

Welcome ArteScienza

Giordano Bruno*

In Sicily – and probably not only, and certainly not exclusively, there – the way of approaching a stranger is to ask, to establish who he looks like. For a new baby this seems normal although it may be less so when applied more broadly. In his essay *L'ordine delle somiglianze*¹ Leonardo Sciascia shows us that this apparent game is not a game at all:

In Sicily “the game of likeness” is a delicate and sensitive way of sounding someone, and instrument for knowing. “Who does he look like” is asked about a new-born baby but also about a business partner, a neighbour, a travelling companion. The same question applies to the Madonna over the altar, to the Pantocrator of Monreale, the monster of Villa Palagonia? There is no order without likeness, nor is there knowledge, or judgement without it. The portraits of Antonello ‘look like’; they are the very idea, the origin, of likeness. Who does the “unknown man” in the Mandralisca Museum look like? The country “Mafioso” or his more sophisticated urban counterpart, the member of parliament sitting on the right-wing, or on the left-wing, benches, or the prince of the forum; he looks like the writer of this article (it has been said); and certainly he looks like Antonello. Try to establish where he stands on the social scale and the specific humanity of the person. Impossible. Is he a nobleman or one of the people? Is he a notary or a peasant, an honest man or a scoundrel? A painter, a poet or a hired killer. He simply “looks like”.

*Honorary Chief Editor of «ArteScienza» and Honorary President of the cultural association "Art and Science", mathematician, director of ISIA Design Roma; gibrun84@gmail.com.

¹ In *Cruciverba*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1967.

Now, what should we wish this newcomer?

I would like it not to “look like”, thus eluding the order of which Sciascia talks.

I know at least that it won't be easy, because “not looking at all like” is not part of the order of things.

Let me say what I would wish it “not look like”:

- specialized magazines for “so-called” specialists. There are many, too many perhaps - excess has become a condition of our world, at least in the western world;

- popular magazines which publish “scoops”, which are trendy, never examine in depth and are too similar to popular TV shows;

- cultural magazines which deal with all kinds of matters, with no thread binding them.

What I would like it to be: an instrument for knowledge, for satisfying curiosity, presenting hypotheses indicating links, relations, interaction, which may or may not be obvious, acting in the midst of the infinite intertwining of threads connecting art and science: the road they travel together, their divergent paths, the opportunities they give each other.

In the end, something which allows us to say simply, «it is not like!».