delusions presented at the Tokyo Congress, the article by Professor Luigi Antonello Armando. We are delighted to publish his work here, as it clearly demonstrates the scope and variety of developments fostered by cultural psychiatry.

We hope that the participants in the Tokyo Congress will find in Luigi Antonello Armando's article a methodological framework that may assist them in gaining a deeper understanding of what we sought to accomplish during the congress.

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## The biblical myth of the origin of the human world

### 1) The "feminine" and the "masculine"

Like the language of dreams, the language of myth condenses multiple meanings into each of its terms, does not respect the principles of non-contradiction and unity of time and place, and each of its themes can have "different developments, side by side or one after the other, similar to what happens in the different variations of a musical theme" (Kerényi, 1972, p.16).

It is therefore no surprise that Genesis, after recounting that God places a woman beside a man, recounts that he places a second woman beside Adam, who is and is not the same in the sense that the first represents a real woman, while the second represents a generally human reality consisting of the 'feminine', meaning an immaterial and unconditional disposition to receive. What rational thinking sees as a contradiction makes sense if the two stories are read in light of what the text, then says about the process of differentiation between the human world and nature and the role that the two women play in it.

According to Genesis, this process begins when God first creates "male and female"<sup>3</sup> after creating nature as a set of objects on which human beings will depend. However, "male and female" are neither man nor woman but form an androgyne.<sup>4</sup> They must therefore have separated for the process to continue. A Hebrew text from the second century BC, The Alphabet of Ben Sira, gives us an idea of how the separation took place. It tells us that God placed a woman, Lilith, next to Adam, and that the two immediately began to argue: "[Adam said:] 'You will lie under me,' and she replied: 'You will lie beneath me, for we are both of equal value and we are both made from the earth,' and

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<sup>3</sup> "God said: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals, and over all the reptiles that crawl on the earth.' And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (1:26-27).

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, in several texts of Hebrew literature: "Rabbi Yeremyah ben Eleazar said: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man, He made him androgynous, as it is written, 'Male and female He created them'" [Genesis 5:2]. "Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachman said: 'When the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man, He made him with two faces'" (Briata 2019).

they did not listen to each other."<sup>5</sup> Man and woman are separated here, otherwise Lilith would not have been able to refuse to lie beneath him during sexual intercourse, and since the man did not accept her request for equality, which was the reason for her refusal, she fearlessly and rebelliously walked away from him. It must therefore have been she who brought about the separation between "male and female" necessary for the appearance of man and woman and the unfolding of the process of differentiation of the human world from nature.

However, Genesis attributes the separation to God, who "this time" proceeds to carry it out in an orderly fashion. First, he creates Adam, who is still part of nature because he is made of clay. He therefore decides to put him to sleep<sup>6</sup>, thus awakening in him the power to dream, which the stars, plants, and animals lack. But even this power is not enough: for the process of differentiation between the human world and nature to take place, it is necessary for that power to be expressed in giving form to a dream, for Adam to dream of Eve, in whose image a reality underlying that of Lilith as a rebellious woman is made explicit.<sup>7</sup>

Eve is therefore first and foremost a dream image, a 'visible' reality with defined yet evanescent contours, which nevertheless underlies and represents an immaterial and supersensible reality in that it eludes the senses and the intellect. In a myth from classical

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<sup>5</sup> *Ben Sira's alphabet*, which echoes the biblical account of the creation of man and woman, is published and annotated in De Piccolo, *L'Alfabeto di Ben-Sira*. Translation and history of the text.

<sup>6</sup> "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone: I will make him a helper suitable for him.' So, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he fell asleep; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. The Lord God formed a woman from the rib He had taken from the man and brought her to the man. Now both of them were naked, the man and his wife, and they felt no shame" (2:18, 25).

<sup>7</sup> John Milton had Adam recount the fateful moment of his encounter with Eve in a dream: "[God] closed mine eyes, but open left the cell of fancy, my internal sight, by which abstract as in a trance I saw (...) a creature similar to man, but different sex, so lovely fair that what seemed fair in all the world seemed now mean, or in her summed up, in her contained and in her looks, which from that time infused sweetness into my hearth, and left me dark; I waked to find her, or for ever to deplore her loss, and other pleasures all abjure; when, out of hope, behold her, not far off, such I saw I saw her in my dream, adorned with what all earth or heaven or earth could bestow to make her amiable" (Milton 447-449).

antiquity, the dream image of another woman, Creusa, gradually loses its contours until it vanishes. However, she is not overcome by 'darkness', but by the immaterial disposition, underlying in her and activated by her in those who dreamt of her, to receive the manifestations of the otherness. She is overcome by the same disposition that the dreamlike image of Eve activates in Adam, shaking him from the inertia of not being, of being only matter, and awakening him from his sleep.

Establishing what is meant by this disposition, that is by the "feminine", represented by real women, encounters difficulties posed by the tendency to confuse it with one of the positive or negative qualities usually attributed to real women and by the rational need to trace it back to a cause. Once these difficulties have been overcome, it presents itself as a pure, unlimited space open within the inner world of men and women, in which those who enter can lose themselves and that very disposition can vanish.

However, this fear can be overcome if we recognize that within men and women there is also a generally human reality consisting of the "masculine," meaning an immaterial and unconditional disposition to act represented by real men. This, in fact, sets a limit to that space and finds in turn in the disposition to reach a limit without which it would be lost in the tendency to prevail. It follows that both dispositions become historically significant only in their mutual relationship.<sup>8</sup>

## **2) The synergy of 'feminine' and 'masculine'**

This relationship should not be thought of in terms of coexistence, but rather as a synergy from which every action proceeds that gives human beings the certainty of their existence and confidence in the continuity of their world.

Two texts show that the existence of this synergy in human reality is known to culture and help us understand its nature.

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<sup>8</sup> As Elvio Fachinelli (1989, pp. 21-22) rightly understood: "The feminine would then be at the heart, the heart, of many different experiences. When becoming shamans, it is said that men change sex. This highlights the depth of the necessary change. However, the feminine as a receptive attitude does not abolish the masculine but proposes a parallel change. The masculine is then outlined as a patient, laborious, sometimes almost blind operation that precedes and follows the creative act (...). Rhythmic alternation of the masculine and the feminine."

The first, *The Song of Songs*, belongs to the biblical tradition. The timelessness, and therefore the simultaneity, of the events of the myth allow us to find Adam again in the guise of another man, Solomon, and Eve in the guise of another woman, Sulimane. Now, however, the two are united in a shared dream because not only the man, but also the woman dreams. By dreaming of her, he activates his disposition to receive that she represents him; by dreaming of him, she activates her disposition to act that he represents her. The figure of the androgyne is thus resolved in the synergy of these two dispositions, one 'feminine' and the other 'virile', which men and women have within themselves and which each represents by activating it in the other. This synergy arouses in them a feeling that Solomon and Sulimane refer to with the word 'beauty' and experience as if it were a quality of the other.<sup>9</sup> It is the feeling of an intimate harmony through which men and women perceive their own being as an absolute reality, that is, free from divisions and not determined by belonging to a lineage, a race, or the performance of a role. It animates them with the reciprocity of a desire that seeks satisfaction in acts, each of which renews the origin of the human world and sustains its continuity.

The second text belongs to the Christian tradition. In Dante's *Comedy*, we encounter these verses: "Virgin Mother, daughter of your son, humble and high above all creatures, / fixed term of the eternal council, / you are she who ennobled human nature so much / that its creator did not disdain to become your creature."

As the "fixed term of every eternal counsel," Mary, the new Eve, firmly and continuously represents that disposition to receive which marks the appearance of humanity in nature ("you are the one who ennobled human nature") and constitutes an element of every decision capable of ensuring its duration over time. Being "virgin" and "higher than any creature," she does not presuppose any creator, cannot be traced back to any cause, and that appearance originates from her. However, the fact that she is the daughter of her son alludes to two human dispositions, "virile and feminine," one to act

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<sup>9</sup> Solomon: "How beautiful you are, my friend, how beautiful you are!" (I, 15), "most beautiful among women" (I, 8). Sulimane: "How beautiful you are, my friend, how lovable you are!" (I, 16). In the passage quoted, Milton describes their feelings with the word "sweetness."

and the other to receive, each included in the other, from whose synergy springs every decision that goes in the direction of ensuring the duration of "human nature" over time.

If The Song of Songs says that this duration depends on human beings keeping alive the feeling of harmony, Dante's verses say that it depends on them keeping alive those two dispositions whose synergy is the source of that feeling.

It follows that those beings can abandon the certainty that an uncreated entity guarantees them eternal life in a world without time and without history. It also follows that the responsibility for the indefinite duration of the world in which they live falls on them and that therefore such duration appears precarious to them.

### **3) Separating, confusing, deluding**

In ancient Greek myths, the unknown inhabitants of the peasant world sung about by Hesiod and the heroes of Sophocles' and Euripides' tragedies take responsibility for ensuring the continuity of their world, the former through their works, the latter through intentions and actions that remove them from the determination of fate. The biblical myth proceeds differently: it does not merely posit the will of an uncreated entity as a guarantee of the human world's durability but attributes its precariousness to the workings of an Enemy.

The figure of the Enemy as an angel rebelling against the will of the one God dissolves and articulates itself in its identification with realities consisting of ethnic groups and myths different from those of the chosen people, an unpredictable future, a nature experienced as hostile, and everything that undermines faith in that God. However, the identification of the Enemy with these realities presupposes the suppression of the disposition to receive aspects of them that would not allow it.

However, this disposition is a "person" of the secular Trinity<sup>10</sup>, which *The Song of Songs* allows us to recognize, consisting of herself, her disposition to act, and the feeling of intimate harmony that springs from the synergy of the two. In order to suppress it, mythical thinking acts as rational thinking does: it separates it from the Trinity,

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<sup>10</sup> I take this expression, modifying it, from Feuerbach, who wrote of a "divine trinity," divine in that it constitutes the essence of human beings, as "unity of thought, will, and love" (1841, p. 180).

translating the simultaneous coexistence of the three "persons" of the Trinity into a temporal succession at the beginning of which it places the disposition to receive. It thus comes to identifying the Enemy no longer in this or that reality, but in this disposition.

However, it is an invisible reality that cannot be grasped by the senses. To suppress it, mythical thinking confuses it with the prefiguration of the real woman whom Adam finds beside him when he wakes up, thus giving the Enemy the face of the real woman. We are here in the presence of the phenomenon, known to psychiatry, of delusional perception. It consists in attributing a definite meaning to something indefinite or attributing a surplus of meanings to a given reality: in the first case, the disposition to receive, the 'feminine', becomes the real woman; in the second, the real woman becomes a sinner, a witch, a snake. When this phenomenon occurs in an individual, its abnormality is recognizable and can provoke a reaction of rejection in the members of the community to which that individual belongs. But when all members of a community participate in it, which in this case is that of the believers in the myth, their belonging to the delusion becomes unrecognizable, and for men, hating woman for hallucinating the Enemy in her becomes normal and part of a cultural obligation.

#### **4) Hatred towards the "feminine"**

Many reasons contribute to arousing man's hatred. The fact that she, in the form of Lilith, deprived him of the omnipotence he enjoyed when he was with her back-to-back and she could not therefore activate in him the disposition to receive. The fact that she evoked in him the terror of losing himself outside of space and time if he had abandoned himself to this disposition and that he would have felt empty if she had made him miss her by taking away her presence. The fact that he would have felt his sexual identity compromised if, in order not to lose her, he had identified with her and confused this disposition with his physical reality.

However, man's hatred of the "feminine" could not have the effect of suppressing it if the woman herself did not establish a perverse alliance with him.

After a long period of time, which in myth is equivalent to an instant, the story of Adam and Eve unfolds in that of Abraham and his wife Sarah.<sup>11</sup> Adam reappears in the guise of Abraham, burdened by his inability to father children, which he attributes to Sarah's advanced age. However, Sarah has Hagar, who, being her slave, a foreigner, represents her reality, different from that of a real woman, consisting of a disposition to receive and capable of welcoming Abraham's 'seed'; and the myth tells that Sarah gives her to Abraham so that he may impregnate her with his disposition to act.

However, it also recounts that Sarah then asked Abraham to send Hagar away<sup>12</sup>, thus expressing her hatred for her own disposition to receive, represented by Hagar, and that Abraham accepted Sarah's request, sending Hagar into the desert together with the son she had borne him. Between Abraham and Sarah, between man and woman, an alliance is thus established, made perverse by their common intention to suppress the disposition to receive and the Trinity contained within it, consisting of herself, the disposition to act, and the feeling of beauty that springs from their synergy. It is as if the initial androgyny were reestablished in a new form: if, before the differentiation of the human world from nature, "male" and "female" were paralyzed by standing back-to-back and not existing as man and woman, now they are paralyzed by having entered into this perverse alliance. In fact, it leads each of them to lose the notion of the other's existence and transfers them into a world of shared delusion in which each can consider themselves free to love only themselves and enjoy a presumption of omnipotence.

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<sup>11</sup> "Sarah, Abram's wife, had borne him no children, but she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar. Sarah said to Abram, 'Behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children; please go in to my slave; perhaps I shall obtain children through her. And Abram listened to Sarai's voice. So, Sarah, Abram's wife, took her Egyptian slave Hagar, ten years after she had been living in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram, her husband, as his wife. He went into Hagar, and she became pregnant" (*Genesis*, XVI, 1-4). What happens between Abram, Sarah, and Hagar is echoed in what happens between Jacob, his two wives Rachel and Leah, and their maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah. (*Genesis* XXX, 1-13).

<sup>12</sup> "(...) when [Hagar] realized she was pregnant; her mistress no longer mattered to her. So, Sarai said to Abram, 'My wrong is on you! I put my slave in your bed, but since she realized she was pregnant, I no longer matter to her. May the Lord judge between you and me!' Abram said to Sarai, 'Your slave girl is in your power; do with her whatever you think best.' So, Sarai mistreated her, and she ran away from her presence" (*Genesis*, XVI, 4-6).

However, neither of them takes responsibility for the intention to suppress that disposition. The woman blames the man for suppressing it in her by imposing his dominion on her; the man lets God pronounce the woman's condemnation to be dominated by him, as if it were not he, but an uncreated entity he fantasized about, who wanted to love only himself. There is no longer synergy or harmony, but conflict, a futile struggle between 'male' and 'female' in the impossibility of separating to become man and woman.

## **Myth and history**

### **1) Historical forms of hatred towards the feminine**

The mythical tale collects and projects outside of time the depiction of experiences that appear possible to a group of human beings in given moments and circumstances. Made transcendent in this way, this depiction permeates their mentality, as if it were an influential machine, determining the actualization of those experiences in history. Just as the script of a play uses actors to actualize its content on the stage of a theater, so that tale uses real men and women to actualize on the stage of history the experiences they themselves have handed down to myth.

The hatred of the man of myth towards the disposition to receive is actualized in history by turning against the real woman who represents it. This hatred can remain contained in the secret of the man's delusional imagination or unfold in elementary verbal statements, theoretical constructions, and violent acts, which together contribute to the galaxy of forms of femicide, of which the killing of the real woman is only the most extreme.

The analogous hatred of the woman in the myth is actualized in history in forms acted out by real women. This happens when she assumes the passive role assigned to her by the myth and confines her identity to being a wife and mother; when she rebels like Lilith against this role becoming a maenad, witch, enchantress, femme fatale, or taking on the blame for the wounds of Christ and dedicating herself to healing them; when she identifies her disposition to receive and her identity with her own body or aspires to assume a masculine one; when she tends to suppress that disposition in men or children by imprisoning them in a love that hides an absence. The real woman can also actualize

this hatred by turning it against her own body and letting it waste away until it dies of anorexia, or by inducing the man to kill her, or by committing suicide.

The hatred that unites the man and woman of the myth is also actualized in history. It may happen that, just as when the waters recede from their bed, only the dry and stony bottom of a river remains visible, so, having suppressed the disposition to receive, real men and women find themselves in the desert of their mute anatomy, hating each other because each blames the other for having led them into that desert.

## **2) A pause in the history of hatred**

The hatred of the mythical man and woman towards the disposition to receive would have been without object and therefore could not have been actualized in history if that disposition had not also been actualized.<sup>13</sup>

In the first millennium of the Christian era, it has been actualized in the feelings of real women who recognized themselves in the image, albeit angelic, of the New Eve, or exaggerated it to the point of offering themselves to someone who existed only in their imagination, made boundless by their lack of relationship with real men. Starting in the 13th century, it became a reality for real women, both unknown and well-known, who began to emancipate themselves from anonymity and domesticity, sang of 'courtly love' and inspired poets to sing of it (Mercuri, 2024).

In that first millennium, it also became a reality in the minds of the masters of Romanesque and Byzantine art, enough for them to represent it in images of women, albeit immobile and sacralized. Then, starting in the 13th century, it became so present in the minds of painters that they came to represent it through the free movement and smiles of their images of women, as well as in poets who recognized it as their inner reality in a crescendo that reached its peak in the transition from the 15th to the 16th century.

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<sup>13</sup> This includes the possibility of resolving the metaphysical and existential dilemma between believing that evil precedes good and is its condition, or that good precedes evil and that this is due to the forgetfulness of good.

One author has described better than I could what a woman, Lucrezia Donati, represented to Lorenzo de' Medici between 1470 and 1480:

"She was the name that embodied all the magical arts and heroic intentions of man. He had met her in his youth (...) and his powers had been immediately enhanced. Meeting her had given him a magical way of seeing and acting. Her image was imprinted on his imagination, like a figure that remains fixed in a mirror, no matter which way the mirror is turned. In this way, she shaped his actions and heightened his sensitivity (...). From that moment on, she was for him a prophecy of extraordinary deeds" (Welliver, 1957, p. 28).

Another author, Salman Rushdie (2008), brought together in the figure of Qara Köz, a woman who came to Florence from the East, the figures of the women who animated the city around the end of the 15th century: not only Lucrezia Donati, but also Simonetta Cattaneo, whose reality Botticelli translated into the image of Lucrezio's Venus, and Barbera Salutati, who charmed Machiavelli with her personality and her singing, inspiring him to venture along "untrodden paths." Rushdie said, better than I could, what that woman from the East represented for an entire city:

"Many who saw her walking through the streets claimed to have heard the crystalline music of the spheres playing around her. Others swore they noticed a halo of light around her head so bright that it was visible even in the scorching glare of the day (...). In short, Qara Köz without her veil—in the guise of Angelica—had reached the fullness of her feminine powers and was using them sparingly on the city, clouding the air with a benevolent mist that filled the minds of the Florentines with images and paternal, maternal, filial, carnal, and divine love (...). Subtle scents of reconciliation and harmony filled the air' (Rushdie, 2009, p. 286).<sup>14</sup>

The synergy between the dispositions to receive and to act that animates Sulimane and Solomon with the feeling of harmony was thus actualized in history, finding the

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<sup>14</sup> Rushdie thus establishes a connection between what happened in Florence between the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century and a moment in the history of the Islamic East: if Lorenzo draws on the mirror of his beloved to shape his actions, the Mughal ruler, Akbar the Great, also draws on the mirror of his woman (Rushdie 2008, pp. 32 ff.).

necessary condition for this in the embodiment of these dispositions in real women and men. Thus appeared the idea of a bisexuality that was no longer that of the androgyne because it was now due to the coexistence of 'feminine' and 'masculine' in each of two different bodily realities. The possibility arose of living a sexuality without sin and of achieving the equality between man and woman in sexual relations demanded by Lilith and based on their constraint to depend on each other despite their separateness.

This synergy was also realized in history in the project of a society based on the shared feeling of harmony that springs from it, no longer activated only by its reflection in the quality of beauty attributed by man to woman and by woman to man<sup>15</sup>, but also by works of art inspired by that feeling. This project is based on a vision of history no longer as a cyclical return of things that are always the same, of the same world after every flood, but as progress through the stumbling blocks of Fortune towards the realization of a good consisting of the initial disposition of human beings to recognize each other as equals in a relationship of mutual dependence.

Because of this dual actualization of the synergy between the two dispositions, something "new and special happened to the human spirit" (Welliver, 1957, p. 41) in New Athens<sup>16</sup> between the second half of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The mentality of femicide was overcome because the cohesion of society and the duration of the human world were no longer entrusted to the subjugation of women, seen as their enemies, but to that synergy and the feeling that springs from it.

Furthermore, the mature awareness that the cohesion of society and the duration of the human world were guaranteed only by the permanence of that synergy and that feeling

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<sup>15</sup> And from the reflection of that quality in nature: 'With thee conversing I forget all time, all seasons and their change, alle please alike. Sweet the breath of morn, her rising sweet, with cherme of the earliest birds, pleasant the sun when first on this delightful land he spreads his orient bearns, on herb, tree, fruit, and flow'r' (Milton, 227-229).

<sup>16</sup> "Athens," said Landino, "was so named from the Greek 'anthos', flower, just as Florence seemed to derive from the Latin 'florens', meaning flourishing" (Welliver, p. 42).

led human beings to take on not the responsibility of making society and the world eternal, but of not bringing about their own ruin.

Other tales of the origin of the human world helped to consolidate this awareness. If, according to Genesis, that world originated in the omnipotent will of a being without origin, other myths drawn from the culture of the ancient Greeks found again in New Athens came to tell of its origin from a woman born from the sea<sup>17</sup>, from the founding of that city<sup>18</sup>, from a goodness of human beings consisting in an innate disponibility to recognize each other as human. Through Lucretius, Epicurus' voice came to oppose the biblical myth of creation, reminding us that "nothing ever comes from nothing by divine decree" (Lucretius, I BC).

### 3) The return of hatred

Darkness soon fell on that moment in Florence's history. The victory of New Athens over Jerusalem was immediately overshadowed by the double assault suffered by the city. From the outside, because it was caught in the grip of the great nations that at the end of the 16th century were fighting for dominion over a world undergoing "changes" that went beyond "all human conjecture" (Machiavelli, 1513, XXV), but even more so from within. The images of Botticelli's Venus and Donatello's David that stood out in the city were not enough to protect it, nor was the idea of a virtue opposed to power and based on the synergy of respect and impetus (ibid.). Fifteen hundred years of domination by the Jewish myth in its Christian version had in fact conditioned the minds of the women and men of Western Europe to consider what had been achieved in that momentary victory as an extreme threat to a coexistence governed by the dictates of the God of Genesis and to the duration of the world he had created.

Under this double assault, even those who had been among the greatest architects of the overcoming of the myth fell into despair and nostalgia (Welliver, 1957, pp. 258-260),

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<sup>17</sup> Mother of the Aeneids, delight of men and gods, / soul of Venus, who under the wandering stars of the sky / populates the sea plowed by ships and the earth fertile / with fruits, since through you every living species is formed, / and once blossomed can see the light of the sun" (Lucretius vv. 1-4).

<sup>18</sup> A myth taken up by Machiavelli told of Florence's descent from the Etruscan people, with whom the human world originated, cf. my 2020 essay.

falling back on the certainties of the myth and re-proposing it in its entirety by frescoing two sacred places in Orvieto and Rome. Together with them and after them, an army of Cherubini<sup>19</sup> took to the field to restore and strengthen its authority. Theologians from opposing factions agreed to revive the hatred that the man of myth harbors towards the availability to receive and to turn it against real women, hallucinating in them the witch who threatened their authority and the order of creation. Philosophers added another fault to those attributed to women by the mythical man: the fault of disturbing them in the exercise of reason, on which some based their certainty to exist and the continuity of their world, while others based their justification of faith in the existence of an uncreated entity and its promise of eternal life. Doctors diagnosed her with a predisposition to hysteria as a source of individual and social instability.

Hatred of the disposition to receive is renewed and revived in real women when, having extinguished it in themselves because they had to accept submission to men and confine themselves to domesticity, they turn to extinguish it in others. In this way, they intend to consummate their revenge for having been abused and to establish equality with men based on being together in the nothingness of never having been born.

This composite and shared hatred breaks the synergy of the two dispositions and nullifies the possibility of living a sinless sexuality. The idea of equality between men and women in sexual relations vanishes, and with it the project of a society of equals whose cohesion and duration are entrusted to the continuity of the feeling of beauty that springs from that synergy. There is no longer any notion of an original disposition of human beings to recognize each other as such. Cohesion and duration are once again entrusted to divine providence or to a contractuality whose continuous search for compromises between different forms of selfishness is undermined by the persistence of a mentality accustomed by myth to believe that human nature is burdened by an evil introduced by women. Or they are entrusted to the will to power of someone who feels invested by the biblical and Christian God with the task of suppressing the disposition to receive that makes otherness visible and legitimizes its existence.

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<sup>19</sup> "[God] drove out man and placed the Cherubim and the flaming sword east of the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life" (*Genesis*, III, 22-24).

The Enemy is now identified not only in women or in those othernesses, but also in the feeling of harmony ignited by the synergy of the two dispositions, in a nature that is no longer spiritualized and, in an art, where that feeling is reflected and reflects it. Nature is enslaved to consumption, and energy is drawn from it that can destroy it. Art is disciplined (Forcellino, 2008), preventing it from reflecting and evoking the feeling of harmony, and works that escape this impediment are imprisoned in categories that render it unrecognizable<sup>20</sup> and enslaved to decorum or consumption, when not debased, damaged, or destroyed. The vision of history as a “tool for constructing the present” disappears, leading to “a crisis of memory” (Capogrossi Colognesi, 2024, p. 47).

A decisive factor in this disappearance and crisis stems from the Lutheran version of the biblical myth as accepted by those Cherubini who, in the 17th century, constructed “the myth of a civilization born without sin, based on detachment from old Europe, and of an immaculate hegemonic power above the miseries of history [generating and spreading] the illusion of being able to live a meta-historical, if not ahistorical, life” (op. cit., p. 48), even to the point of moving to another planet (De Ruvo, 2024; Armando, 2025) like the life that, according to the myth, awaits human beings in the eternity of Paradise.

The loss of synergy between the two dispositions in each of two different bodily realities means that bisexuality is no longer conceived as their coexistence in those realities, but in anatomical terms as the coexistence of male and female sexual organs in men and women. Consequently, the minority of the latter is no longer thought of as resulting from a redeemable sin, a fault that can be atoned for, or an illness that can be cured. Instead, it is thought to result from a biological fact, namely the malformation of the penis, whose immutability would arouse in her a devastating envy for the community (Freud, 1937), so much so that it led a philosopher to declare that women “must disappear, otherwise there is no possibility of establishing the kingdom of God on earth” (Weininger, 1903, p. 327).

It also follows that the minority of woman implies that of man. His presumption of being able to dominate her, not by divine decree, but because he has “more,” is shipwrecked

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<sup>20</sup> Freud's 1910 essay on Leonardo is emblematic of this imprisonment.

in the sense of minority that derives from the biological fact that he does not have a vagina, which has become for him the fetish of a disposition to receive that he has lost.

The perverse alliance that the mythical man and woman had established by directing their hatred against that disposition can thus be actualized in history in the shared project of real men and women to free themselves from the aforementioned minorities by denying the difference between the sexes and making that difference a matter of opinion (Butler, 1990). But also, when this is not enough, by equipping one with a vagina and the other with a penis and claiming the right to have children without being either man or woman (Giacobbi, 2019).

The biblical figure of the androgyne is thus actualized in history in a form unknown to myth. It splits in two: it is not made up of a 'male' and a 'female' placed back-to-back, but of a man who is no longer a man but an androgyne and a woman who is no longer a woman but an androgyne. The condition that existed before the appearance of the human world returns to a radical form. It seems that, in order to oppose its impending end, human beings have no choice but to restore the authority of myth and have faith in God.

### **Noah's Ark**

The theme of the threat that woman poses to God's omnipotence introduces in Genesis the story of God's decision to end the world with a flood.<sup>21</sup> However, he provides all humanity with the possibility of a new beginning by ordering Noah to build an ark in which to take refuge during the flood, bringing with him "male and female."<sup>22</sup>

Noah's ark is actualized in history in the supersensible reality of a mentality that does not accommodate males and females, but men and women.

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<sup>21</sup> "When men began to multiply on earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took wives for themselves as they chose. Then the Lord (...) saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every design conceived by their hearts was nothing but evil. And the Lord repented that he had made man on the earth, and he was grieved in his heart. The Lord said, 'I will destroy from the earth the man I have created'" (*Genesis 6:1*).

<sup>22</sup> "So every being that was on the earth was destroyed: men, domestic animals, reptiles, and birds of the sky; they were destroyed from the earth, and only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained (...) male and female of every flesh" (*Genesis 7:15-23*).

The air they breathe is made up of sounds, words, colors, movements, and smiles of women, shapes that dissolve into other shapes, keeping alive the willingness to perceive. It rises from works of art free from the slavery of myth that appeared in New Athens, from the aesthetic qualities of the works themselves that re-proposed it, from countless others from the past and present, from nature as long as it remains uncontaminated, from dreams as long as they bring to life realities that lie beyond the horizon defined by myth and reason.

The water that sustains it is that of Heraclitus' river, which renews its waves at every moment. It is the water of Thales, without bottom or boundaries, like the infinity of Anaximander, in which Democritus' atoms compose and decompose themselves in a free, continuous flow.

Its staves are made of the wood of a reason that has become aware of the fact that thinking about a cause of the origin of the world means losing oneself in having to think about a cause of that cause, that imagining a creator God means having to imagine a God who created him.<sup>23</sup> A reason that avoids wrapping itself up in itself to the extent that it finds a brake in the actualization in history of the synergistic unity of dispositions to receive and act, of conscious and dreamlike thought, of intellect and imagination. To the extent that, nourished by this unity, it manages to unearth the feeling of harmony called beauty from conceptual, ethical, or taste determinations and reveal it in its "universal communicability" as the "deeply hidden and common foundation" of the "harmony" of all human beings (Kant, 1790, pp. 135-137).

Those staves are also made of the wood of a vision of history that leads back to the memory of gods sacrificed on the altar of the one God, myths that told of an origin of the human world unburdened by evil or of its origin from the union of a god and a goddess. It brings to mind the thoughts of the early philosophers, the voices of a new

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<sup>23</sup> "How, then, can we be satisfied with the cause of that Being whom you supposed to be the author of nature, or with the cause of the ideal world to which you trace the material world? Do we not have the same reason to trace this ideal world to another ideal world, that is, to a new intelligent principle? But if we stop here and do not continue our search for causes any further, why did we ever come this far? How can we be satisfied without proceeding *ad infinitum* in our search? And, after all, what satisfaction is there in this infinite progression?" (Hume, 1759-1751, p. 59).

culture which, grafted onto an ancient culture, flooded the West with the “hidden and common” feeling of harmony.

The fact that this ark also contains the memory, handed down and enriched by numerous works, of a culture that for a short time resolved the confusion between the real woman and what she represents, allows us to think that it is always possible to leave behind the world without history of the biblical myth and participate in a history guided by the presence of the secular Trinity that ignites the feeling of harmony.

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