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Post-modern art and a Platonist idea of Cosmos.

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"...anything which is judged is judged in terms of Western Civilization." (AICA FINLANDE 1983,p.184)

Unhappy about the art criticism in his country, a Zambian delegate accused the art critics of perpetuating a paradigm of aesthetic judgement¹ informed by the preoccupations and appearance² of visual art production in the West, assuming³ a stable, homogeneous set of ideas, beliefs and practices, so well tailored to the Western Civilization as ~~is~~ of no value in any other culture.

Such position overlooks the differences between the centre (or centres) of a civilization and the rest of it. The history of Modern Art meanders from a centre to a centre, both artists and art critics promoting the field of problems for art as defined by a small group of practitioners in a centre of the day. It is still thought as a good practice by many art critics to tell the readers that a work of art, which they can see in their region is like some other work of art which they cannot see, but which belongs to that " agalma " of the West, say New York.⁴

Although it is the artist or group of artists who as " new talents full of energy " are the main condition for a place to become a centre of visual art, we must be wary of divorcing a discussion of art from the discussion of the critical debate of their production.

The consciousness of the importance of a centre within the Western Civilization lead for example Clement Greenberg to welcome the emergence of the abstract art produced by A.Gorky, J.Pollock and D. Smith as another sign of the growing prestige of the United States:" If artists as great as Picasso,Braque and Leger have declined so grievously, it can only be because the general social premises that used to guarantee their functioning have disappeared in Europe. And ... with

the emergence of new talents so full of energy and content as Arshille Gorky, Jackson Pollock, David Smith then the conclusion forces itself, much to our own surprise, that the main premises of Western art have at last migrated to the United States, along with the center of gravity of industrial production and political power." (Partisan Review, March 1948, p.369)

The complex ideology of the proposed links between a dying centre and emerging centre, and between the economical basis and visual art is discussed in a number of articles published during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵ This is significant, because it was a time when artists started to re-define the "core subjects" for art.⁶

There is another aspect of the quote, that was not recognized as important, maybe because it is somewhat hidden: art production is seen as a part of the concept of the world. Greenberg operates the idea that more industry, more political power is a guarantee of a better "general social premise". Only years later, did he recognize that such a centre insists that art which does not follow its lead is condemned to a "lower order" - when for example he regretted that the English painter Paul Nash⁷ was not "exportable".⁸

Recently, Carter Rattcliff voiced a difficulty he experienced when reviewing The Sculpture Show in London. Complaining that he could not find "more productive clues" in a work of Carl Plackman, he thought that the reason was his not belonging to the "artist's world". Rattcliff introduces here the consciousness of the different ideas about the particular fragment of the world or in other words different perspectives from which we look at the whole of the world. The barrier in understanding "the artist's world" - or the perspective of The Other - is made up of the genuine difficulties we have with another's point of view and of the ease with which regional or personal may skid into provincial, and self-centred. He wrote:

"Not only is the art of one corner of the West opaque

to visitors from other corners. In addition radical artists tend to work from stances of complete ... accomodation to the local forces they claim to oppose." ⁹

Whereas some may argue that a strong centre will take care of these two issues, the development of art which is variously labelled trans-avantgarde, New Image and Post-Modern points clearly to an alternative.

These artists re- defined the field of problems for art, the "core subjects" on one hand in marked difference to Modernism ¹⁰ on the other in clear loyalty to the artists working from approximately 1860.

Catherine Strasser ¹¹ observed that the paintings produced recently by Francesco Clemente represent "une dilatation du concept artistique" while the strategy employed fall within the modernist paradigm: "une interiorisation et, avec le refus des valeurs dominantes, l'apparition de démarches confinées, personnalisées ..." (ibid.p. 24) The idea of the artists concentration on the individual universe is one shared by both Modernists and Post- Modernist. Yet there is a significant difference between their understanding of it in relation to the works of art, Whereas a Modernist sees the meaning in the work of art as produced by a discrete visual experience, irrespective of whether or not the work refers to the world, the Post-modernist allows art to move in all directions as a reply to the changing reality. Thus Clemente's repetition and shifting of a pre- existing image ¹² both re-affirms and shifts the meaning of the Modernist's attitude to form as illustrated by this formulation by W.Kandinsky: "... the most important thing in question of form is whether or not the form has grown out of the inner necessity." (On the Spiritual in Art, 1911, p.)

The strategy of repetition and shift clearly attacks the notion of "novelty" as a central idea of art production until 1970s. ¹³

Andreas Kiefer activates a heavy dose of irony, as Jürgen Harten has shown, ¹⁴ in ~~xxx~~ paintings like The Tomb of

the unknown painter and *The Painter's Studio*. Whereas the success of, say, a comparison of a painter to an unknown soldier depends on what Modernists called "the internal necessity" it cannot be explained by it. The context provided by the art world with its centre in promoting art and artists in a way similar to promoting goods or celebrities provides a key to the paintings meaning. Of course, we may lose it, and, of course there is always something in the work of art which remains unexplained. As Heidegger warned us: "The work belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm that is opened up by itself"¹⁵

The difference between the Modernist and Post-modernist "core subjects" - that is subjects perceived both by artists and art critics as acute may be observed on these three *Dejeuner sur l'herbe*.

In 1863 E. Manet made use of his copying at Louvre to design pictures that were perceived by contemporary critics as "ungrammatical", "daring" and "absurd".¹⁶

What kind of a realm this painting opens? Briefly: French, urban with uncomfortable socio-political aspects.¹⁷

Manet's "borrowings" provide for a tension between the design loaded with historical references (i.e. sameness) and the contemporary men and women presented in the composition. Theophile Thore criticises Manet for the "absurd composition" and praises him, as a typical Modernist, for the use of colour, light and "convincing bits of modelling"

Beatriz Gonzales represented Colombia at the XXVIII Venice Biennale in 1978 with a large Drop curtain of the mobile and variable nature using Manet's *Dejeuner* as a subject matter. The realm this work of art opens is the relationship of two cultures, an action across the divide among peoples, from the perspective of the place and time the artist found herself in. As she explained: "The drop-curtains emerged from walk through the dusty Jimenez Avenue in Bogota. There in a shop window, I found among bottles and bocadillos, a Salvat magazine the front cover of which was Manet's *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, dusty and ruined by the sun. It looked like a drop-curtain, or a circus tent

painted with faced acrylics."¹⁸

The emphasis is m o r e on here and now, than on the " inner necessity ". The critical debate stressed " the point of view o f the underdeveloped." 19

John de Andrea's Manet, Dejeuner sur l'herbe 1982, represents attitudinal inversion in his " comment" on the idea of "contemporary". The meaning of his sculpture is determined m o r e by the Manet's painting, than Manet's work ever was by that of Giorgione. Conversely, de Andrea's work is also a part of the meaning of that of Manet, in the sense of being its interpretation. De Andrea participates in the tradition of representation in which Manet's painting is a significant member. The critical debate emphasised the role of sculpture as ~~xx~~ radical new genres were associated with it rather than with painting (" living sculpture ", " environmental sculpture ", " site specific sculpture ") and the attitudinal inversions that render the recognizable Twentieth Century modes less straightforward: "Additional contents of quoting, irony and contradiction between semiotic levels have been added to the content of representation." ²⁰ De Andrea invokes an older tradition of art production that used a master's work as a model, thus releasing the art from the grip of a dogmatic adherence to the Modernist concept of " novelty " ²¹ and " originality " ²².

The contemporary critical debate provides more evidence for the " core subjects " of post-modern art being different from those of Modernism.

Post-modernism refers to that part of human history when man required the power to eradicate all human beings. This threat, similarly as natural catastrophe like droughts, floods and earthquakes, undermines the validity of all those cultural forms that d i v i d e people on and from this planet. In social terms post-modernism pulls down barriers and announces that " acting out " is the way to recognition.²³ In cognitive terms post-modernism "refines our sensibility to difference" ²⁴ as the three examples of the Dejeuner illustrated.

It employs a " multiplicity of various points of departure " ²⁵ oscillating between various poles ²⁶ "replacing the myth of a unitary vision of the world " by " working from the standpoint of present"(NOW) and by " recovering an identity corresponding to the genius loci"(HERE). Art is seen as " overcoming a privileged perspective" ²⁷ by " borrowing of styles " ²⁸ and by " moving away from the centre ". ²⁹

The emphasis on HERE and NOW and not on a unique centre is central to the paradigm of Post - modernism, both in the art practice and in the art critical debate.

"We must recognize ", Kuhn warns, " how very limited in both scope and precision a paradigm can be at the time of its first appearance. Paradigms gain their status because they are m o r e (my emphasis) successful than their competitors in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute. To be more successful is not, however, to be either completely successful with a single problem or notably successful with any large number. The success of a paradigm ... is at the start largely a promise of success discoverable in selected and still incompatible examples." ³⁰

The promise post-modernism offers is the understanding of the "Other ", the rejection of dogma and re-assessment of the values that insulated some from the socially and existentially important problems, which all people share. This global aspiration is not tolerating the old model of a centre acting upon the rest. By stressing the HERE and NOW of the creative act, it hopes to uncover meaning in various perspectives, points of views.

Is there a tradition of thought in the history of Western culture that corresponds with the " core subjects " of Post- modernims ?

The answer is yes: the unlikely aliance of Nietzsche and Plato. ³¹

The idea of cosmos with a centre e v e r y w h e r e

is announced by Zarathustra's animals and Timaeus respectively.

"O Zarathustra," the animals said, " to those who think as we do, all things themselves are dancing: they come ~~xxx~~ and offer their hands and laugh and flee - and come back. Everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being. Everything dies, everything blossoms again; eternally runs the year of being. Everything ~~xxxx~~ breaks, everything is joined anew; eternally the same house of being is built. Everything parts, everything greets every other thing again; eternally the ring of being remains faithful to itself. In every Now, being begins; round every Here rolls the sphere There. The center is everywhere. Bent is the path of eternity." ³²

We can either join Zarathustra in his reply " O you buffons^{es} and barrel organs !" or follow the advice given by Francis Bacon in *Novum Organum*:

"... the journey of a thing to be defined from one state to another ... furnishes a favourable situation for scientific analysis." ³³

Such a journey of the idea that cosmos is a sphere whose centre is everywhere has been mapped by Robin Small ³⁴ from Nietzsche to the legendary Hermes Trismegistus. As the acceptability of the formula depends on a distinction between a corporeal and an intelligible spheres, Small concluded, that it was a Platonist or neo-platonist concept, rejecting explicitly the suggestions made inter alia by Alain de Lille in his Seventh proposition and by Voltaire in his discussion of "Embleme ", that the source is Plato's *Timaeus*. Instead Small concentrates on the emphasis given to the idea that centre is everywhere by Nicholas Cusanus (cca 1440): " The world he argues, is always seen from some standpoint - at least, this is the case for any observer like ourselves. To such an observer, his own standpoint must always appear to be the center of the world. But there is no way either to prove or the disprove that assumption;

all claims to the status of ' center ' are equally valid."(ibid.,p.95)

In the above quote from ~~2x~~ Thus spoke Zarathustra the paradoxical formula that the centre is everywhere affirms what Nietzsche elsewhere called " perspectivism ", meaning, that all knowledge is relative to the standpoint of a particular perspective upon reality, an idea, known today as Law of ~~o~~ complementarity (Niels Bohr).

The loss of a unique centre, of a unique point of reference results, Nietzsche says, in "the most extreme form of nihilism" ³⁵

Small suggested that nihilism as an ambiguous concept stands for an intersection of two processes: ending of old beliefs ., , and a beginning of new ones which are very different.(see p. 100)

What appears to be the case here is the transitional period between the old and a new paradigm,gs Small seems to be aware:

"But there is another side to this event and a way of understanding it as a liberation rather than abandonment! The affirmative meaning of perspectivism is what is contained in the statement " the center is everywhere".

We can understand this by looking at what it denies.

A unique center is an authority for all other standpoints in Nietzsche 's view this amounts to a devaluation of the others (points of view - my add.) ... Affirmative perspectivism ... treats every point of view on the world as a source of meaning." (ibid. p.100)

On reading the passage from Zarathustra two more aspects become important: its implications for a concept of being in general (ontology) and the emphasis on the epistemological value of an " apparent world ". That the " house of being " may be built from the ~~xxx~~ perspective of any observer is a thought, whose implications are already ~~being~~ understood by contemporary artists.

Although Small rejected the journey to go on back to Plato, the temptation to search in Timaeus for ideas and formulations which would appear to be a part of the tradition so well documented from the twelfth century onwards *is there*.

Scholars agree that Timaeus (cca 380 BC) " has deeply influenced mediaeval and modern speculation " ³⁶

Both Cornford and Klein are aware of a particular character of Timaeus in particular and Plato's dialogues in general: "Timaeus ... covers an immense field at the cost of compressing the thought into the smallest space ... " which gives authority to validity of a small passages that will soon follow.

That " ... every word counts; some casually spoken words may be more important than lengthy, elaborate statements " ³⁷ lends a particular edge to the method ~~analysis~~ employed here.

There is an agreement among scholars that Timaeus belongs to the scientific tradition of thought and as such it was denounced by many as reactionary. A small number of the students of this dialogue only started to think along the lines written ~~by~~ with some surprise by Vlastos: "... Plato's conception of the physical world would be more congenial to the creative scientist of the modern era from Galileo to Heisenberg than would be that of Democritus. " ³⁸ The comparison to Democritus is not a happy one, as Vlastos himself shown, there are too many points of agreement between Timaeus and Democritus. The first part of that observation is here more important, as it suggests a new possibilities for interpretation of Plato's thought.

Vlastos approached Timaeus from the point of view of the older Greek tradition of thought about cosmos, namely Pythagoras, Anaximander and Heraclitus (ibid.p.29) He recognized that the way Plato settles an issue differs from the tradition. For example the Demiurge after cutting the Existence, the Sameness and the Difference into strips, joins their ends to make moving circles because circles are " most appropriate for reason and intelligence (T 34 A)

When the Demiurge " ... turned its shape rounded and spherical ... " to please the reason (T 33 B) the cosmos still had one centre, albeit ^{un}defined. Only when Timaeus narrates how the Demiurge made the world - soul the idea of a centre being everywhere hesitantly crops up:

"... in the centre he set a soul and caused it to extent t h r o u g h o u t the whole ... (T 34 B) and again

"... And the soul, being everywhere inwoven from the centre to the outermost heaven ... "(T 36 E)

Plato clearly is thinking of one centre ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~, and an expanding dynamic entity that is not to be constraint by it, thus being at once a centre and circumference.

There are similarities in imagery used by both Nietzsche and Plato when introducing the paradox:

The words like " joining ", " circle " (Nietzsche says a ring), " cutting " (Nietzsche says 'breaks ').

The idea of perspectivism appears in Timaeus also:

" What we perceive is a certain combination of shifting qualities in a certain place at a certain time .."(T 51 B) as a part of the debate of the third factor of Cosmos, the Receptacle of Becoming.

That we ought to read Timaeus not just as an explanation of the ontology of the world but also as an explanation of our being, existence, is born out ~~by the~~ insistence by Plato^s on the analogy between the world and man:

"Let us rather say that the world is like, above all things, to that of living Creature of which all other living creatures, severally and in their families are parts."(T 30 C, and again at T 30 D). Although, as scholars observed Plato's thoughts are never set before us with complete clarity, Timaeus is a severe case of analogy ³⁹at work.

This is further illustrated by the way Plato characterizes the Demiurge. He is not an object of worship, but " maker and father " (T 28 C), " builder " (T 29 A) and again a " Maker " (T 29 A). The world is "... framed by him ..."

(T 29 E) and " ... brought from disorder to order ..." (T 30 A). The Demiurge is described as putting things together (T 31 B), joining things together (T 34 C), composing (T 35 A), blending (ibid.), dividing (T 35 B), mixing (T 35 A) and splitting (T 36 D).

That he is like a craftsman maybe surprising in the light of other dialogues (The Republic and The Laws in particular)The implications of the idea of a maker driven by the desire to do things well and to share his excellence with others (T 29 E) while inspiring in themselves are particularly pertinent to the art and to the art today.

For example Rainer Petting said of himself: " There is a certain point when I think the painting is good, that it's got some expression I wanted. I leave it when I feel there is life in it." 40

The nearest Plato comes to the idea of a " house of being being eternally built " (see quote from Nietzsche) is in two contexts: when he discusses the Receptacle of Becoming and when he discusses what we can know of the world.

The passages do not occur together. The idea that our interpretation of the world is just a " likely story " comes as a follow up of the ontological debate of a copy of an original:

" Concerning a likeness, then, and its model we must make this distinction: an account is of the same order as the thing which it sets forth ... (T 29 B) ... while an account of what is made in the image of the other, but is only a likeness, will itself be but likely ..." (T 29 C) Cornford discussing this point insists that the Timaeus is a poem (p.31) The difficulty with the ambiguity of this passage is that it invites two contradictory interpretations: the correspondence theory of truth and the race of one likely story after the other. Plato does not refute either of the two.

Some light on the possibility of the second meaning is thrown much later in the dialogue when Plato discusses the language used in a debate about those things in the world that " slip away and do not wait to be described " (T 49 E) The reason why he wishes for a clear language is the early formulation of what Wittgenstein called "Language imprisonment."

" Whenever we observe a thing perpetually changing ... (we must not) speak of (it) .. as having some permanence ..."(T 49 B). And a little later Plato says that a quality "... perpetually recurs in the cycle" (T 49 E) which compares with Nietzsche's "eternally runs the year of being."

We have observed significant similarities between the conceptual tools employed by artists and those used by art critics since mid 1970s.

The emphasis on the " individual universe ", HERE and NOW occurred both in Post- modernism and in the passages from Nietzsche and Plato.

The paradoxical formula " centre is everywhere " appears in Timaeus limited to the World - Soul, in Nietzsche together with the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Plato via the analogy between the world and man allows the extension of the formula to the society and social issues. Nietzsche while allowing its applicability to both being in general and human beings, covers up his tracks through Zarathustra rebuking the eagle and ^{the} serpent. The formula makes sense only when understood as affirmative perspectivism.

What it may mean for contemporary art criticism?

In simple terms, affirmative perspectivism unchains art production from a unique centre; it treats every work of art as a " likely story " about the world; each point of view on the world is seen as a source of meaning. The art practice is already doing it.

The art criticism is expected to raise the critical consciousness even if only of those who read it.

Notes.

1. Any discussion of aesthetic judgement must include I.Kant' s Critique of Judgement (Kritik der Urteilkraft,1790). I have in mind his finding that aesthetic judgement is subjective, but claims universal validity.
2. By appearance I mean a unity of the set impressions as an objective thing. Discussion in: Quinton A: The Nature of Things,Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, Part I and III.
3. The other implications in the quoted statement are even more worrying, but ironically they invoke their own opposites:
If the art critics in the speaker's country are not capable of constructing their own criteria, the Western thought about art may offer something universal, thus cancelling the need. If the Western art practice is seen as a shrine of excellence, it may be that, but it may also be because of its inherent imperialistic character. This cannot be resolved in general terms.
4. "The word agalma, however, contains no implication of likeness and is not a synonym of eikon the word itself has two main meanings:1) object of worship and 2) something in which one takes delight ".
Cornford,F.Macdonald: Plato's Cosmology, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977,p. 99
5. Although they all invite more substantiation, their thought-provoking force is commendable:
Cockroft,E.: 'Abstract Expressionism,Weapon of the Cold War,Artforum,XII, June 1974,pp.39 - 41

Kozloff M:'American Painting during the Cold War', Artforum,XI, May 1973 pp.43 - 54

Shapiro D. and C.: 'Abstract Expressionism: The Politics of Apolitical Painting', Prospects, ed. by Jack Salzman, 1977, pp. 175 - 214

Guilbaut S: ' The New Adventures of the Avant -garde in America, October, Winter 1980,pp. 61-78
6. Core of things - hupokeimenon - something always already there and ta sum-bebekota - that which has always turned up along with the given core and occurs along with it. See Heidegger M: in Hofstadter A.,Kuhns R. eds.:Philosophies of Art and Beauty, Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger, The University of Chicago Press,1976 (1st publ. 1964) p. 655

Core subjects-in the sense of Kuhn's paradigm .Kuhn suggests that the change

Notes - conti 2.

- the change in science can be explained by a shift in paradigms.

A paradigm - offers the practitioners a promise of success, a criterion for choosing problems and at times it can "insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies."

Kuhn, T.S.: The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, The University of Chicago Press, 1970 (1st publ. 1962) p. 370

I am not suggesting that art practice and art criticism are scientific research, but I am suggesting, that Kuhn's notion of a paradigm has got an explanatory power in the sphere of art production, and for the critical discourse on art,

7. Paul Nash (1889 - 1946)

8. Harrison Ch.; English Art and Modernism, The Open University Press, 1983 p.52

9. Ratcliff Carter: The New Sculpture, Cryptic or Cozy, Art in America, Jan 1984, p. 40

10. "Until the 1960 the term modernism was used in a vague way to refer to what it was that made works of art seem contemporary, with capital 'M' the term has only been regularly used since Greenberg's publication of Modernist Painting in Art and Literature, no 4, Spring 1965. Modernism as a set of ideas consists of many of them, but these characteristics must be present (ta sumbebekota):

- i) less emphasis on illustrative, story telling and imitative aspects of art

- ii) preference for 'primitive art'

- iii) autonomy of art has high priority, works of art tend to be regarded as 'things in themselves'

- iv) The emotions aroused by works of art were understood as different from ordinary emotions

- v) Meaning in a work of art was seen as produced by a sense of the coherence of its internal relations, more so, that by some significance in its relation to the world

- vi) The aims and interests of artists were seen as determined in essential way by their interest in art, rather than by their need of money, their politics, their experience of the world.

For a discussion and evidence see: Harrison Ch: Modernism, Problems and Methods, 1983, p. 49 - 53

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- 11 Strasser C: Francesco Clemente le son du corps, Art Press, Mai 1982, p.24
- 12 Oliva Achille Bonito: The Italian Trans-avantgarde, Flash Art, 1979, no. 92-93 p. 19
- 13 Discussion of the notion of 'novelty', real, apparent, hidden and corrupt in Lippard L: Changing, DUTTON, N.Y., 1971

In the context of this paper an opposite view as expressed by Plato in the Republic Bk IV, 424 is of interest:
" ... the overseers of our state ... must throughout be watchful against innovations in music ... fearing when anyone says that that song is most regarded among men 'which hovers newest on the singer's lips ' . "
- 14 Harten J: Anselm Kiefer - The Painter's Atelier, Bulletin of the Association of Art Historians (London), July 1984, no 19, p. 21
- 15 Heidegger M: The Origin of a Work of Art, in: Hofstadter A., Kuhns R. eds, op.cit. p. 670
- 16 Théophile Thore' in: G.H. Hamilton, Manet and his critics, Norton, New York, 1969, pp. 48 - 50
- 17 Discussion in : Frascina Francis, Manet and Modernism, The Open University Press, 1983, p.35
- 18 La Biennale di Venezia, General Catalogue, 1978, p. 96
- 19 op.cit., p.94
- 20 McEvilley T: On the manner of addressing clouds, Artforum, April 1984, p.67
- 21 Amusingly Erasmus introduced Folly as the daughter of Wealth and Novelty in his Encomium Moriae, see note 7 in: Kristeller, P.O.: Creativity and Tradition, Journal of the History of Ideas, Jan-Mar 1983, v.44, n.1, p. 108
22. Kristeller (op.cit) concluded that i) originality and novelty are never completely absent or present in any work of art (my emphasis)
and ii) originality is not a sufficient condition for artistic excellence
23. Bell L. The Future of the Western World, 1979, p. 68, quoted in Lischka

Notes - conti.

24. Lischka, G.: The Postmodern - A Multilateral Approach, Flash Art, Jan 1984, p.22
25. Jencks Ch.: The Language of PostModern Architecture, 1980, p.6
26. Oliva A. Bonito: Art: Tragedy and Comedy, Flash Art, 1984, p.31
27. idem : From the Avant-garde to the Trans - avantgarde, AICA FINLANDE, 1983, p.107 ff.
28. Kuspit, B.D.: From Existence to Essence: Nancy Spero, Art in America, Jan 1984, p.96
29. Oliva, op.cit., p. 107
30. Kuhn.T., op.cit. p. 23
31. Nietzsche sketched his philosophical position around 1870 -1 thus:
" My philosophy (is) an inverted Platonism ", quoted in Heidegger M:
Nietzsche, Vol I, The Will to Power as art, Routledge and Kegan Paul,
1981 (1st German ed. 1961) pp. 153 - 154

Heidegger argues that this utterance receives its proper range and intensity only in the light of Nietzsche's growing insight into nihilism. He distinguished Nietzsche's nihilism from the Christian nihilism (p.156) and concluded that a number of ideas clustered together with Nietzsche's thinking about nihilism, namely that of Grand Politics are a new interpretation of Plato. In number of places in the book but most importantly on p. 160 ff and in the chapter 24 called Nietzsche's Overturning of Platonism (pp. 200 - 210) Heidegger warns that the " inversion " of Platonism is not a simple exchange of one epistemological standpoint for another.

Nietzsche stated that nihilism is an ambiguous concept and distinguished between active and passive nihilism (The Will to Power, Vintage Books 1968 (1st publ. 1967), p. 17.

For a discussion of Nietzsche's thoughts :

Deleuze G.: Nietzsche and Philosophy, Athlone Press, 1983, pp.147 - 8
and pp 171 - 174

Schacht R: Nietzsche and Nihilism in : Solomon R.C.: Nietzsche, A Collection of Critical Essays, University of Notre Dame Press, 1980 (1st publ 1973) pp.58 - 82

Notes - conti:

Solomon R.C.: Nietzsche, Nihilism and Morality in: Solomon, op. cit.
pp. 202 - 225

32. Kaufmann/Walter : The Portable Nietzsche, Chatto and Windus, 1971, pp. 329 - 330

33. The Second Book of Aphorisms, XXIII

34. Small R.: Nietzsche and a Platonist tradition of the Cosmos: Center is everywhere and circumference nowhere, Journal of the History of Ideas, Jan-Mar 1983, v. 44, n1, pp. 89 - 104

35. ibid.p.100

Whereas in his early writings Nietzsche saw ancient 'myth' as the lost guarantee of the interconnection of all things, in the later works he calls it "life". Pütz has shown that this concept, if at all a concept, is rather vague. He also came to see the contradictions and ambiguities of Nietzsche's judgement, not as a source of constant irritation, but as "intentionally unsystematic" method. Pütz proposes that the more competent interpreters avoided misconstructions by recognizing the "thinking in antinomies" as Nietzsche's methodological principle. "Among these are Ernst Bertram, Karl Lowith, Karl Jaspers, Max Horkheimer, T.W. Adorno, M. Heidegger .." (p. 5) writes Pütz and mentions among those who put an onesided emphasis on one aspect of Nietzsche's thought: A. Baeumler, G. Lukacs, P.J. Möbius, E.F. Podach. Pütz P: Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry in: Pasley M. ed. Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought, Methuen, pp. 1 - 32 1978

Kaufmann (op.cit.p. 18) believes that Nietzsche "... once stupidly denounced as the mind that caused the First World War might well become a major aid to international understanding" (my emphasis) but maybe only if people take notice of criticism like that of G.B. Shaw in a letter to Archibald Henderson on 5.12. 1905 :

" Nietzsche's views, instead of being added soberly to the existing body of philosophy, are treated as if they were a sort of music hall performance."

Laurence D.H. ed., Shaw, Collected Letters 1898 - 1910, p. 554

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36. Cornford, op.cit., p. VII
37. Klein J : Plato's Trilogy, The University of Chicago Press, 1977, p.2
38. Vlastos G: Plato's Universe, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, p.XIII
39. That analogies may possess varying degrees of precision or relevance is obvious. Hesse provides a critique of the main types of analogies, i.e. quasi-scientific, self-effacing, positive, negative and neutral as well as a critique of the reasons for drawing one.
Hesse M: Models and Analogies in Science, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1966
40. Rainer Fetting, interview, Flash Art, Jan 1984, pp. 16 - 22
There is nothing new here. The point I am making is that contemporary artists re- assert an old idea.