

A Fatherless New Media Testament

"Honor your father and honor your mother" is one of the foremost predicaments of the Old Testament. "Get ready to abandon your father and mother to follow your intuition" seems instead to say the New Testament. It is a rather strong dualism which might let many dueling over whether remaining within the old tradition or, if they find the inspiration and courage, explore the potential of the new. It was not a matter of inspiration and courage that led many avantgardes forward, in certain cases, as we are now going to venture into looking, it is really the circumstance which allows the "pioneering" of a new potential, a new language and the full exploration of a tradition to come. It is here the case of Russia right after the October revolution in the 1920s. The old tradition, so much connected to the previous establishment had to emigrate, else it was wiped out. In this state of tabula rasa, a new creative power took place, a power fully exploring the potential of the new technology then, cameras and other devices which for decades, and mostly in Europe, have been linked to the enslavement of old art forms.

In a Futuristic fashion then, one can see the positive effects in culture on "rinsing out" older forms, this, alas, through violence. We cannot but admit that works like "Battleship Potemkin" and "Man with a Movie Camera", thanks for this cleansing of old traditions, are in the forefront of exploring the actual potential language of the media which were new at that time. One may argue here that the whole issue of "remediation", where old forms takes a new value in new forms is just in fact a matter of laziness of an audience that does not wish to update itself to a new language, a more technical yet fascinating one. It is in this case emblematic to point out that, while old forms are preserved by an old and passive establishment who is in fact in power, the new forms, the New Testaments, only take more and more place as rather the work of active practitioners who ought to sacrifice themselves through their practice in order to bring forward the new language implicit of a new media (can we think this of Jesus Christ?).

The issue remains however the following: is the old tradition necessary for the emergence of the second? The answer is yes but not as academics would expect it. On the contrary, and also thinking about Dziga Vertov's (the author of "Man with a Movie Camera") irritation to theater and literature, on the contrary, old traditions and canons are only necessary to provoke the irritation of the young minds; as was also the case of the Russian Itinerants, and urge of getting out of the fiction of mainly utilizing new media as an extension of the old. In this respect, every new media paradigm occurs and

one may in fact come to think that the fathers of older media forms are obsolete. However now we come into a new paradigm, an era, that of the digital which for many can be considered new but in reality may be considered only as an era in which all other eras and media forms become possible. Digital media provides in fact possibility for all other older media forms and in this respect the New Testament can be conceived as a patch of Old ones which keeps coming back... in this respect the active practitioner exploring digital media can be fatherless, have one father or just have a multitude of fathers, whether natural or acquired. Then now it is the case of Jesus with zero to one, to many Fathers, carrying many a crosses up a hill from many a different sides, or carrying only one as tradition would suggest him, or carrying none, or just rehearsing it all together.

Notice here also that at least for the ancients, a father was to be honored only if he would transmit his practice to his offspring. In this respect the offspring of the digital age is asked to master many a taxonomies. Learn the craft of their fathers while mastering the ever increasing capacity of the digital medium which is nothing but a more efficient way to organize and share such a craft, like a hub of many a dialectics. At this end, the most interesting phenomena might only remain the reverberation left out of all these dialectical clashes, what is ultimately worth to recollect in the little intervals of tranquility emerging from such an apparently chaotic mist.