

IN THE ARTEMIS' KINGDOM WITH THE ATHENA'S SUGGESTION



Raffaella Anania 2000

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A. Anania, *In the Artemis' Kingdom with the Athena's Suggestion*©2014.www.dynamic-psychology.eu

Sometimes it is sufficient “touching” the body with a sensual look for psychologically wounding a girl with virginal trends, imagine you “to touch” her really physically!

The problem is in the terrible quarrel between mind and body!

The Goddess *Artemis* had namely a nice body but also a feminine warrior attitude and a firmly manly face! Often she appeared armed with bows and arrows!



In *Artemis* libido (vital energy) and corporeality (not-sexual) are strongly present not only as abilities necessary for hunting and archery but also as an useful force to preserve own virginity and possibly that of her companions.

In this way, *Artemis* appears the prototype of a strongly free and independent feminine, able to protect itself from the kind of men that sometimes seems quite vulgar, overbearing, arrogant, violent!

But not only that! In fact, the kingdom of *Artemis* is a very complex dimension in which it is not easy to recognize the many different and sometimes contradictory elements that make up it!



Look at this painting by *François Boucher*, 1744, its title is “Zeus and Callisto”! But given that there are two women, where is *Zeus*?



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A. Anania, *In the Artemis' Kingdom with the Athena's Suggestion* ©2014. www.dynamic-psychology.eu

Zeus is there but, as in the myth, he took the form of *Artemis* just to make love with *Callisto* that is the favorite nymph by the Goddess!
And *Callisto* became pregnant!



Eustache Le Suer, 1638

Here we see all the complexity of the world of *Artemis*! An intense mix of masculine and feminine, *anima* and *animus*, oedipal plays and homosexual seduction!

Zeus takes the form of the goddess to seduce the handmaiden *Callisto* who loses her virginity and gets pregnant!

Artemis is *Zeus* that seduces *Callisto*.

Artemis is *Callisto* that joins *Zeus*.

Artemis is herself that joins homosexually *Callisto*!

Artemis is herself that does not tolerate losing her virginity or that her handmaids can lose it!



François Boucher 1742

This is a repetitive story. The nymph *Aura*, by the movements as fast as the wind, was also she a handmaid of the goddess and aspired only to maintain own strength and own virginity, but one day she made the mistake of looking insistently the goddess that was bathing near a waterfall and, admiring the curvy hips and the prosperous breasts of the Goddess, of telling her that no one seeing her so shapely would believed to her inviolable virginity! And the Goddess, as she had made with *Callisto* that she had turned into a bear, retaliated by involving *Dionysus*, who, while *Aura* was sleeping, joined the nymph causing the loss of her virginity! These two episodes make stand out another aspect of *Artemis*: the impetuous temper and her vengeful fury!



Aura, Temple of Asklepios Epidaurus



Artemis, Delo

This daughter of *Zeus* lover of hills, forests and nature suffers from vehement furious reactions when she feels threatened own sacred inviolability! There is something primal in her, the death pulsions against infringers are uncontrolled even if they are companions or handmaids! And in this transpires a wild *animus* in *Artemis*; typical of those who are lacking in impulse control, or of those who belong to fundamentalist cultures! *Dionysus* that represents the most fiery and instinctive part of a person is the prototype of the *animus* that dwells in *Artemis*.

Certainly in the world of the Gods, in the reign of *Artemis* one loves, plots, has strong resentment, there is no strong brakes to revenge! In our world, instead, anger, aggression, hatred are caged, have not sufficient abreaction (emotional discharge) through the relational and social action or through liberating behaviors: it is the “discomfort from civilization”, the “discomfort” from transpersonal teachings, and, from affective blackmail! And several times, especially when one is alexithymic, that is when one is not able to recognize own real inner emotions, that is when one has not knowledge of some of our deep feelings incompatible with our cultural membership or with our family upbringing, one addresses inside himself the death instincts, and therefore, for example, one develops eating disorders!



Paul Laurenzi, 2010

We have two quite treacherous ways to deform our body and to damage us, in other words, to satisfy our death pulsions (or *mortido*) through feeding: a more or less complete rejection of the food up to “starvation” (condition of extreme malnutrition due to long-lasting insufficient nutrition); or, on the contrary, bingeing in such a manner as to alter severely, over time, homeostasis and some important functions of our body.

They are two opposite behaviors, often co-present in the same subject, that unconsciously have the same end: self-destruction, self-annihilation! Someone has said “hunger for death”!



Ray Caesar 1958

But the question is not so simple!

If we observe carefully the young child in his eating habits we can find that often he eats the baby food when he wants to ingratiate himself with the parents, whereas he obstinately refuses food when he wants to rebel against them.

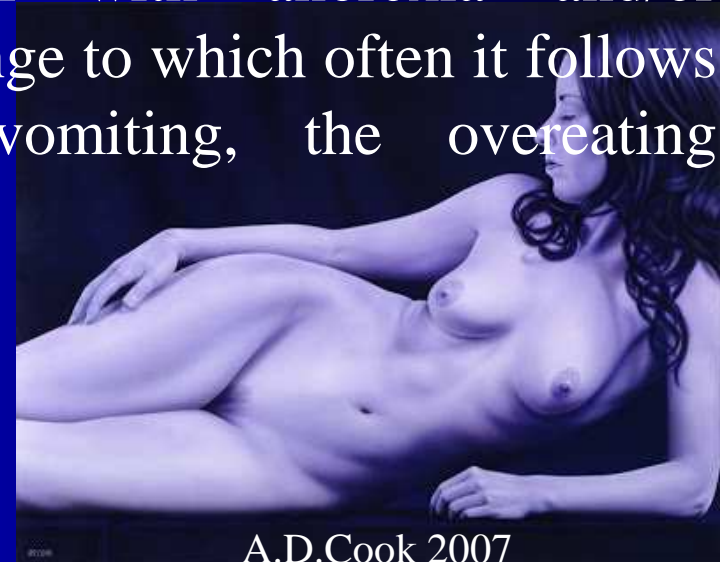
Therefore, we can discover in each alimentary disorder some particular relational situations, in fact, from the point of view of the ecosystemic psychology, the feeding behavior is also considered a communication.

Thus, in the, so-called, “hunger for death” or violent attack to own survival - through the waiver to feed on or through binging up to the far-fetched - we can notice a paradoxical aspect: the will to exist, the desire to be an unique individual and the need to meta-communicate to others this radical and paradoxical attempt of self-assertion!



Often I tend to emphasize that we “nourish” ourselves by our relationships with Others and that also we “nourish” the Others through our relationships with them. Obviously this is a **psychological nourishment**, intellectual but “substantial” of which the human being needs and it is also widely found throughout the animal kingdom, as it is well known to who keeps pets at home!

From this viewpoint it is easy to understand how the “hunger for death” that has been supposed in the eating disorders, in truth, is “**hunger for love**”, therefore a relational empty against which the subject unconsciously tries to rebel with anorexia and/or unconsciously tries to fill with bulimic binge to which often it follows the attempt to evacuate, through vomiting, the overeating compulsively taken!





Pallade Atena, Vienna

In the anorexic patients, the overriding concern is that the body remains quite thin, purified above all from every alimentary “contamination”, devoid of any feature which could exercise sex appeal, pure like that of a vestal: “the material body” must make room to the “spiritualized body”!

Therefore, energy is destructively self-directed, with the unconscious aim of breaking off all relations with own earthly physical dimension, with own mother and with own generative potential!

But what has this to do with *Athena*?

Artemis, we have seen, uses her energies to protect women or to retaliate when she feel betrayed by them.

Athena uses her vital energy to compete with men and fight them, to beat them! At this purpose she needs the *logos*, the identification with her father *Zeus* - the only possible identification because, according to myth, she was born from head of her father who had swallowed his

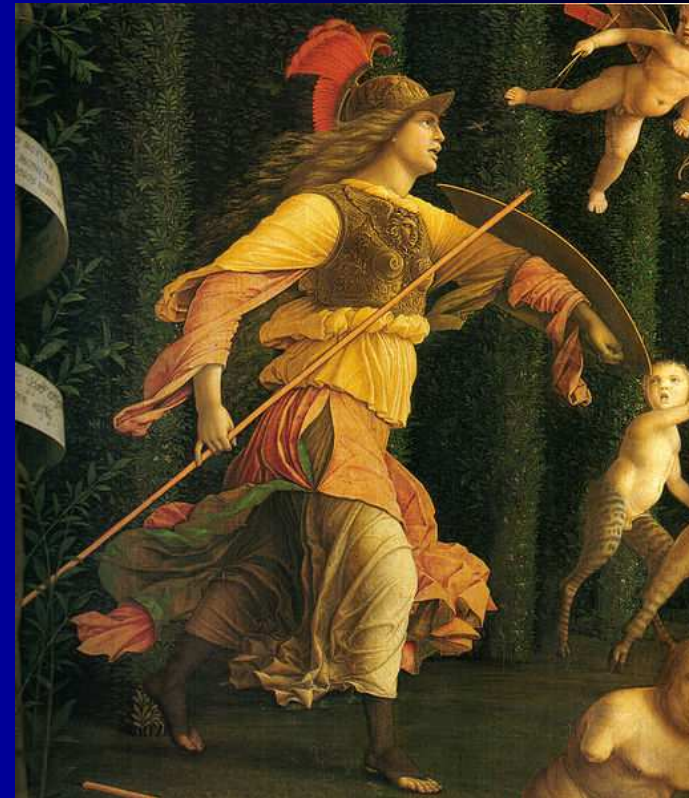


wife *Metis* after having lain with her and having convinced her to turn into a drop of water. Therefore, *Athena*, suffering from the lack of mother and of maternal care, cannot identify if not with a warrior male, a male that through the *logos* must always be able to devise a fighting strategy! Of course *Athena* is totally lacking in *eros* and, in addition, she hates femininity because she repute it too voluptuous and poorly equipped for independence.

In my opinion, in eating disorders it is as if the *virginal sacredness* of *Artemis* and the *tenacious fighting spirit* of *Athena*, with her hostility toward most aspects of the *sexualized female*, together mobilized from early adolescence in the same person! But this is a feminine, it seems to me, more and more insistently emerging!



Guillaume Seignac 1899

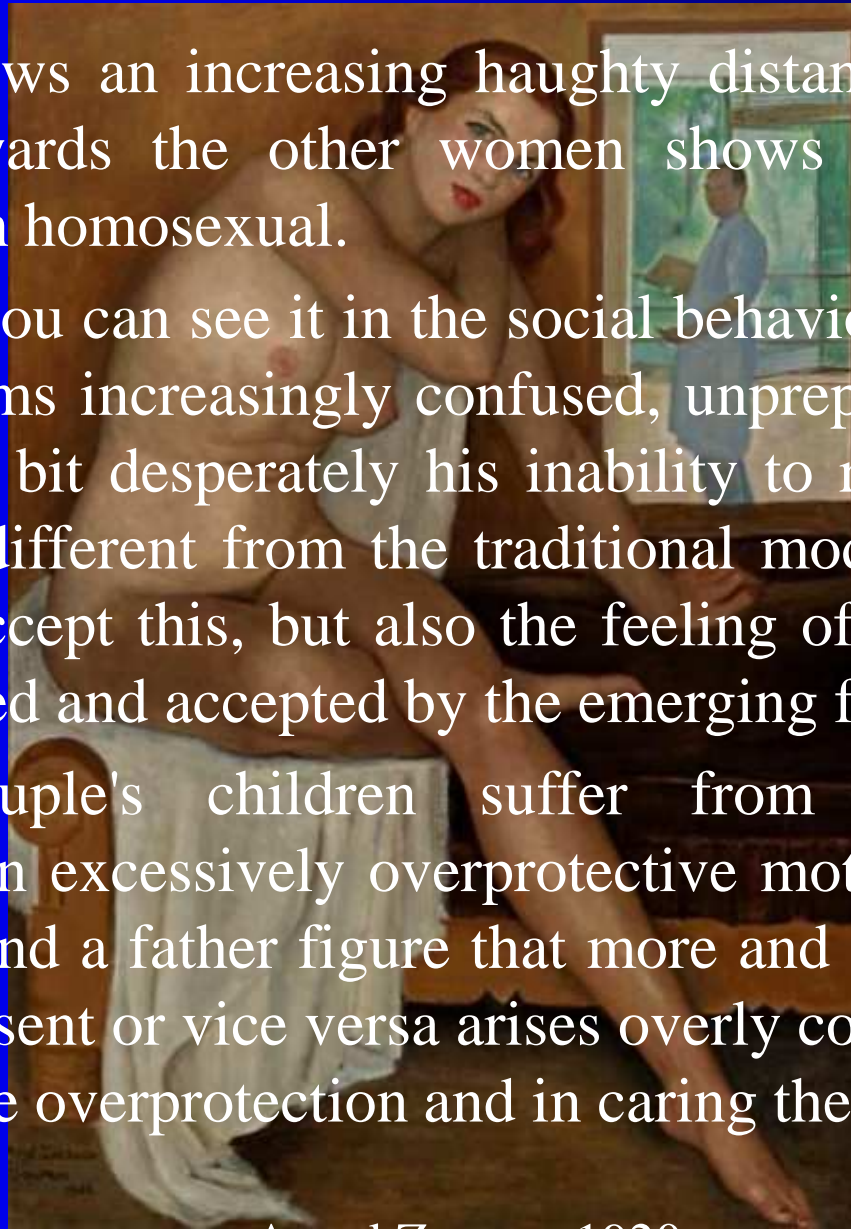


Andrea Mantegna 1499-1502

This feminine shows an increasing haughty distance from the male gender while towards the other women shows a always greater seductive approach homosexual.

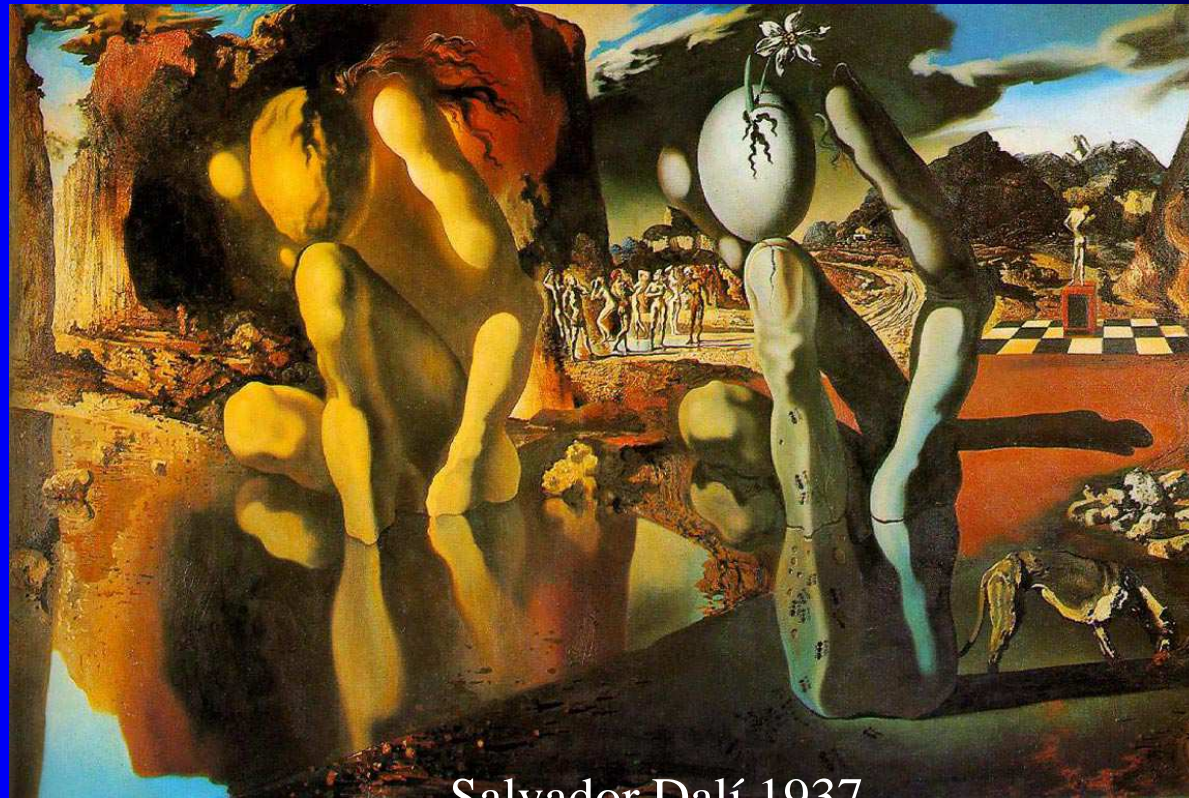
While the male - you can see it in the social behavior, art, particularly in the songs - seems increasingly confused, unprepared, laments and cries sometimes a bit desperately his inability to relate to a woman that now is very different from the traditional model, and therefore, the difficulty to accept this, but also the feeling of not being in turn estimated welcomed and accepted by the emerging feminine!

The modern couple's children suffer from parental cliches characterized by an excessively overprotective mother figure, brittle, cold, narcissistic and a father figure that more and more moves away until to become absent or vice versa arises overly competitive with the female figure in the overprotection and in caring the children!



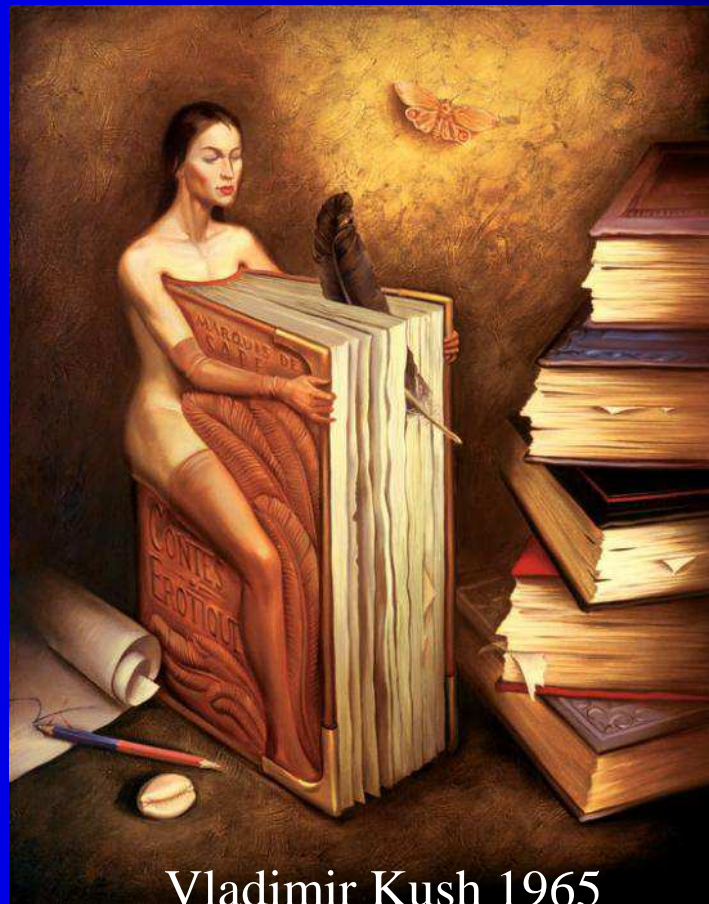
Angel Zarraga 1920

I will not dwell on the relational dynamics of the family ecosystem that have been studied quite thoroughly by the different psychotherapeutic schools that have dealt of eating disorders! Instead I will try to frame this category of disorders within the type of *contemporary collective unconscious* that is offered by our era: the **post-modernity!**



Salvador Dalí 1937

But what interests me here is to highlight that the increase in eating disorders in our time is also paradoxically an expression of the growing **loneliness of contemporary man**, and especially of the very young, considering that we live in the **era of the triumph of communication!**



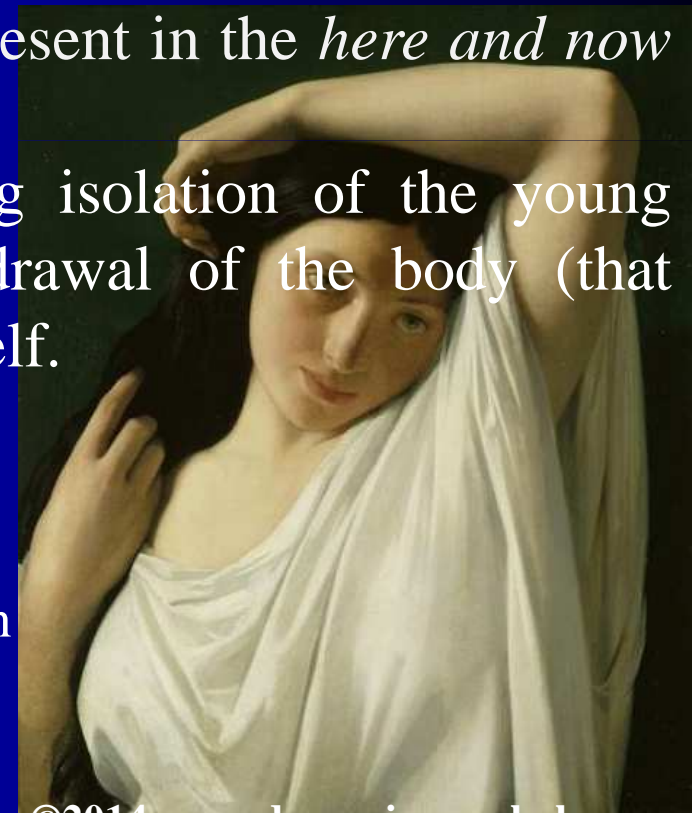
Vladimir Kush 1965

Internet, mass media, personal blogs, face-book, etc. propose an interpersonal communication growingly diffused but also more and more stereotyped and at great physical distance among individuals, at the expense of the real meeting, namely not virtual.

But we must not forget that our *psychological dimensions* live and are realized mainly through the *physical body* which is also an *emotional body*, namely our *psychological being* is also realized through that *body* lived among persons that are really present in the *here and now* of their *existential* (space-temporal) *field*.

On the contrary today there is a growing isolation of the young individual in his own room and a withdrawal of the body (that ultimately is our most intimate room) on itself.

Hippolyte Flandrin
1809-1864

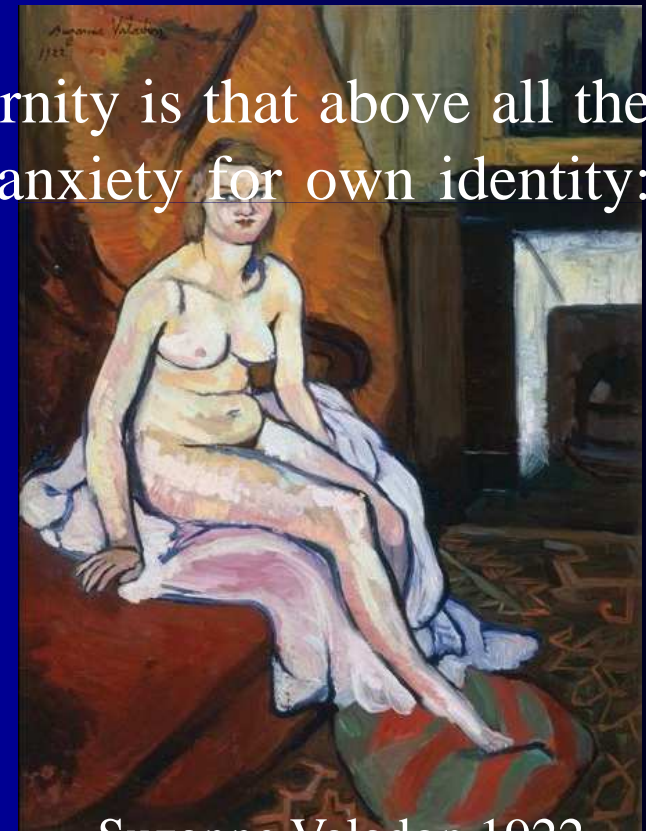


The cultural stereotypes exacerbate the psychological problems of identity in the most young persons: the family and society intrude so invasively in the way of being of adolescents to prevent them from differentiating, reaching own autonomy and *individuation as unique and unrepeatable* person. In several other cases, as we have seen, it has influence not only the absence of the father but also the simultaneous absence of the mother!

Therefore, the typical problem of post-modernity is that above all the youngest people live in a constant obscure anxiety for own identity: increasingly weak, fragile, mutable!

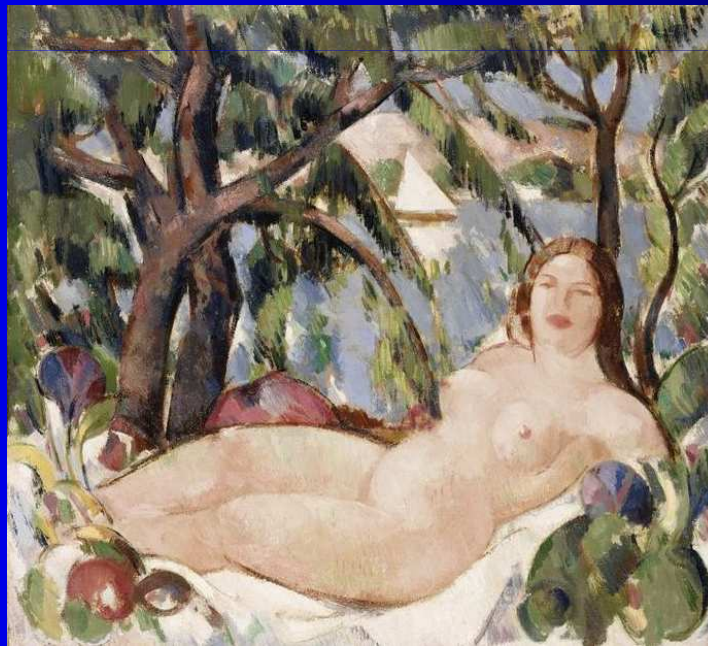


In other words, a growing
“*dis-identity syndrome*”!



Suzanne Valadon 1922

Certainly the alienation from the *Other* and the desire for the *Other* has ended up generating a growing sense of inner emptiness. So sudden, intense, temporary (ineffective in the long term) strong emotions try to find an illusory shelter to the lack of relational objects, and, from this, the search for intense sensations (*sensation seeking*), doping substances (*drugs addiction*), or even, what interests us here, the compulsive tendency to food “*binge eating disorder*” (**BED**).



John Duncan Fergusson
1874-1961

On the other hand, the social psyche, through the media, idolizes skinny models but simultaneously idolizes buxom female figures that are very attractive sexually! In this context, an increasing number of adolescents seem to take the ambivalent double binary of being subdued to the cultural stereotypes but by implementing a paradoxical way of rebellion against them!



Paul Laurenzi, 2007

<http://www.conpsicologia.it/anoressia-e-disturbi-alimentari-lapproccio-sistemico-familiare.html> In a website I found this composition!

Also you yield to
madness
of our strange time
that asks us forever
what we are not
and what we do not
think:
to dress with air
and to eat wind
aimed to have
endless
our skinny four bones
on the cover,



so that they say
“you are beautiful”
even if annihilated
although we pull
on
like a threadbare
blanket
an alien skin
and now too large
but much,
much in fashion.
(Anonymous)

The above excerpt leads me to conclude this way: if we want to find a way to stem the problems of which we are discussing here today and the others that underlie them, I think we should together develop a more “ecologic” view of life according to *the conception of an ecosystem (natural and interpersonal) in which the individual can develop a continuous exchange between the interior world and the external world and in active form because, becoming more deeply aware, has the possibility of usefully self-determining, self-adapting and, besides, participating, together with the others, in the construction of a common satisfying life-context.* About this system the agora must be the most pulsating and vital place!



**THANKS FOR YOUR TOLERANT ATTENTION
I HOPE I HAVE AROUSED YOUR INTEREST
AND I HAVE NOT BORED TOO MUCH YOU!**

Alfredo Anania



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