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The Verbivocovisual Architectonic of the Stage La Conversione Di Un Cavallo

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Keywords: caravaggio; tableaux vivants; philosophy of language; bakhtin circle; verbivocovisuality.

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The Verbivocovisual Architectonic of the Stage La Conversione Di Un Cavallo

Luciane de Paula [α] & José Antonio Rodrigues Luciano [σ]

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I. Introduction

Created as a didactic project at the Facoltà di Architettura Luigi Vanvitelli, in Naples, the staging of the work *La conversione di un cavallo* was conceived and directed by Ludovica Rambelli. After the first performances and the success, Companhia Ludovica Rambelli Teatro (in honor of the director, who died in 2018) has performed in squares, churches, cemeteries, and theaters, in different parts of the world.The title of the scenic project refers to Caravaggio, as it is part of an anecdote – probably apocryphal – about the first version of the work *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, which would have been refuted for portraying a jovial Christ, who descends from heaven with his arms stretched out to help Paul, who is on the ground, ruined and supported by an impulsive angel. This iconic scene painted by Caravaaggio reflects and refracts his sarcastic pictorial and social authorial style: the sacred portrayed profanely or, if you like, in Bakhtinian terms (1988), carnivalized, as the high is inverted and gives way to the low, pressured by social centrifugal infrastructural resistance.

In the case of Caravaggian poetics, the dark rot of social ills is revealed by the human baroque rococo, vivid in contact with the high, which lowers itself in the face of miseries, as human and contradictory as human is divine and demonic, in his image and similarity. Legend has it that, after the reconstruction of the canvas, with its second version presented to the high prelate of the Church, the painter (its creator-author) exclaimed, with his usual irony: "Well, now we will have the conversion of even a horse!". The apostle Paul is animalized (a horse) as much as the artist's supposed speech would demonstrate his pride before his own work – anyone would be converted before the perfection of God. What God? Not the ecclesiastical, but the human-God-creator. The artist who generates, with his brushstrokes, life, as contorted as the existing human.

Based on this anecdote, the company's proposal retakes the meaning of the term (ideological sign) "conversion": a passage from one state to another, the (re)creation of meanings of any objects displaced in a space-time (chronotope) that, from the Bakhtinian point of view (BAKHTIN, 2018; VOLÓCHINOV, 2013), it reveals the link in the discursive chain between enunciative acts, in which meanings are taken up and renewed in each new socio-historical context in a unique way (VOLÓCHINOV, 1973 [1929]).

For this, based on 23 works by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, the staging is performed with the actors' bodies, using common objects and draped fabric. The scene is lit with a single cut of light, to simulate a painting on display, and costume changes are made in public view, rhythmically marked by music by Vivaldi, Sibelius, Mozart and Bach.

The musical soundtrack is not just an accompaniment for the timing of the performances, as it constitutes the staging itself, as a dramaturgical member. The pieces by the aforementioned composers build the atmosphere of the discursive staging and create encounters between the actors-characters throughout the piece, towards a theatrical architectural composition, as occurs, with another configuration, in opera, as studied by Sollertinsky[1].

The technique used by the Company to reassemble the Caravaggio paintings is that of *Tableaux Vivants* ("Live Paintings"). This technique consists of using live models to simulate theatrical performances in studios for sculptors and painters to build their works. The emphasis is on staging, pose, costume, lighting, and facial and body expressions. This procedure was

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[1] According to Volkov (1995), Sollertinsky critically studied the opera of Shostakovich (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*; *The Nose*) and others.

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widely used in the Baroque and Renaissance and became well known in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, then fell into disuse. Caravaggio himself, in the 16th century, used this strategy to portray his scenes.

In this sense, by resuming this method, the Ludovica Company not only reproduces Caravaggio's baroque paintings, but also recreates the event – with other shades of meaning – from the studio in a live scene in the theater recorded on video, in addition to recovering an almost forgotten technique in the 21st century.

In this article, our proposal is to reflect on the verbivocovisual architectural construction of the dramatization *La Conversione di um cavallo*, from a moment of its staging by *Tableaux Vivant* of the *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, by Caravaggio, in order to understand how the company Theatrical articulates the evaluative potentialities of verbal, visual and sound languages in the aesthetic elaboration of its project of speaking and which meanings are produced by this configuration, in which elements such as vivacity and mobility latent in Caravaggio's paintings and in musical works stand out, in particular, by Mozart, who make up the staging. For this, we took the 4:23-minute[2] video, recorded in the Church of São Francisco, city of Sutri, region of Lazio, in which, of the 23 staged works, 13 are reproduced.

The theoretical foundation that anchors us is the Bakhtinian philosophy of language. The dialectical-dialogical methodology follows three intertwined stages: description, analysis and interpretation. The aim is to understand how languages are syncretically architected, how they reflect and refract life and how they are aesthetically explored in the theatrical utterance, in interaction with the pictorial and the musical.

The hypothesis is that the articulation of languages in a singular way expresses an evaluative position in a specific material way, because, unlike what was and is understood throughout Western Cartesian thought, verbal, visual and vocal-sound languages are not constituted in isolation, since they have a single semiological nature, and find their unity in the subject. They (languages) may or may not materialize individually (without losing the link with other dimensions) or together, as in the case of the studied piece.

This perspective converges with the Bakhtinian language conception, as we understand it, in which there is "a potential single language of languages" (Bakhtin, 1986 [1975], p. 106), called by Paula & Luciano (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d) as "verbivocovisual".

For the Circle, specifically for Bakhtin (1986 [1975]; 1973 [1929]), in "The problem of the text in linguistics, philology and other human sciences", the text is understood as a coherent set of signs. In this sense, any field of action operates with text (visual arts, music, literature, biology, physics, mathematics, etc.). And, from this point of view, each text is composed of a language system, so that there are no pure texts, constituted by an isolated language (verbal, visual or vocal/sound), "consequently, sign systems have a common logic" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 106), even if potentially. This general language referred to by the Russian philosopher, we call verbivocovisual, because we understand it as the "work, in an integrated way, of the sound, visual dimensions and the meaning(s) of words." (Paula & Serni, 2017, p. 180).

As we have already pointed out in other works (Paula & Luciano, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c, 2020d; 2020e), verbivocovisuality is a notion developed by the Noigandres group (Augusto and Haroldo de Campos and Décio Pignatari) in the mainstay of the tradition of Cummings, Mallarmé, Joyce, characterized by the inseparable articulation of verbal, sound and visual languages, appropriated by Paula to reflect on the three-dimensional conception present in Bakhtinian works and to think about the relevance of this thought to the analysis of syncretic statements.

We understand that there is, as we can see in the Circle texts, a broad notion of language that permeates the philosophical proposal of Russian intellectuals and that, as it is a living organism, it can be materialized in statements of a single materiality (verbal, visual or sound) or in an articulated way (verb-visual, verb-vocal/sound, visual-sound or verbivocovisually), according to the project of speaking of the subjects, the material and the sphere of production, circulation and reception, but regardless of the form of expression, it will always be verbivocovisual, as there is always the semiological language system that constitutes the utterances.

Some results of this reflection indicate its relevance, as we can see in the works developed by Paula and her group, GED, as is the case of Paula & Souza (2019) and Paula & Sant'ana (in press), among others.

By taking language as the object of its reflections, the Circle starts from the notion of dialogue to understand the phenomena that constitute it and, in turn, constitute the subject and the world. Understood as a clash of and between social voices, this conception is at the heart of the philosophical proposal of the Russian group (according to Ponzio, 2008, the "Bakhtinian revolution"), as, according to Bakhtin (1984 [1963]).

Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it. Dialogic interaction is indeed the authentic sphere where language lives. The entire life of language, in any area of its use (in everyday life, in

[2] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nleyulbiB0A&t=4s. Accessed on Apr 23, 2020, at 4:54 pm.

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business, scholarship, art, and so forth), is permeated with dialogic relationships. (p. 183)

These relationships are not limited only to the logic or structure of language, as they constitute the interaction between subjects (with oneself and with others), statements, chronotopes, senses, ideologies, signs and languages. According to the Circle, outside of dialogical relationships, there is no sense, language and existence. After all, social organization is woven by discursive acts in constant interaction with previous acts and impregnated with future acts.

This movement happens in an inconclusive, unfinished way, there are no limits to the dialogical context, as the interaction is dialectical-dialogical, since we have the thesis, the antithesis and synthesis (Marxist dialectics). This is never considered an overcoming of the discursive event. On the contrary. It generates a new response, from which the dialogue/clash movement starts again, on another level, with the subjects and their discourses, with mutually altered meanings and evaluative positions.

When considering such theoretical assumptions, we turn our gaze to the piece in *Tableaux Vivant* chosen as our object of reflective analysis, in order to move between the aesthetics of Caravaggio and Mozart, as well as the Bible to: 1) understand how languages and re-emphasised the senses in the play-essay-live video exhibition; 2) expand the discussions about verbivocovisuality, based on the Bakhtinian philosophy of language, aimed at analyzing syncretic utterances.

The structure of this article starts from the relationship between the styles and dialogues of Caravaggio and/with Mozart to then analyze the work in focus, in interaction with Caravaggio's paintings and Mozart's music that sets the dramatic scene. As the piece is composed of 23 works by Caravaggio and the video, with 13 works, we will focus on a moment of the recorded piece, in which the frame *Judith Beheading Holofernes* is staged, set by the Communio do Requiem by Mozart, due to the space of an article, without forgetting the interaction of this screen on stage with the others chosen and with the entire Mozart Mass in the unitary living architectural composition of the video piece.

II. Caravaggio and Mozart – Meetings in Art and Life

Michelangelo Merisi, known as Caravaggio (a city belonging to the duchy of Milan), was influenced by the events of the time, a period marked by crises both in art and in the political, religious and economic fields. His art reflects and refracts, with his refined critical style, human contradictions from his small historical space-time. Set in the second half of the 16th century, the Italian painter breaks with the aesthetics that preceded him by approaching canonical themes (such as religious) in an unconventional way.

In the political-religious scenario there was a crisis of values and a dispute for economic power with atrocious social inequality. Even though the economy was concentrated in the capital, Rome was constantly invaded, becoming a territory of various conflicts, including the Sack of 1527, in addition to the beginning of maritime expansion, which took Italy off the commercial axis. The unity of Catholic Christianity was also dissolved with the Counter-Reformation, led by Luther.

In art, until the mid 1520s, artists and audiences got used to reproducing human bodies to perfection, typical of the proportional harmony and logic of Renaissance aesthetics, which led to a period of crisis for later artists: on the one hand, there was the an attempt to imitate the previous masters, especially the figures of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Donatello and Botticelli, as a way to better reproduce the Renaissance style; on the other, some artists refused to accept the stagnation of art and tried to overcome the prevailing norms. If in the domain of the human form there were no more possibilities, they sought to overcome it in other aspects. This is what happened to Caravaggio, who even became a reference to his contemporaries.

In this scenario, we find enigmatic, dark works, with more primitive and figurative aesthetics, static presence of living models, but with their twisted bodies, in difficult positions and movements that refer to the pain experienced with the various crises existing in Italy at the time, like Caravaggio's style. Perfection in the portrayal of human bodies continued, but achieved from other angles. This period was called Mannerism due to the profusion of aesthetic styles and techniques (Gombrich, 1999).

This moment of profound change points to the "rococo" baroque aesthetic, which portrays human contradiction through light and shadow, oblique angles, slanted perspectives and a hazy background.

The Catholic Church, during this period, consolidated itself in the communication and catechization of the faithful through paintings, in contrast to Protestantism, which prohibited the veneration of images, in order to opt for knowledge and access to the Bible.

This religious dispute for power established a restriction of themes for artists (such as, for example, the supremacy of portraits, the incidence of the picturesque in everyday life as opposed to the religious pride maintained by the Church of Rome), many, supported by religious leaders, who began to play the role of "maecenas", influencing the aesthetic production of the time, given the commission of works, which passed through their endorsement. Caravaggio was one of the painters under the yoke of the Church (supported

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by Cardinal Del Monte) and (perhaps, for that very reason) critical of it.

This social situation of the period is reflected and refracted in the Caravaggian aesthetic, with its authorial style and acid satirical positioning, marked by what we can consider definitively baroque.

Caravaggio's art is marked by contradiction and criticism. Considered a disruptive artist, the painter turns against political, artistic and religious authorities. Controversial and extravagant, he doesn't like the classic artificial models or the celestial models distant from the human condition. What matters is the "bare and raw truth". Pain, suffering and other ailments constitute the dark beauty of his baroque poetics. For the painter, the truth lies in human ambivalence. The aesthetic contradiction, in Caravaggio, is not characterized by dichotomous poles that mark the difference between one and the other. It does not correspond to the opposition between distinct elements and their consequent separation. On the contrary. Contradiction is the sum of contrasts in an ambivalent way, with the coexistence of differences that constitute the unity of the state of things, the world, man and existence in an aesthetic-social way: living art in life.

Based on this notion, we understand the Caravaggian aesthetic, marked by the incongruity of imperfection, the coexisting game between life and death, heavenly and earthly, high and low, sacred and profane, light and shadow, among other dichotomies, thematized in the human-divine relationship.

The sacred scenes, so common in Caravaggio, are represented in a daily and human way (union of the religious theme, typical of the Catholic Church, with the picturesque instituted by Protestantism), sanctity is found in suffering, ailments and degradation (on the low, meager) in order to startle humanity.

Jesus and the highest characters of Christianity appear in Caravaggio's paintings as symbols of the people. There is a predominance, in its aesthetics, of the negative, low and human, with behaviors, space, time, and conceptions that are expressed by the excess of shadows, dark colors, curvilinear features, crumpled or folded fabrics and scenes portrayed on the floor.

These characteristics mark vices, degradation, human ailments and criticism of religion. If the rational (privileged in the Renaissance), which elevates human, brings him closer to God; the affections, the passion, lower human to the level of the unconscious, the impulsive, almost animalistic (according to the logical and rationalist valuation that prevails in Western culture to this day).

The best example of this is a picture of *St. Matthew* (in addition to the anecdote quoted in the introduction), painted around 1598 and then destroyed, in which the bald, barefoot evangelist with dirty feet clumsily holds the huge volume of papers, with tense expressions at the unusual task of writing. Beside him, on the same level, a young (sensual) angel, who seems to have just arrived from above, guiding the saint's hand as a teacher guides a child. The work was rejected for constructing the image of one of the main saints of the Catholic Church in an imperfect way, marked by time with a tone of satire and irony. For the Church, it was outrageous for a holy man to be portrayed with extreme humanity. Consequence: Caravaggio had to redo the painting, following the conventions that the images of angel and saint should have, according to the religious standards of harmony and beauty of the time. In the new work, the imposing man with a circular line around his head (which refers to a halo), autonomous in writing, with an angel above him (no longer to the side), as a representative of God "/should/ be", without traces of sensuality, fluttering, just revealing the words to the writer of the gospel.

From a Bakhtinian point of view, Caravaggio's paintings elucidate the process of carnivalization described by the Circle, especially in *A Cultura Popular na Idade Média e Renascimento* (1988 [1965]), in which the constitution of culture occurs in the coexistence, always in conflict, between ideologies of super and infrastructure, high and low, serious and comical, divine and profane. According to Paula & Stafuzza, Carnival presents itself as an ambivalent culture - the opponent of the oppressed against the oppressor, not in a watertight way, but in a dialogical, circular way. The "unofficial" world can only be seen from below, as it starts from the official world to invert it, always through language. In the public square. In it, there is the combination of social opposites (always related) that are established through the reverse of the social structure: hilarious and rowdy marginalized (the unofficial world, with all its language, logic and ideology), dethroning monarchs (the official world), from the already established (2010, p. 133, our translation[3]).

Bakhtin claims that this feature is typical of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, but especially of the Baroque period (Bakhtin, 1988), of which Caravaggio is one, if not the big name in painting, just as Bach is in music.

To dethrone the Church's top official, Caravaggio works with marginalized actors and courtesans as models to compose his paintings. In other words, using the *Tableaux Vivants* technique, the painter seeks to give dynamism and three-

[3] In the original: o carnaval apresenta-se como a cultura ambivalente - opositora do oprimido contra o opressor, não de maneira estanque, mas sim dialógica, circular. O mundo "não oficial" só pode ser visto de baixo, uma vez que parte do mundo oficial para invertê-lo, sempre por meio da linguagem. Na praça pública. Nela, há a combinação de opostos sociais (sempre relacionados) que se estabelece por meio do avesso da estrutura social: coroa-se marginalizados hilários e baderneiros (o mundo não oficial, com toda a sua linguagem, lógica e ideologia), destronando monarcas (o mundo oficial), a partir do já instituído.

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dimensionality to his works, in addition to the perfection of the drawing lines (due to the proportionality of the anatomy of the bodies portrayed), an action painting, the photography of a paused moment represented by the moment and reproduced by gestures, weight and strength of and in the constituent elements of the work. The expressions, especially the scream, very recurrent in his paintings - as in *Medusa* -, mark the *pathos* intrinsic to humanity through the facial and bodily expression of the (twisted) subjects portrayed.

Like Caravaggio, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart also advocates the human-divine relationship in his music, as we will see in his final and unfinished work *Requiem K 626*, object of collation of this article, as it is the soundtrack of the recorded piece analyzed here.

The human-divine relationship in Mozartian authorial aesthetics is presented through the theme of death, influenced by J. S. Bach's baroque musical language. In Mozart, on the one hand, there is the desire to renounce passion, to purify himself morally and to return to the good of humanity or, in other words, the reflection on the collective attitudes of men towards other men; on the other hand, man's attitude towards God expresses the attempt to dominate abandonment in the face of death, as well as to dominate it.

Musically, the theme manifests itself in the synthesis between counterpoint and fugue (again, Bach's influence) and melody. The first, the vanishing counterpoint, reflects human's Herculean, laborious and painful struggle to ascend to the light; while the second, melody, symbolizes God's free gift, divine mercy.

This structure creates a dramatic or "theatrical" tension in Mozart's mature minor-key works, especially in his operas. The Austrian musician's fascination for the opera's intrinsic theatricality is a constitutive feature of the Requiem, as the combination of a *melodic dramaturgy* is indispensable in Mozartian works. After all, "we can assert that Requiem is a culminating compositional architecture that links theatricality and sacred milestone into a supreme musical edifice" (HUDEA, 2018, p. 107).

According to Jean and Brigitte Massin (1997), Requiem Mass is part of the group of Masses in sacrificial dedication and is played in memory of faithful souls who crossed the threshold of life. The structure of the Requiem consists of unsung and sung parts. These can be divided into nine parts and are performed on funeral days as well as on the third, seventh and thirtieth day after the end of life. The parts that make up the Mass are: prayer at the beginning of the liturgy, called the Introit, which begins with *Requiem aeternam dona eis* ("Give them eternal rest"), giving the rite its name; Kyrie (supplication to the Holy Trinity); Glory (glorification of the Holy Trinity) – this part can be omitted; Creed (profession of the dogmas of the Church); Sequence (Dies irae, dies illa); Sanctus (Proclamation of Holiness); Benedictus (Recognition of Holiness); Agnus Dei (Supplication to Christ before Communion); and Communio (or also known as Offertory – moment of union with the Lord). Except for the local variants, the liturgical and musical dialects, the Requiem crystallized its structure until the 14th century. The sequel was the last part added.

Based on this Requiem structure, Mozart composed his composition for orchestra, choir and four soloists (soprano, contralto, tenor, and bass), with the following division: Introitus (Requiem), Kyrie, Sequentia (Dies irae, Tuba mirum, Rex tremendae, Rememberare, Confutatis and Lacrimosa), Offertorium (Domine Jesu Christe and Hostias), Sanctus, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, and Communio (Lux aeterna).

Although the work was conceived by Mozart, it was not finished by him, due to his death in 1791. The widow Constanze had to deliver the commissioned work to receive the promised amount. The Requiem then went through four hands to be submitted. In general terms, the work presents the following elements and movements:

> the choral and orchestral *tutti* are linked to the idea of the greatness of God before man, further reinforced by the use of dynamics in fortissimo, the work of voices in the high register (to establish a heavenly association) and by presenting melodic and harmonically great stability and tonal distinction. In contrast to these moments, there are vocal solos with reductions in the orchestra, whose function is to gradually present man to God and penetrate into his human interiority. In these cases, the dynamics are generally piano, the register fluctuates (midrange combined with bass and treble), melody and harmony introduce tensions with the use of increased and decreased intervals and tonal instability. The vocal solos have the function of presenting the dramaturgical line that represents man in front of God and this is the line that developed the most throughout the work, perhaps because it contains the presence of man as a being so contradictory and unstable. The solos of the Introit, Gradual, Trato, Offertory, Saint, Benedictus, Agnus Dei, and Communion maintain a certain emotional-volitional balance, which points to the optimism offered by the Christian faith regarding the death and resurrection of men forgiven and blessed by God. (Cavini, 2005, 218, our translation[4])

[4] Original text: os tutti corais e orquestrais estão vinculados à idéia da grandeza de Deus frente ao homem, reforçados ainda pelo uso da dinâmica em fortíssimo, do trabalho das vozes no registro agudo (para estabelecer uma associação celestial) e por apresentar melódica e harmonicamente grande estabilidade e distinção tonal. Em contraposição a esses momentos, há os solos vocais com reduções na orquestra, cuja função é apresentar de forma gradual o homem frente a Deus e ir penetrando em sua interioridade humana. Nesses casos, a dinâmica é geralmente em piano, o registro flutua (médio combinado com grave e agudo), a melodia e a harmonia introduzem tensões com a utilização de intervalos aumentados e diminutos e a instabilidade tonal. Os solos vocais têm a função de apresentar a linha dramatúrgica que representa o homem frente a Deus e esta é a linha que mais se desenvolveu ao longo de toda a obra, talvez por conter a presença do homem como ser tão contraditório e instável. Os solos do Introito, Gradual, Trato, Ofertório, Santo, Benedictus, Agnus Dei e Comunhão, mantêm certo equilíbrio

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According to Ortega (1988; 1994), the Requiem was composed in D minor. We can trace this tone in the Introitus to the Kyrie, which, in Mozart, expresses men's anguish in the face of metaphysical terror. In Kyrie eleison, we have the moment of the liturgical rite of man's repentance before God, when he assumes himself as a sinner and pleads for purification, in order to remain in the presence of the King of the Universe. In this passage, we have a darker atmosphere in Mozartian aesthetics. This first moment in front of Death and the Last Judgment generates a feeling of despair and anguish.

Later, in the Mass, in the Sequentia, the progressive penetration of the Divine Light in the shadows of the opening choir develops until its full irradiation in Confuntatis – the last part of this section. The setting is: Dies iræ in D minor resumes the previous vibe of Introitus and Kyrie. In Tuba mirum, in B flat major, it portrays the inner state of man. The soloists represent the Divine Light, so that as the vocal registers increase (bass, contralto, tenor, and soprano), the clarity becomes more present until the emergence of a new maximum state, reached by the soprano. This moment marks a new place in musical discourse, as Rex tremendae begins. Composed in G minor, it expresses tenderness and pain, sublime and intimate, anguish and hope, it is the separation between Light and Darkness. The presence of the Divine is getting closer and the Recordare, as its name indicates, reminds the listener that one of the most important moments is approaching, hence the key of F major, proportional and relative to D minor. If this indicates human suffering, despair and anguish, the former refers to peace and spiritual joy, which comforts and fulfills. In Confutatis, the male choir and the female choir continue the narrative. The first, by singing in the key of A minor, transports the listener to an exotic place. The second, in the key of C major, creates a luminous atmosphere (the key in C major is the most spiritual in Mozart). But the man's fear has not ended yet, because at the end the female choir sings, in A minor, the musical ending. According to Hocquard (1958, *apud* Ortega, 1988), this configuration semiotics the lived experience of agony, which Mozart leaves us here. It is about the disintegration of the being that, however, has nothing to do with a descent into Hell of the damned, it is a meeting of man with the divine reality (p. 114, our translation) [5].

At the end of the first part of the Mass (called Liturgy of the Word), in Lacrimosa, the tonality is returned in D minor, with a change of attitude towards death and no longer just as a feeling of abandonment.

The Offertorium opens the second part of the mass, called the Eucharistic Liturgy, part of which, in the liturgical rite of the Catholic Church, God makes himself present. Thus, in Domine Jesu Christe, the choir invokes Christ, with voices almost joyful for the cessation of anguish, in the tonality of G minor, which represents, at the same time, the suffering/pain and the tenderness of the act of Salvation (represented in act of the Crucifixion), while the four soloists sing the luminos prayer.

On the other hand, the used escape resumes the feeling of anguish, raising it to the apex until the prostration as an offering of human (humanity) to God. This moment of offertory recalls the promises to God and his covenant with Abraham, considered the father of/in the Christian faith. Although feelings are wavering, like Abraham himself at the time of sacrificing his son Isaac, Abraham's words to God are one of hope when he sees Christ on the Cross. This act of sacrifice and surrender of Jesus generates the detachment of the human being to the Divine Light, a smoothness that occurs through the suspension of the accompaniment, with the permanence of the choir, now, in G major. In this atmosphere of joyful and tranquil contemplation, the choral vocals enter Hostias, written in E-flat major, accompanied by the wind instruments, while the violins with syncopated and incessant movements create an unusual backdrop for the choir. Happiness surrounds the environment.

Sanctus and Benedictus are in the shades of D major and B-flat major, respectively. In both, the moment is for exalting the glory of Christ and acknowledging his holiness. Here, Earth and Heaven proclaim glory and, in unison, affirm that what comes from his Holy Name is blessed, as it is heard in homophony of the female and male choir (high and low, Heaven and Earth). The B flat major resumes the inner peace, present in Tuba Mirum, in front of the new dwelling place in eternity, next to God, while the D major expresses the radiant Light.

In Agnus Dei, Christ's sacrifice is represented by the Lamb of God, in atonement for the sins of mankind. The return of the tonality in D minor semiotizes, here, the weight of a fatality of metaphysical levels ("the death of God"), which is also manifested by the lament sung by the basses. But with the resurrection and salvation of humanity, the section converges on F major in order to express the radiance of Divine Light over the darkness.

Finally, Communio (Lux aeterna), communion with Christ. This communion should be celebrated, sung in the splendor of Divine Light, in the tonalities of C major or D major, but it is performed in D minor. There is a return to Introitus and Kyrie. This is because Mozart wrote this section from an excerpt from the Mass previously composed with the opening excerpt from the

emotivo-volitivo, que aponta para o otimismo que ofereceu a fé cristã com relação à morte e à ressurreição dos homens perdoados e benditos por Deus.

[5] Original text: la experiencia vivida de la agonía que Mozart nos deja aquí. Se trata de la desintegración del ser, pero que nada tiene que ver con un descenso a los infiernos de los condenados; sino con la desintegración que reúne al hombre con la realidad divina.

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Introitus. Thus, for Mozart, in the Requiem, the celebration of Communion with Christ happens together with the mystery of the Glory on the Cross.

In the liturgy of the Catholic Church, the moment of Communion occurs when the faithful communicate the Eucharist and, with it, remember the Death and Resurrection of Christ on the Cross: "Take this and share it among yourselves […] This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me" or "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you." (Lk 22, 17-20, The New American Bible).

In other words, in Mozart's conception, the mystery of faith is present in the Passion and Death of Christ, it is the Glory on the Cross, just like the Gospel of St. John (chapters 18 and 19), where God and humanity (the high and the low, the divine and the human) are present at the same time. This is even one of the characteristics of the Gospel of John, as it turns to the incarnation of the verb: God who, from above, came to human (the earth) and became flesh (through his son, Jesus and his word – the scriptures).

With this small illustration, we demonstrate converging points between the aesthetics of Caravaggio and Mozart: in both, the elevated is represented in the bass. Glory (the high) comes through suffering (on the Cross), that is, in the pain of humanity. Death and Life. In the crucifixion, anguish, abandonment and suffering belong to the human character of Jesus while overcoming and salvation belong to the Divine aspect of him. The divine manifests itself in the human and vice versa. The human being is saved by God while God does it by human means and this alternation prevails as a keynote in the poetics of the two authors and marks the ambivalence of the recorded piece, analyzed below.

III. The Verbivocovisual Architecture of la Conversione di un Cavallo

Coming from the two aesthetics discussed here (Caravaggio and Mozart), the production of Companhia Ludovica Rambelli Teatro is built. In the video, of the 23 works staged by the theater group, 13 works appear, namely: *The Entombment* (1602-1603); *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy* (1606); *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* (1601); *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (1608); *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (1599); *The Flagellation of Christ* (1607-1608); *The Martyrdom of St. Matthew* (1600); *The Annunciation* (1609-1610); *Rest on the Flight to Egypt* (1595-1596); *Narcissus* (1599); *Resurrection of Lazarus* (1609); *Saint Francis in Ecstasy* (1594-1595); and *Bacchus* (1596-1597). Communio, the last part of Mozart's Requiem briefly analyzed, constitutes the discourse of the montage and the setting of the recorded piece.

We consider all the aspects that make up the compositional unit of the video utterance in the constitution of its evaluative (ideological) meaning. That is, musical language (intonation, orchestration, timbre, voice etc), visual language (colors, camera position and movement, material used, order of appearance of frames, bodies, light and shadow play, atmosphere, framing, makeup, facial and body expression, clothing, plans etc) and verbal (name of works, content of what is sung).

This perspective is essential for dealing with the integral architectonic unity of the work in question, since "Every phenomenon functioning as ideological sign has some kind of material embodiment, whether in sound, physical mass, color, movements of the body, or the like" (1973 [1929], p. 11), which makes the reality of these signs expressed objectively, alive and capable of being studied and analyzed.

When thinking about the recorded dramatization, in relation to the works of Caravaggio and Mozart, the interaction between them reveals the explicit three-dimensional material work of language, marked by the technical exercise of *Tableaux Vivant*, with a provisional and apparently rudimentary/random/casual finish (although extremely rehearsed, marked in the time of the music which, in turn, fits into the time of the strategy between theatrical compositional movement and pause).

On the one hand, in baroque paintings, through enunciative marks such as the contrast of light and shadow, facial expressions (mouth and eye contours, forehead movement, rounded shapes as opposed to triangular, square and oval shapes), distortion of the bodies (in contrast to classic rectilinear bodies), refer to the experience of revitalization of the scenes portrayed. After all, Caravaggio, more than representing a given "truth", presents the living reality before the eyes of the beholder. It follows the unfolding of the act in process, hears the human *pathos*, the scream and the painting becomes a photograph that captures and eternalizes the moment.

On the other hand, in Requiem, Mozart builds a musical dramaturgy through the creation and combination of melodic lines, in opposition, with different textures and tones, which give the dramatic element of the piece, so as, as in Caravaggio's painting, express the liveliness of the composition. In other words, the music becomes a narrative action that takes place in the presence of the audience, who not only hear it, but experience the encounter with the Divine, the creation of the painting in a dramaturgical pause. It is precisely this element of the liveliness of the discursive event that Companhia Ludovica takes up and explores in its staging through the movement of the actors and the scenographic pause.

This proposal demonstrates how the expressiveness of acts (Bakhtin, 2010 [1919]) does not constitute the social event only because of the internal elements that compose them, but also because of the

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relationship that our discourses maintain with others, in the enunciative link, in a unique way.

The dramatization *Conversione di un cavallo* enhances the latent expressiveness present in the works of Caravaggio and Mozart, is determined by them, assimilates their tones and re-emphasizes them. Such a proposition is indicated by Bakhtin, when studying *Speech Genres* (1986), as determined

> [...] very frequently the expression of our utterance is determined not only—and sometimes not so much—by the referentially semantic content of this utterance, but also by others' utterances on the same topic to which we are responding or with which we are polemicizing. They also determine our emphasis on certain elements, repetition, our selection of harsher (or, conversely, milder) expressions, a contentious (or, conversely, conciliatory) tone. (1986 [1975], p. 91)

The Russian philosopher adds that the tone is not fixed to the utterance, nor is it determined by it, nor by the speaker's subjectivity, but is revealed in the relationship between utterances. Bearing in mind this consideration about the importance of the constitutive dialogic link of utterances for the composition of their uniqueness, we think about the production of the compositional architectural unit of the dramatization recorded here analyzed in relation to Caravaggio's paintings, Mozart's Requiem and our axiological position, as an other of the statement.

As we have already mentioned, in view of the impossibility of presenting and analyzing all the works that make up the staged play, due to the delimited space, we highlight a moment (Fig. 1) that seems to us better to show the vivacity, as well as the recreation of meanings that permeate so much the works of Caravaggio and Mozart as the company staging, in its entire authorial unit. Thus, we focus on the representation in *Tableaux Vivant* of the painting *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, by Caravaggio, set by the session Communio do *Requiem* by Mozart, marked in the interval from 00:01:21 to 00:01:34 and from which we collected a frame (from a screen print) at 00:01:28, as a photographed frame of Caravaggio's work in a composition recreated and re-signified by the Theater Company, also in dialogue with Mozart's music, picturing the baroque human contradictory ambivalence, configured in another context (21st century) and with another discursive genre (a recorded play that syncretizes theater and video with the technique of *Tableaux Vivant*, which even creates another aesthetic genre: the video play, with another configuration and other enunciative strategies):



Fig. 1: *Judith Beheading Holofernes*: dramatization and reproduction of the work[6]

In a general perspective, the relationship established between the dramatization of the works and Communio indicates an intensification of the theme of the contradiction between man and the divine, from the perspective of and for the human. As we have pointed out, this passage from the Mozartian Requiem presents us with the suffering of Christ on the Cross, the presence of God's sacrifice in and for man: holiness is expressed by the suffering of human beings on the Cross, as Caravaggio portrays in his works. Therefore, the syncresis of Mozart and Caravaggio in the play marks the Company's act of reading, which adds the opposites (humanity and divinity), in an inverted and ambivalent way.

All the pictures staged in the video play also thematize the conjunction of opposites and express contradiction as a constitutive element that gives unity to the work. The staging begins with the representation of Christ being buried and ends with Bacchus, a deity of the Greco-Roman narrative sphere, strongly opposed by Christianity in Rome and who represents the low, the excess, the pagan spring festivals, the Bacchanal ones.

[6] Frame I (above): screen print taken from *Tableaux Vivants* paused, marked on the video space of Companhia Ludovica Rambelli Teatro, at 00:01:28. Table II (below): *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, Caravaggio, 1599. Oil on canvas, 144 cm X 195 cm.

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In the first painting, the lexeme "burial" semantically refers to the idea of humanity, because, like men, Christ is buried (crucified with two thieves), following the rite of men. The figure of Christ (elevated) is narrativized in a human practice (burial).

This same process occurs in the painting *The Flagellation of Christ*, in which, by portraying Peter, Lazarus, Matthew and John the Baptist, Caravaggio paints, respectively, the "Crucifixion", the "Resurrection", the "Martyrdom" and the "Beheading", a semantic set that refers to the glorification of each one to the Christian faith. In this case, biblical humans are deified by suffering and semiotize the man-deity union.

In the case of the paintings of the characters Mary Magdalene and Saint Francis of Assisi, two saints of the Catholic Church (the first, considered the patroness of repentant sinners and the second, the patron of animals and the poor), the contradiction appears in the fact that two saints are portrayed in ecstasy, in the pleasure of the flesh – which, more than causing estrangement, shocks the Church and its faithful.

In *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (Fig. 1), the contrast occurs because it represents an unusual biblical scene for the manifestation of the glory of God. Caravaggio reproduces an episode of extreme violence, which represents the people's resistance against the abuses of authoritarian governments, since, according to the Old Testament, the book of Judith, composed of 16 chapters, was written apocryphally as a stimulus for the struggle of the people against tyranny, in the name of religious faith.

According to Echegary et al (2000), Judith was a widow who, stimulated by the oppression of the people, goes to the enemy army and seduces the commander, Holofernes, who gets involved and has his head cut off by the heroine who, with this act, frees the people. The axiological position of the biblical episode turns to the courage of the people, especially women, who face the authorities, in the name of faith and in favor of freedom.

When considering the context of Counter-Reformation and the crisis (economic, political, and religious) experienced at the time of creation of the painting by Caravaggio, by order, Judith's placidity in act reveals the position of the author-creator in defense of the people, symbolized by the maidservant who follows the heroine closely, watching attentively the beheading of Holofernes, with a cloth in hand, an accomplice of Judith. Holofernes represents, according to Pearlman (2006), "the figure of any dominator with his system of oppression" (p. 321), who agonizes, fragile and helpless before the strength of the people, in contradiction to what the system that governs (violent and merciless) presents.

Caravaggio's act of rebellion in conceiving this painting also reveals itself as an aesthetic and ethical metalinguistic act in defense of the people. By semiotizing Judith and Holofernes as allegorical characters of struggle and oppression, the painter semiotizes his conception of art, artist, language and society, in practice (*pravda*). Art, in this case, pictorial, reflects and refracts life doubly (Voloshinov/Bakhtin, 2003 [1925]). With a formal finish (Medviédev, 2012) that explores the technique of *chiaroscuro* (light and dark), Caravaggio aestheticizes a situation that, even though marked by the short time of the story, personalized by specific characters, extrapolates it, given the thematic content and style of his project of saying, and is eternalized in the great time of culture (Bakhtin, 2018).

The allegorical rebellion also refers to the artist's act, due to the painter's position that, even supported by the Church, calmly decapitates her, like Judith, by using the same weapons as the current power: the hypocrisy of controlled freedom and the control of rebellion - what is marked, according to the study by Lambert (2004), in the X-ray of the painting, which "showed that initially Judith was represented with her breasts bare, with Caravaggio opting to cover them with a veil" later. The brave young biblical widow, with bare breasts, would explain even more, the rebelliousness and irreverence of Caravaggio and would cause greater shock to the Christian public at the time – which could cost the work's disapproval.

This painting by Caravaggio, while inspired by a biblical episode and studies of facial expressions or caricatures by Da Vinci (which is expressed, according to Lambert, in the traces of the maid who accompanies Judith), inspires other works, both from homonymous title (the most famous being that of Goya, from 1820), as well as with other titles and by other authors (if we relate it to Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* , from 1830, we see, with another historical configuration and aesthetic singularity, a dialogue not only thematic but also compositional with Caravaggio – even the woman who represents Liberty is found with her breasts exposed).

According to Bassani & Bellini (1994, p. 278), the model who posed for Caravaggio, the courtesan Filida Melandroni, also incarnated Catarina (from the painting *Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, 1598) and Mary Magdalene (from the portrait of *Martha and Mary Magdalene*, 1598 -1599), both works by Caravaggio. Thus, we perceive, in its aesthetics, a unity of features that make up its poetics (Bakhtin, 1984 [1963]) and its stylistics (Bakhtin, 2015).

In the painting in question, Judith has a peaceful, but decisive countenance, as if the act performed were something frivolous, part of everyday life. Holofernes, in turn, has his position reversed: from imposing general to impotent victim, reduced to an expression of despair, anguish and pain. These are images of men and women that are uncommon in the social imagination, as these subjects, representatives of

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different genders, often occupy opposite positions: the man, in general, in a position of domination and oppression and the woman as subservient. With the inversion carried out, a reflexive criticism is expressed: the courageous woman who rises up against her (and the people's) oppressor and the latter, in a situation of domination, suffering for what was caused, with the same truculent weapons she uses. The act of death, in process, marks the event of justice through the position of rebellion.

The camera's position throughout the entire video is kept at a front angle while the scene is assembled, then it alternates in movements from top to bottom, bottom to top, diagonally, always in close-up. In a constant game of opposites, of ups and downs, left and right that brings the spectator closer and farther from the staging, in movement and pause of the live work.

The predominance of black and white colors in opposition also marks the typical *chiaroescuro* technique of Caravaggio. If the paint is darker, the piece is lighter. The light inputs, in the frame, come diagonally and cross the screen side by side, while, in the video piece, the light is found in the background, behind the staged frame, coming from the window. This difference is also related to the genre and, more specifically, it marks the styles of Caravaggio and Cia Ludovica Teatro, respectively.

The presence of red marks the painful passion (suffering, sacrifice, blood). This aspect semiotizes humanity in the enactment. In contrast, gold and purple refer to the celestial. Not an artificial, idealized, superior and canonical (blue) deity, but a dark, brown, corrupt sanctity, in keeping with the composition of Caravaggio's painting.

Tableaux Vivant reframes the human-divine contradiction existing in pictorial and musical works. The twenty-first century dramatization, with its configuration, displaced in time, is loaded with accents and intonations that compose other senses, with different volitional-emotional tones. According to Bakhtin, Tone, released from phonetic and semantic elements of the word (and other signs) is important. Those signs determine the complex tonality of our consciousness, which serves as an emotional-evaluative context for our understanding (complete, semantic understanding) of the text we read (or hear) and also, in more complex form, for our creative writing (origination) of a text. (1986 [1975], p. 164)

The tone is the guiding element of the enunciative construction. The selection of sign forms (the language units) is carried out according to the capacity of expression of the emotive-volitive tone designed in the subject's discursive project. In the *Conversione de un cavallo* dramatization, the choices of camera position and movement, the lighting focus, the colors, the clothing (type of material used, texture, etc.), the music, the arrangement of the bodies, among other aspects (re)constitute the vivid scene portrayed by Caravaggio, enhanced with Mozart's Requiem.

In the biblical text, the episode narrated between Judith and Holofernes is praised in the name of God, who acts through Judith and does “justice” by intervening in the war and killing the enemy. The human-divine relationship is also exchanged in the sacred book and is revitalized, with authorial stylistic marks in the aesthetics of Caravaggio, Mozart and the Theater Company, with other configurations.

In the video play, which stages Caravaggio's painting and, mainly, in the painting, there is a mixture of sensuality and cruelty, grandeur and despair, sweetness and harshness, youthfulness and old age that are expressed through the faces of Holofernes (of terror before of death), of Judith (of plenitude in face of the salvation – life – of her people) and of the servant (the observer who semiotizes the harshness/hardness of the people's life).

The position of the characters, especially the young widow and the general, reveals the power exercised by one over the other. In the Italian painter's painting, Judith is erect, above Holofernes, who, in addition to being horizontal (from the girl's waist down, in an evident position of surrender), is also leaning downwards, in opposition to her tormentor. Together, they compose a right angle (90 degrees) that semiotizes inverted hierarchization and leveling, almost like a cross (after all, it is about the crucifixion of Holofernes to God/Judith to save the people/his maidservant). In the staging, however, the general's body leans up, towards the young woman and he is almost seated (upright), in a clear confrontation with her, which, in turn, is different from the Caravaggian work, in which Judith is found facing Holofernes, in the video play, she faces the audience, as he turns to the recording, to the spectacle that simulates the painting (without actually being it).

A battle is enacted in the act, in the play, in a different way from that narrated in the bible, in Mozart and in Caravaggio. This resignification marks the Company's position, since, if, on the one hand, the tension between the bodies of the two characters is attenuated, on the other, the female strength is highlighted, as the major arcana of the Force and Temperance of the *tarot*, which semioticize transmutation by reversing positions of domination – instinct is civilized by the domination of the beast. In this case, the strength of the people, iconized by the female figure, challenged by God (in dialogue with the biblical version), who dominates the oppression of the enemy tyrant. Beating him, by killing him, means freeing herself, the people and God himself from valuative stigmas: political authoritarianism, economic misery, gender inequality, and social disparity are overcome with the personified death of the tyrant, who represents the oppressive system.

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The rupture, marked by carnivalized inversion, semiotizes a defense of the excluded and the subjugated. Fragility is strength and tyrannical violence is weakness. This position builds the humanized image of God as a just being, who opposes authoritarianism in choosing the people (his flock). This revitalization confirms Caravaggio's criticism of the Church and society in choosing to paint an episode not so canonical as a retraction (an apology) in an act of rebellious redemption.

From our contemporary perspective, the staging brings up clashes of voices of our time: the feminist struggle against patriarchy. This rereading is an example of conversion, displacement, recreation of meanings and re-signification of objects in space-time existing in the recorded theatrical proposal.

The music integrates the theatrical utterance (which is not made explicit in the painting, although we can potentially hear Holofernes' scream, expressed by the visual traces of his facial expression - mouth positioning and muscle tension in the eyes, forehead, shoulders and the arm that rests on the pillow, still trying to impose itself).

Simultaneously with the construction of the staging for the preparation of the painting, the verse "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine" ("Give them eternal rest, Lord" – our translation) is sung, starting with the high and low voices (low registers in the voices female and male, respectively), followed by the addition of the soprano and the tenor (high registers in the female and male voices, respectively). The singing in *tutti* by the female and male choir recovers the idea of the greatness of the collectivity (the people), supported and defended by God.

If the lows refer to pain and the earth (to the people), the highs refer to the divinities. Thus, "Requiem aeternam" ("Eternal Rest") is conquered by the people, by their struggle and faith; while "dona behold, Domine" ("give them, Lord") reveals supplication and devotion that makes us question the resistance of the people: conditionally accepts ("provided that") by faith, approved by God (and the Church). The victorious outcome positively sanctions Judith's performance because she semiotizes a divine messenger. Outside this circumstance, the fight would be disapproved (or, if we wish, "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus" – "There is no salvation outside the Church") and this is the biblical canonical position questioned by Caravaggio, Mozart and by the Ludovica Teatro Company.

In this game, the highs stand out to recall spiritual supremacy. The fleeing style creates man's stability in the encounter with God and in conjunction with the reenactment, the glory is found in death. Thus, the freedom of the people comes with the death of the enemy. Who is the enemy? Who oppresses the people or displeases God? These two propositions are consistent in the work.

IV. Conclusion

When considering the relationship between art and life semiotized in the video that captures the dramatization in *Tableaux Vivant* from the works of Caravaggio with accompaniment of Requiem, by Mozart, we reflect on the human contradiction that crosses centuries to the present day.

Voloshinov (2003 [1925]) argues that the aesthetic work is born from life and returns to it as a set of reflected and refracted valuations on the aesthetic plane, with a certain stylistic finish (authorial and generic). In the author's words, due to the social structure, the work

It is *open on all sides to the influence of other domains of life*. Other ideological spheres, prominently including the sociopolitical order and the economy, have determinative effect on verbal art not merely from outside but with direct bearing upon its intrinsic structural elements. And, conversely, the artistic interaction of autor, listener, and hero may exert its influence on other domains of social intercourse. (2003 [1925], p. 174)

In the dramatization in *Tableux Vivant* analyzed, this and other issues are updated through the staging of the 23 canvases by Caravaggio. Problems inherent to the contradiction that constitutes human beings reappear in the great period of life and art, re-signified by the verbivocovisual articulation of language, which semiotizes it.

In this framework, it is up to us to reflect: what is the production(s) of sense(s) or signification(s) when re-enacting Caravaggio's works recently, especially through the format of the recorded theatrical presentation, in video, which presupposes an absence, but which wants to be present and alters the entire configuration of the enunciative event, since there is a change in gender?

Thinking about this dislocated performance in relation to the historical trajectory and the situationality of the works is fruitful because it refers to social issues that remain in the great time of cultures, even if reconfigured (as the piece does with the pictorial work of Caravaggio, set by Mozart). The divine humanity and the profane divinity, contrary and contradictorily ambivalent, refer to themes in vogue, with varied finishes, treated in the works and, if we think, in particular, in the current *Judith Beheading Holofernes* framework: oppression and inequality.

When we consider issues such as individualism driven by consumerism, with the exaltation of the self and the erasure of the other (in the era of *selfies*), weakened relationships, virtual lynchings (or, as it is currently known, cancellations), the attempt to return to conservative values, the denial of science and the foundation of truth in God, so that human action is based only on belief, the reconfiguration of human

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miseries stands out. Although the compositional form is different, the thematic content remains, as well as the systemic *modus operandi* to be overcome.

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