

Arts, Linguistics, Literature and Language Research Journal

AN INTERSUBJECTIVE EMPATHY FOR THE CREATIVE FREEDOM OF JORGE MARTINS' DRAWINGS

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Abstract: Based on a conceptual approach to drawing, it will be explained how the search for objective and subjective intelligibility, through poetic expression, can guide us towards artistic empathy. Based on the artistic drawings of Jorge Martins, in a meta-reflection on the relationship between artists, supported by a conceptual essay, it will be clarified how artistic empathy can expand subliminal (self) knowledge and how it can contribute to the liberation of the creative process, making it more meaningful, comprehensive and profound.

Keywords: Design, intersubjectivity, intrasubjectivity, empathy, freedom.

INTRODUCTION

Jorge Martins (1944) dedicated himself to painting and also, particularly, to drawing. In this area of expression, his exhibitions at the Marco de Vigo Museum, the Badajoz MEICA Museum, the Serralves Museum, the Carmona e Costa Foundation and the Pompidou Museum stand out.

Taking JM's artistic practice as a reference, this approach will be a meta-reflection, adopting the premise that artistic empathy between artists requires, at the individual level, an *intra-subjectivity* in the relations "objectivity of the conscious self - subjectivity of the unconscious self" and, at the level of sharing, an *intersubjectivity* in the relations "subjectivity of the self – subjectivity of the other."

Regarding the present field of analysis, it will be taken into account that, in the first person, the exploration of links (more or less tacit) between form, content (reflection of the author's thinking) and the process (creation phenomenon). We will also assume that the creative process embodies, subjectively, realities that were previously divergent in their objectivity. Since this approximation happens through sensitivity, in such a way

that previously disconnected contents are (re) connected by deep subliminal affinities and according to the action-thought stimulus of creativity.

The artistic process of drawing is characterized, in particular, by allowing the potential for the sensitive exploration of shapes and, inherently, a different knowledge about them. Moreover, it will be a process (of knowledge) where relationships are established between the interiority of the content, the process of its exteriorization and the resulting form. Furthermore, the design goes beyond the rational character intelligibility with which objective characteristics are differentiated from what appears to be concrete. More than making the physical identity of the perceptible recognizable and more than allowing a reading of formal thought, artistic design contributes to the consubstantiation of sensitive informality in a way that indicates polysemic thinking; it allows for the finding of a latent, albeit unspeakable, meaning associated with what was previously innocuous; it allows, with this, to create a symbolic and subliminal bridge between realities separated by the literal meaning; in a word, it creates a sensible intelligibility. It must be noted that the possible intelligibility, if understood in its subliminal, symbolic and metaphorical condition, is contextualized, as mentioned, in a subjective field, of intrasubjectivity and intersubjectivity, therefore, exceeding the need for objective recognition of the form.

Thus, with the sensitive expression that is immanent to art, drawing raises subjective experiences that seek a deeper knowledge of the self(s), which takes place at a tacit level, that is, on a subconscious and subjective, which dispenses with rational elaboration. We can evoke Davidson's idea (2003: 90) that private thoughts are the property of a subject who knows that he has them in a certain way, but which other subjects are unaware of;

however, it must be added, these subjectivities may no longer have that private quality when they materialize in a representation that makes them perceptible and interpretable, but not literally explainable.

With these premises, the meta-reflection that is presented intends to show why and how the *intersubjective relationship* between artists is experienced. That is, we will seek to deepen, in a comprehensive sense, under what circumstances *artistic empathy is provided* and how we can justify the reason why we, artists, are influenced by other artists, to the point of reorienting our artistic projects., in a sense, through what is commonly called inspiration. Not forgetting that this reflection, although extrapolable to painting, had as the starting point the *drawings* of Jorge Martins, and was influenced by the sensitization they aroused.

THE CONTEXT OF INTRASUBJECTIVITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In the search for a certain (self) awareness, the drawing, in a first phase, is elaborated in an intimate context, of *intra -subjectivity*, in which one travels through a space confined to the interiority of the author, although, in a dialogue with what is exteriorized in the creative process. When this phenomenon happens, the experience ceases to have this restricted character, passing from the phenomenon of intra-relationship I-I to an open phenomenon, of intersubjectivity and of interrelation with the other, that is, “I – other-I”” These two types of relationship are fruitful when in complementarity. In these circumstances, a different look is provided not only between artists, but also from the artist on himself.

In the individual experience, in the creative process, the path through the unknown - in the informal space of the unconscious, because it is devoid of forms and because it is

occupied only by chaotic energies or hidden memories - is, in a first phase, an experience of intuitive (self) knowledge in the infrastructure. -I-I intrasubjective level. In other words, the drawing begins by providing an introspective knowledge through navigating through the spaces (known and unknown) of the author's interiority. From the base of intra-subjectivity, it facilitates the development of an empathy for their own creations and, later, they will eventually arouse the empathy of other artist(s).

Regarding this situation of creation, the idea that triggers the drawing, rather than pre-existing pre-defined, can only be glimpsed with willingness and motivation to germinate. The idea, when it appears in the representation, will give rise to an objectification of the subjectivity experienced by the author in the face of the conscious-unconscious and objective-subjective systemic dialectics. It is these dynamics that cause the author to (re)formulate the awareness of his identity through the creative process. In fact, the artist will have the expectation of converging more towards his individuation through art. But, it will be with the addition of the intersection with other identities (from other authors) that awareness of oneself and of the world can become broader.

Thus, the orientation towards individuation requires, along with intra-subjectivity, the experience of *intersubjectivity*, that is, a relationship between the subjectivities of the authors, which supposes “to encompass this field ‘between two’ where the subject, without ceasing to be, produces and produces itself as another through the action of the relationship precisely with the other” (Goldestein, *in* : Fiorini, 2004: 95). Intersubjectivity describes a subjective-objective-subjective interrelation that consists of a possibility of communication in which “the meaning of an individual's experience, as a subject, is shared

by other individuals” (Antunes et al., 2000: 91) and with others. that we shorten the space between subjectivities. In a broad sense, with intersubjectivity, new knowledge is provided, insofar as “one will know after producing oneself in doing with the other, a knowledge different from the knowledge instituted as prior” (Goldestein, *in*: Fiorini, 2004: 95). It must be noted, however, that this experience, in terms of artistic empathy, does not require that the latent contents of the representations become manifest/objective in order to establish an understanding of an artistic drawing. The artistic quality goes beyond this objectification.

Art brings subjects together when it creates the *freedom* to search and choose subjective paths beyond objective literality. With artistic empathy, artists experience interior spaces as they intersect and unite with each other. The result will be greater creative potential, in which the artist’s internal space is freed and expanded. In other words, we would say that when a representation arouses artistic empathy, an objective-subjective symbiosis is created, undoing rational blocks and, thus, bringing us closer to others and to ourselves, expanding the inner space of sensitivity.

The means by which art creates artistic empathy is the symbolic character (in the broadest sense), as it facilitates a more sensitive and free communication, in a more direct contact between the interiority of souls. Note that, as Jung says (1935/2000: 273), although we do not have a symbolic life, “only it can express the soul’s need”. In fact, the tacit understanding through the symbolic nature of poetics allows us to formulate a broader knowledge of our Self, or a deeper and more effective contact with our soul: a principle of effective contact that Kandinsky (1912/1987) associates with “Inner Need”.

The contact with the soul(s), through subjectivities (intra-subjective and

intersubjective) is explored having as impulse the creative motivation triggered in the “me – not-me” relationship, in the interior-exterior, conscious-unconscious dialectics, and internalization-externalization. At the level of intersubjectivity, creation constitutes a bridge between the infra level (of an author’s unconscious) and the subliminal level (of another author). In this experience, between the subjectivities (between the one who makes the drawing and the one who observes it) a dynamic results - from the movement of approximation-distancing and the variation of empathy of attachment-detachment - that can potentiate the will and the (re) orientation of the act of creating.

THE INFORMAL IRRATIONALITY OF THE UNCONSCIOUS AND THE RATIONALITY OF THE AWARENESS OF REPRESENTATION

The order of the drawings results from a conjugation (of complementarity) between the objective and the subjective, which varies depending on how we develop them according to a typology that is more faithful to concrete and rationalized information – *through the mechanisms of rational translation of the logical-deductive construction* – or according to a typology more faithful to more personal needs of expression – *according to subjective motivations and where the manifestation of irrationality fits*.

It is understood that the drawing supposes a representation in which sensitivity, subjectivity, objectivity and rationality are simultaneously projected - but, in addition to that, irrationality, or rather, the indefiniteness and informality of the same are also projected. Let us not forget that, according to Freud (1912/2001: 162), this irrationality is constituted by drives that do not become an object of consciousness; what can happen, according to this author’s thinking, is that the

representation makes us glimpse an *idea* linked to this irrational drive. Therefore – aware that concerns have no shape or dimension, because, like sensations of other natures, they reside in the informality of an organic, irrational and unconscious nature – what becomes visible is the idea of this sensation. Therefore, the concerns, having no form, manifest themselves in signs, configurable in the possible representation (which depends on the intervention of rationality). In fact, the vagueness of the sensation materializes in the represented form, in a way, giving visibility to the thought awakened by the sensation. Basically, artistic empathy is facilitated when the sensation causes emotion and this is the need for expression.

In the empty space of paper (or any other support), the original plane of representation will be the unreality of nothingness that gives way to formal reality. It is this reality that absorbs the sensations of the unconscious, that is, the form gives them material substance. In fact, these unconscious contents are not absolutely indefinite. More than that, they will be the imminence of images retained in a deep memory, which aspire to be conscious, even if they only indicate ideas. This way, the infinity of the informal void and energetic chaos of the unconscious can take on a form by transforming itself into a representation. At the sensitive level, when the drawing is the result of the manifestation of the energy of affections, desires, fears, etc., and when all this is limited by the finitude of a form, the limits of the area of thought and energy are configured. that accompany you. But these limits can reopen if, in their construction process, internal harmony is created, that is, if the aesthetic expression is freed from the externalization of memories and if these are reconciled with the critical judgment of reason.

Despite what has been said, in the

process of representation, in addition to the expression being able to sensitize the reason of the representation, when we configure the disorder of the irrational energy that resides in the subconscious, we instill in the sensible expression of the form a certain rational order so that the representation acquires a certain sense. Moreover, in order to find this, it is also necessary to influence awareness, sedimentation of memories or an archeology of past experiences – which are reconciled with the present when reason intelligently guides them.

In a way, in the drawing of figure 1, perhaps JM tried to reconcile the organic experience of the action of the movement of the now with the memories of the past experience. These memories were perhaps in the depths of the unconscious and, presumably, he would not have had an idea of them until they emerged in the exploration of drawing. Certainly, by summoning the release of sensations (linked to the irrational energies of the unconscious) from procedural action, he will have fed the will to seek meaning for latent ideas and for the forms that emerged associated with the manifestation of these sensations. This free creative flow led JM to a certain autobiographical archeology and a consequent subliminal catharsis.

EXPRESSION AS LIBERATION FROM THE RESTRICTED SPACES OF RATIONALITY

The purpose of an artist may be to (re) find the original condition of order. Or rather, perhaps look for the stage of holistic balance, where sensitivity is (re)conciled with rationality, harmonizing the (apparent) divergences of realities. Which suggests that, in a broad sense, the artist wants to recover a unity between formal reality, procedural reality and semantic reality or action-thought-representation. The underlying expectation

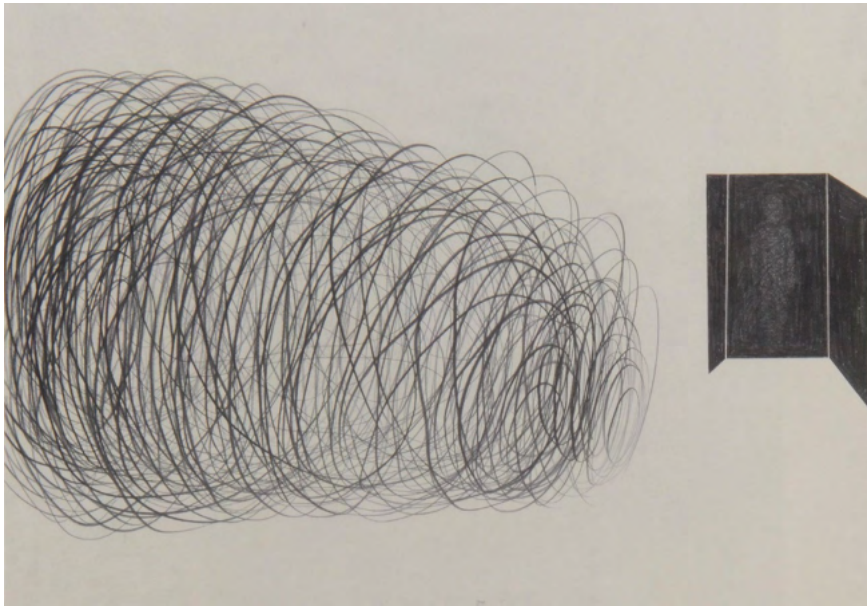


Figure 1: Jorge Martins, *Untitled*, 1997. Graphite on paper, 70 × 100 cm.



Figure 2: Jorge Martins, *A true story*, 2006. Graphite on paper, 120 × 160 cm.

is perhaps that of *greater freedom of thinking and feeling and of knowing oneself by knowing*. The vortex of this freedom and consciousness would be a creativity that overflows a possible rationalist omnipotence.

For the return path to a certain sense of genesis, we will have the contribution of the creative process that activates the “rational-irrational”, “subjective-objective”, “space-object”, “mind-body” dialectics. These dialectical interrelationships are established when, through creative guidance, energetic reality is embodied in material reality. With creation, *a priori* pre-defined and pre-existing rationality can be reformulated and give rise, *a posteriori*, to a new reality, to a new and broader consciousness. When this process describes and activates an “exterior (rational and objective) – interior (irrational and sensitive)” harmonizing reflexivity, the way is opened for reconvergence towards an ideal freedom or an originary consciousness.

In the search for approximation to the ideal (im)possibilities, it is necessary that the design allows an expressive manifestation - at the procedural, formal and semantic level - in which fears and desires can be resolved tacitly, at a subjective level and without the censorship of the rational. In fact, the re-harmonization that is aspired to becomes possible when we can externalize our imagination without predetermined direction or paths and, as in a dream, free from rationalist restrictions, to the point that the objectivity of the images is in line with subjectivity. that underlies it.

Note that the following drawing (next page, figure 2) seems to bring to the plane of consciousness, not concrete characters, but entities with whom JM had experiences that possibly triggered emotions that he repressed and, therefore, that were retained and frozen by the censorship of rationalism, lacking their reconciliation with the conscious. It can be inferred that, with the deliberate staging of a

symbolic repetition of unresolved situations (as if it were a play), JM will have returned to the past, recovering his harmony with the present. As a symbolic representation, the drawing was liberating – similar to a dream, although, unlike the dream, by deliberately summoning the remnants of memories that he wished to revive using the representations that made them re-emerge freely.

Taking this drawing as an example (figure 2), let us recall Cassirer (1926/2001: 42), when he says that “art cannot be understood as a mere expression of the interior” nor “as a reproduction of the figures of an external reality”, instead, from this, as the author reveals, art will be a fusion of the subjective with the objective, resulting in a new existence and a new content. To what we add, with this process a more significant, idiosyncratic and (tacitly) conscious content is glimpsed.

CONCLUSION

We suggested, then, that, in the foreground, on the basis of an *intra -subjectivity*, drawing is not restricted by the limits of the realism of forms that are external to us, nor by the limits of rationalist nature. Conversely, the creative process requires that sensible experience in the field of objective reality become free through immersion in the infinity of the energies of the unconscious subjectivity. Which does not mean that art is a rejection of the concrete and rational; with greater or lesser intensity, we always follow the rationalist paths, as long as we submit them to the associative freedom of images, ideas and means. Creative freedom will increase if harmony is generated in the reconciliation between the rational and the irrational, between the objective and the subjective, between consciousness and the unconscious, and between the literal and the symbolic.

Once this subjective experience of the self is explored, it moves to a background with similar

characteristics, based on an *intersubjectivity*, creating conditions for: empathy for the creative experience of the other; an opening for different ways of creation; a broader, more sensitive, creative and free collective way of seeing and reformulating the representation of the world.

What is awakened in an artist (the senses, affections, emotions and feelings) through an intuition about the creations of another artist will constitute the nourishment of the

motivation to create new incursions into the depths of the soul. This contagion of the soul triggers an *artistic empathy* with which artists acquire greater affective harmony, a narrowing of the distances they have to travel within their inner space (conscious self and unconscious self) and towards that of others (artists). In these circumstances, artistic creation creates conditions for approaching a certain essence of the human collectivity and its innate potential to create with *freedom*.

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