

## FROM ZARATHUSTRA'S POETRY TO THE AESTHETICS OF METAPHYSICAL ART

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For a number of years now, two dechirican scholars, Paolo Baldacci and Gerd Roos, have been following in André Breton's footsteps by putting forth a theory that de Chirico was radically dependent for his painting and his ideas on his brother Andrea, in art Alberto Savinio. Indeed, they even sustain that the first manifesto of Metaphysical Painting was the work of Alberto Savinio. Their theory initially put forth by Baldacci in his 1997 book *De Chirico, the Metaphysical Period, 1888-1919*<sup>1</sup> and successively by Roos in his 1999 publication *Giorgio de Chirico e Alberto Savinio, Ricordi e documenti. Monaco Milano Firenze 1906-1911*<sup>2</sup> is newly proposed on every occasion, as it was once again not long ago at the Winterthur exhibition in which the recently rediscovered painting *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*, 1910, was exhibited.<sup>3</sup> These ideas, which were discussed on occasion of the *Die Andere Moderne* exhibition in Düsseldorf in 2001<sup>4</sup>, will be looked at again in light of new developments, as will the interpretation of the painting, to which much study has already been dedicated.

### Dating the Birth of Metaphysics

The first point of this discussion regards the date of the above mentioned painting, which according to Maurizio Calvesi is attributable to the artist's stay in Florence from March 1910 to July 1911, more specifically the summer of 1910, whilst Baldacci believes that a group of letters that de Chirico wrote to his friend Fritz Gartz in Munich<sup>5</sup> is proof that the painting was executed while de Chirico was still in Milan (June 1909 - March 1910) and working in close contact with his brother from whom he would have drawn fundamental motifs for his pictorial poetics. According to Baldacci, these letters allow for a reconstruction of events which proves that de Chirico falsified the account of his personal and spiritual development during this period, in contradiction to his Memoirs where he wrote

<sup>1</sup> P. Baldacci, *De Chirico, The Metaphysical Period, 1888-1919*, translated by Jeffery Jennings, Bullfinch, New York 1997.

<sup>2</sup> G. Roos, *Giorgio de Chirico e Alberto Savinio. Ricordi e documenti. Monaco Milano Firenze 1906-1911*, Edizioni Bora, Bologna 1999.

<sup>3</sup> *Giorgio de Chirico, Werke 1909-1971 in Schweizer Sammlungen*, curated by G. Roos e D. Schwarz, Kunstmuseum, Winterthur, August 23 - November 23, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> See R. Dottori, *De Chirico, Savinio and the Other Face of Modernity*, in "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico", n. 1-2, 2002, pp. 321-324.

<sup>5</sup> The correspondence in question consists of 12 letters dating from July 1908 to January 1911 sent to Fritz Gartz, ten of which were written by G. de Chirico, one by his mother Gemma Cervetto de Chirico, and one by his brother Andrea de Chirico in Giorgio's handwriting. The letters were published by G. Roos, *op. cit.*, pp. 422-430 in the original German. Photocopies of the letters are published in this Periodical, with German transcription and are translated into English for the first time, pp. 521-567.

that he painted works inspired by Böcklin and by Romanticism during his stay in Milan and that only in Florence began to compose his newly inspired metaphysical paintings, fruit of a new cultural maturation: "The minimization of the Milanese period and the playing down of his Böcklin phase served the purpose of hiding or diminishing the importance of his close collaboration with his brother Alberto. His intention was to represent himself as the unique and exclusive inventor of Metaphysical Art."<sup>6</sup> Now, besides the fact that such judgement – indeed truly insulting to the artist – is a mere conjecture on the part of Baldacci, and besides the fact that Savinio only began painting twenty years after de Chirico, it remains to be proven that the letters de Chirico wrote to his friend Fritz Gartz in Munich, discovered and published by Roos in the above mentioned book, allow for the history surrounding the discovery of Metaphysical Art to be rewritten. One of the letters, considered of prime importance for the identification of the two paintings *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* and *The Enigma of the Oracle*, presents a problem as to its effective date as two dates are written at the top: what seems to be "January" 26 and July 24, 1910, which is crossed out. In this letter we read:

1) "What I have created here in Italy is neither very big nor profound (in the old meaning of the word), but formidable. This summer I painted paintings that are the most profound that exist in the absolute."

2) "Do you know for example what the name of the most profound painter who ever painted on earth is? [...] I will tell you: his name is Arnold Böcklin, he is the only man who has painted profound paintings"

3) "Now, do you know who the most profound poet is? You will probably say right away Dante or Goethe or yet others. This is totally misunderstood. The most profound poet is Friedrich Nietzsche."

4) "When I told you my paintings are profound, you must have thought they were gigantic compositions with many naked figures trying to overcome something, like those painted by Michelangelo, the stupidest of all painters. No, my dear friend, it is completely another matter – profoundness as I understand it and as Nietzsche understood it, is found elsewhere than where it has been searched for until now. My paintings are small, the biggest 50-70 cm, but each of them is an enigma, each contains a poem, an atmosphere [*Stimmung*] that cannot be found in any other painting. When I exhibit them, possibly in Munich this spring, it will be a revelation for the whole world."

5) "I am the only man who has understood Nietzsche – all of my paintings demonstrate this."<sup>7</sup>

6) "I have many other things to tell you, for example that now, my brother and I have composed the most profound music."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See P. Baldacci, *Zum Gemälde. L'énigme d'un après-midi d'automne von 1909*, in *Giorgio de Chirico. Werke 1909-1971 in Schweizer Sammlungen*, curated by G. Roos and D. Schwarz, Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Richter Verlag, Winterthur 2008, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> This statement alone is enough to discredit the theory that de Chirico felt in debt to his brother, as he states that he is the only one who has understood Nietzsche, evidently the same is not true for his brother, or at least not as he intends it for himself, even if they "composed the most profound music" together.

<sup>8</sup> See G. Roos, *op. cit.*, p. 242. The photocopy of the original letter is published in the section of plates outside the text from p. 17 on.

According to Roos, the above demonstrates that the paintings in question are the two paintings: *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* and *The Enigma of the Oracle*, exhibited in Paris in 1912, given that their dimensions more or less correspond, although the height of the paintings is respectively 45 and 42 cm and not 50 cm. There is something of even greater importance that does not correspond and that is the fact that on April 11, 1910 de Chirico wrote to Gartz (who had sent him the Secession exhibition forms he had asked for), saying he no longer intended to show his work as the paintings he had spoken of were too profound and would seem out of place and would not be understood (it is obvious he was referring to paintings executed in the summer of 1909).

Roos and Baldacci's theory (which they no longer even consider a hypothesis!) consists in two key affirmations: the first, that Metaphysical Art was discovered *in Milan* – and not in Florence as the artist stated –, and the second, that this occurred *in 1909*, therefore a year earlier than that which de Chirico declared by signing his paintings 1910 and confirming as much in his Memoirs. Apart from historical accuracy, the real victim of their theory is the artist's integrity, as Baldacci claims de Chirico falsified his personal history in order to "obscure, or at least place in secondary importance, his close collaboration with his brother Alberto". Besides being extremely offensive, such a statement is illogical as the two brothers were together even in Florence where they moved in March 1910.

By way of the letters published by Roos, the entire thematic development of de Chirico's paintings has been taken into consideration again, with hasty and simplistic conclusions. In his first publication<sup>9</sup> Roos did not draw such clear-cut conclusions as he would in his latest exposé but rather, left two or three possibilities open: the first, that de Chirico painted his Böcklin-style paintings in Monaco and the paintings inspired by Nietzsche, therefore truly metaphysical, in the summer-autumn of 1909 in Milan; the second, which is the traditional interpretation based on de Chirico's affirmations<sup>10</sup>, is that he painted his enigmatic or metaphysical paintings in Florence, once his Milanese Böcklinesque period had ended; the third possibility, which Roos has come to maintain definitively, is that in the summer of 1909 in Milan de Chirico first painted the Böcklin-style paintings and successively his works inspired by Nietzsche. According to the third hypothesis the paintings of de Chirico's most personal style, enigmatic or metaphysical, Nietzschean and Böcklinesque, would have been painted in Milan. But Roos thinks this is unlikely as he reasons thus: if de Chirico painted in the summer of 1909 the profound paintings inspired by Nietzsche's poetry (small canvases), then he would have had to paint the Böcklin inspired works (large canvases) that have survived, in Florence. Although it seems rather unlikely that the artist, after writing the letter that is presumed to have been written in January 1910 in which he gave an account of the work he achieved in the summer, could have painted a painting like *Battle of the Centaurs*. There is actually no reason not to believe that this painting was painted in Milan during de Chirico's Böcklinesque period. There is also nothing strange in considering that the end of Böcklin's influence occurred in stages, while the artist devel-

<sup>9</sup> W. Schmied, G. Roos, *Giorgio de Chirico. München 1906-1909*, Akademie der bildenden Künsten, Munich 1994, pp. 172-181.

<sup>10</sup> See the English translation of the Angelo Bardi autobiography *The Life of Giorgio de Chirico*, in which the artist wrote: "He spent his first Italian year in Milan. During this period he painted works in which the influence of Böcklin was still all too evident. He then destroyed these paintings." In "Metafisica. Quaderni della Fondazione Giorgio e Isa de Chirico", n. 5-6, Rome, 2006, pp. 496-499. Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/1 (1911-1945). Romanzi e scritti critici e teorici*, edited by A. Cortellessa, Bompiani, Milan 2008, pp. 830-837.

oped his new and personal style in which Böcklinesque iconography combined with Nietzsche's poetry gave way to a new pictorial poetics.

How then should the painting *The Enigma of the Oracle* be considered: is it work inspired by Nietzsche's profound poetry or by a certain kind of lyricism of ancient Greece<sup>11</sup> and therefore "metaphysical", like *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*, and thus, if we follow Baldacci and Roos, and even Calvesi, no longer Böcklinesque? However, the main icon of this painting is precisely Böcklin's *Ulysses*. And is it not this same icon that we see (although headless and with a differently shaped silhouette) in *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*? If these two paintings belong to "the most profound that exist in the absolute" are they not also inspired by Böcklin, whom the painter calls in this very letter the most profound painter? If this is the case, then we can not consider them as the manifestation of the new painterly poetics the author is enthusiastic about, which are instead fully visible in *The Enigma of the Hour*.

With regard to de Chirico's account of his Böcklin period, the paintings executed primarily in Milan can be considered as the following: *Battle of the Centaurs*, *Prometheus*, *Triton and Siren*, and a work with a very different symbolic content of religious ascent entitled *Procession on a Mountain*, which are paintings undoubtedly precedent to *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* and *The Enigma of the Oracle*. In this same period which de Chirico defines as his Böcklin period dating 1908-1909, we find *Serenade*, which is no longer uniquely romantic inasmuch as its imagery tends towards a new kind of symbolism, with allegorical figures such as the veiled Aphrodite, referring to the artist's mother, along with other icons such as Janus, the god with two faces as a symbol of the flow of time into the past and the future and a shepherd's crook, as a symbol of wisdom and paternal guidance. This reference to the artist's personal life is woven together with motifs of ancient Greece in *The Departure of the Argonauts*, in which a statue of Pallas Athena is seen at the right of the two Argonauts – de Chirico and his brother Andrea –, in front of which a propitiatory sacrifice of animals is laid. The circular temple or tholos, found in the background, is an element that will be seen later in the metaphysical paintings.

We see here how Böcklinesque symbolism, limited to a mere representation of mythical content, manages to flow into allegory and specifically into an allegory of the artist's own life: the painter born in Greece, a land with its ancient history which inspired Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy, which de Chirico felt very close to at this time. Here, we see the path toward the first Enigmas, in which Böcklin's influence is still present in the iconology, even if the painter is well on his way to a decisive personal style. What differentiates these paintings from the more characteristic Böcklin-style paintings resides not only in the treatment of myth, which re-emerges in a personal key of symbolic allegory (an event which would later become a constant feature in Modern Art<sup>12</sup>), but in the technique with which they are executed and especially the dense, strong and compact use of colour, to the extent of requiring a strong demarcation line, similar to that used by Gauguin.

<sup>11</sup> G. de Chirico, *The Memoirs of Giorgio de Chirico*, Peter Owen, London 1971, pp. 60 and 65.

<sup>12</sup> This thesis was initially proposed by the well-known critic Paul de Man who Derrida frequently expressed respect for and who he recognized as the founder of Deconstructuralism along with P. Riffaterre. See the collection of P. de Man's famous works in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust*, New Haven 1979, and in *The Resistance to the Theory*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1986.

It must also be noted that the predominately narrative or symbolic passages found in de Chirico's first paintings become essentially enigmatic in the new ones, in which Böcklin's Ulysses takes on an enigmatic quality in the total economy of the composition, where he is portrayed both as an oracle on a terrace with pre-historic pavement and as a renewed figure of Dante, beheaded in an unreal piazza. If the Nietzschean theme of enigma is more decisive here than in the previous Böcklin-style paintings, it must not be forgotten that this occurs while Böcklinesque iconography is still maintained, at least in these two initial Enigmas. This is indication that the liberation from Böcklin's influence and the elaboration of the artist's personal poetics occurred in stages and was a transformation enacted not exclusively for philosophic reasons, but rather, through pictorial innovation. Hence, Roos is mistaken in saying that with *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* (fig. 1) "the change from the paradigm of Böcklin, the most profound painter, to Nietzsche, the most profound poet"<sup>13</sup>, occurs, because the iconography in this painting is, in fact, still influenced by Böcklin. Such an assumption is also incorrect due to the fact that the pictorial poetics, understood as the sum of one's personal means of expression, will never depend exclusively on philosophical-literary reasoning. If anything, de Chirico's poetics are related to the poetry of autumn, based on *Stimmung*, specifically the atmosphere of the autumn afternoon experienced in 1911 in Turin in remembrance of Nietzsche, of which the painter spoke in his Memoirs<sup>14</sup> and is therefore something he owes to no one.

In fact, in the first two Enigmas, which have similar pictorial qualities, we find that particular melancholic feeling that brings Nietzsche's Eternal Return to mind, as well as a feeling of satisfaction conferred through the atmosphere of the autumn afternoon, described by de Chirico in the letter dated between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of January, 1911. It is therefore quite plausible that the paintings executed between the summer of 1909 to the spring of 1910 were works the painter rejected as too Böcklinesque and which in part he later destroyed. The first two Enigmas painted in the summer-autumn of 1910 are the paintings with which he had finally found his identity not only as a poet, but also as a painter. This is the base he then continued to develop with his paintings of 1911-1912 in Paris. In the letter dated December 26, 1910, the artist declared he had created something "formidable". In his recent article on this subject, Maurizio Calvesi<sup>15</sup> remarked on the use of the adjective "formidable" (underlined in the letter), comparing it with the adjective "profound" that de Chirico had used to describe his Böcklinesque paintings, which at that time had been surpassed.

We get a sense of just how deeply de Chirico's recent discoveries have touched him from the tone with which he expresses his enthusiasm for Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in his letters to Fritz Gartz. In the letter dated between January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, de Chirico refers to his letter of December 26, 1910, in which he defined Michelangelo as the most stupid of artists and far from the Nietzschean idea of *Superman* (*Übermensch* – *Overman*). It is obvious that Gartz had raised some questions regarding this statement to which de Chirico responded: "You misunderstood my words when I said that Michelangelo was a stupid artist. Now that I know a new world he seems too coarse and insignificant. Because I have

<sup>13</sup> See G. Roos, *op. cit.*, p. 315. The image of the painting is found in the Italian text *Dalla poesia di Zarathustra...*, in this Periodical, p. 97.

<sup>14</sup> G. de Chirico, *The Memoirs...*, cit., p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> See M. Calvesi, *De Chirico "fiorentinus" dalla metafisica (1910) al museo in De Chirico e il museo* curated by M. Ursino, November 20, 2008 - January 25, 2009, Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna, Rome, Electa, 2008, p. 36.

drunk from another source and a new and marvellous thirst burns my lips now – how can I possibly continue to believe in such artists? I know what you are thinking when you ask me: ‘is David not a superman?’ This is how I once felt. [...] but now a new air has inundated my soul, a new song has reached my ears and the whole world appears totally changed – the autumn afternoon has arrived, the long shadows, the clear air, the serene sky, in a word: Zarathustra has arrived, do you understand? Do you understand the enigma these words hold, the great cantor has arrived, he who speaks of eternal return, he whose song has the sound of eternity? It is with a new magnifying glass that I now examine the other great men and many seem terribly small and coarse and some even smell bad – Michelangelo is too coarse –. I have thought these problems over for a long time and can no longer be mistaken. It is only with Nietzsche that I can say I have begun a real life.”

It is clear how the Nietzschean philosophic theme enters into the paintings *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* and *The Enigma of the Oracle*. This will be even more the case for the successive paintings, starting with *Enigma of the Hour* and ending with the paintings of the Ariadne series. There is no doubt that Böcklinesque iconography is employed to express the Nietzschean feeling of the autumn afternoon – long shadows, clear air and serene sky – especially when compared to the paintings that would later be called “metaphysical” by Apollinaire. It must be pointed out that this letter was written in January 1911 after three full seasons spent in Florence (from spring 1910). For both its enthusiasm and style, the letter corresponds perfectly to the December 26, 1910 letter in which de Chirico said he had created the “most profound paintings that exist in the absolute”. It is extremely improbable that an entire year could have past for such an exchange to take place (as Roos erroneously supposes that this letter is dated January 26, 1910), also because Gartz always answered his friend’s letters almost immediately. A disagreement on the theme of Nietzsche’s *Superman* or *Overman* and de Chirico’s statements regarding Michelangelo’s paintings and sculptures could not have taken an entire year to be clarified. This causes one to ask one’s self what the real date of the letter actually is (of which only a photocopy, and not the original, is available for examination). The dating of this letter is indeed critical as it is double: the first date is “Florence 24 Juillet” with “1910” written underneath; “Juillet” is crossed out and the “24” transformed into “26”. Above the crossed-out month of July we find, in de Chirico’s handwriting “*Januarius*” or “*Januarii*” and not simply “*Januar*” in German. The letter, which begins with New Years greetings, could thus be dated to the end of December 1910. As Calvesi has noted, “July” is crossed out, as no-one who is sending New Years greetings can think they are in the month of July. It is much more likely that the letter was begun in the summer, on July 24, then dropped and picked up again on the 26<sup>th</sup> of *Januarius*, which is not *Januar*, as Roos believes, but can only be December. It is extremely likely that at the end of December, when de Chirico wanted to send seasons greetings, he substituted “July” with “*Januarii*”, that is, the month of Janus, the god of doors. It is also for this reason that he did not change the year 1910, not because he forgot to, but because it was still effectively 1910, and more precisely, December 26, 1910. Janus, the god of doors is in fact always represented as a head with two faces, one at the front and one at the back, looking both at who enters and who exits through the door; December 26<sup>th</sup> is the moment when one exits 1910, and is a period when one can use the name *Januarius*, which indeed has symbolic meaning.

The remainder of the correspondence, which becomes increasingly dense, is confirmation of the above. De Chirico wrote another two letters, one on December 28, 1910 and one on January 3, 1911, in which he asked Gartz for help in organizing his brother's concert in Munich, to be held on January 23 or 24, or if not, in February (although this turned out not to be necessary). Then there is the letter which was written sometime between January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, when de Chirico received the news of the suicide of Fritz's brother Kurt, an event which profoundly shocked him. In the meantime, Gartz must also have commented on de Chirico's December 26<sup>th</sup> letter as in this same letter, after expressing his shock provoked by Kurt's death, and commenting on the depth of the German soul, de Chirico endeavoured to explain to Gartz what he had meant with what he had written regarding Michelangelo. The two letters full of enthusiasm for Nietzsche and de Chirico's new direction in painting are of the same tenor and content, hence the first letter could not have been written on January 26, 1910, but was indeed written on December 26, 1910.

Therefore, the "most profound paintings that exist in the absolute" were conceived in the summer of 1910. Instead, the paintings de Chirico decided not to exhibit at the Secession show, as he states in his April 11, 1910 letter, must have been painted in 1909 and are hence precedent to the letter dated "Poseidione 1909" in which he asked Gartz to send him the Secession regulation forms. Some of these works are known today, although according to the Angelo Bardi autobiography there were other paintings that the artist destroyed because he considered Böcklin's influence in those works as too strong. Such a decision could be the result of an excess of enthusiasm or, contrarily, the artist's inadequate mastery of his stylistic abilities that resulted in a dependency on Böcklin, or even an excessive intellectualism.

Indeed, even Gerd Roos has had to ask himself what were the paintings that de Chirico painted between 1909 (the date Roos assigns *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*) and the summer of 1911 (other than *Enigma of the Hour*, which was painted in Florence) since *Morning Meditation* and *Autumnal Meditation* were both painted in Paris.<sup>16</sup> Even he considers it impossible that the artist could have only painted two or three paintings during the entire period, since the Böcklin inspired works were previous to this. Such considerations show how Roos' own theory backfires against him. It is much more logical to suppose that from the summer of 1909 to the spring of 1910 de Chirico painted works which later, with a more detached vision, he decided not to show at the Munich exhibition (see the April 11, 1910 letter) and a number of these works he then destroyed. The subsequent contact with the Florentine environment and his interest in Nietzsche and enthusiasm for his thinking then roused him to begin conceiving paintings of a completely new style inspired by *Zarathustra*, based specifically on his "revelations", which resulted in the first two Enigmas in question. Convinced to have found a new direction in painting, de Chirico wrote to Gartz after Christmas on December 26<sup>th</sup> offering New Year's greetings. Convinced to have found his new path in painting, of which he speaks with regard to Nietzsche, he salutes January as "Janus" the god of doors (*ianua*: door) as the month when he too was entering into a new period of health after the illness that prohibited him from working and had obliged him to take a period of rest in Vallombrosa, of which he speaks in his autobiography and, cancelling

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<sup>16</sup> See G. Roos, *op cit.*, 1999, p. 314.

"Julliet" (July), which was written on the sheet of paper, he writes "*Januarii*". When he moved in July 1911 to Paris, he began working once again and newly applied himself to his project of Nietzschean painting. The two Enigmas in question, besides being mature, well thought out paintings, which de Chirico decided to exhibit later in Paris, are paintings of an accomplished mastery of means and a new poetics that lead the way to *Enigma of the Hour* and to successive paintings conceived in Paris.

As Calvesi has remarked, the fact that de Chirico painted *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* once he was established in Florence can also be inferred by his account (written in Paris) of how this painting came into being: "Indeed, it wasn't the first time I had seen this square..."<sup>17</sup>, which means he was very familiar with the piazza at the time. The Böcklin inspired paintings were painted prior to his stay in Florence, in other words prior to the spring of 1910 and therefore before the paintings of his new vision, conceived after his reading of Nietzsche.

What is certain is that it was in the autumn that his pictorial language ripened, based on his exaltation for the poetry of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.<sup>18</sup> It is very probable that he read Nietzsche in German, a language, which, as demonstrated by the letters written to Gartz, he had a very good grasp of. As referred by Wieland Schmied, as well as by another person<sup>19</sup>, de Chirico would recite long passages of Nietzsche from memory, which he had studied as one studies poetry. This can only be *Zarathustra*, which in German is composed practically in verses, much like Biblical verses.<sup>20</sup>

### The Poetics of Metaphysical Art – Between de Chirico and Savinio

It does not really matter, of course, whether the two paintings were painted in Milan or in Florence. What is important is that with these paintings de Chirico recognized his way, or the start of his pictorial poetics, which he would later call Metaphysical Art, and it is only with these two paintings that he broke away from Symbolism and the narration of myth, typical to Böcklin, as can be seen in his painting *Centaur in the Village Blacksmith Shop*. In his 1921 article regarding Böcklin, de Chirico observed how in the painting, the peasants and children looking on the scene have a ghostly look that can be found in the work of Paolo Uccello or of Giotto. Whereas the body of the

<sup>17</sup> G. de Chirico, *Méditations d'un peintre. Que pourrait être la peinture de l'avenir in Il meccanismo del pensiero. Critica, polemica, autobiografia, 1911-1943*, edited by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, Einaudi, Turin 1985, pp. 31-40. Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/L...*, cit., pp. 649-652.

<sup>18</sup> Roos published the account written by the Greek painter Dimitris Pikionis, who was de Chirico's classmate at the Munich Academy of Art, of a chance meeting with de Chirico that occurred in Paris, on which occasion de Chirico apparently told him of how on a clear autumn day accompanied by the murmuring of a fountain, he came across Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Return in an antique shop. See G. Roos, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 431. Baldacci and Roos sustain that the book he refers to is none other than *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and that he bought it in an antique shop in Rome during his trip in October, 1909. Instead, Jole de Sanna sustains that the book he speaks of is *Beyond Good and Evil* ex libris Leotardi, bought from an antique dealer in piazza Barberini. See *Analisi della forma III. Iconografia, in Metafisica del tempo*, edited by J. de Sanna, Ediciones Xavier Verstraeten, Buenos Aires 2000, p. 35. In this text Nietzsche draws conclusions to *Thus Spake Zarathustra* with regard to his theory of Eternal Return. De Sanna also refers to another text, *La gaia scienza – L'eterno ritorno* (an Italian translation of the second edition of 1887 of *The Gay Science*, not the 1882 edition), edited by Antonio Cippico, Fratelli Bocca, Turin 1905. In reality, in his account, Pikionis does not specify which of Nietzsche's works de Chirico spoke of, therefore it is difficult to place this account in relation to a precise event and a specific publication with regard to the theory of Eternal Return.

<sup>19</sup> With regard to the verses in *Song of Zarathustra*, W. Schmied says: "De Chirico loved these verses by Nietzsche more than anything else and was capable of reciting them by heart even when he was an elderly man. No one who heard him recite Nietzsche in his home in piazza di Spagna could ever forget that voice, in a foreign language, which seemed to come from far away." See W. Schmied *Im Namen des Dionysos. Friedrich Nietzsche und die bildende Kunst*, Oros Verlag, Munich 1995, p. 216. Also cited by G. Roos, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 287. The other account comes from Dr. Joachim Brinkmann, who was H. G. Gadamer's assistant in Heidelberg and later a German language assistant in Italy, who spoke of having met de Chirico in Rome (sometime in the 1950-1960s) and of hearing him recite long passages of Nietzsche by heart in German.

<sup>20</sup> This affirmation was made by H. G. Gadamer, after our observation of the metric composition of *Zarathustra*, and seems justifiable seeing that the tone of the text is that of a new prophet, of the doctrine of the Superman and the Eternal Return of the Same.



centaur, with its hoof on the stump showing the blacksmith the work to be done, is rendered with astonishing realism<sup>21</sup>, similar we might say to a bicyclist showing a flat tire to a mechanic. Hence, the painting has a fundamentally narrative function, in spite of the fact that the centaur is a symbol of a fantastic or mythical reality that disorients the peasant's usual vision of reality, leaving them notably stupefied. Even if the function of a symbol is to refer to another order of reality, here the symbol is still narrative, as in many of the Böcklin paintings de Chirico refers to, just as his own paintings, *The Departure of the Argonauts* and *Procession on a Mountain*, hold symbolic/narrative meaning. By substituting symbol with enigma, it is specifically from Symbolism that de Chirico's new and personal way of painting distances itself. The enigma does not function as a simple reference, nor does it represent another reality, but rather, suspends typical representation by conferring to it the search for the mystery of existence. This mystery was revealed to the artist and his oeuvre is the representation of this revelation. This is what constitutes his new poetics of Metaphysical Art.

With this, we come to the second point which Baldacci has dealt with: de Chirico's poetics or what used to be called his style or his method of work regarding composition and painting, which in Greek is called *poiein*. Baldacci calls this "metaphysical poetics". But then, what should be understood by "metaphysics" and how can that which is considered the highest philosophical discipline, which Aristotle considered the foremost, become a poetic feeling, a way of painting? Here, we arrive at the heart of the problem.

There is one thing in particular that must be made clear and that is the precise distinction between aesthetics and poetics, especially when we say that Metaphysical Art was explicitly theorized only from 1917 onwards in articles published in "Valori Plastici", at a time when de Chirico had to defend the primacy of his new aesthetics, not yet from his brother, but from Carlo Carrà. Aesthetics is understood firstly as a doctrine of aesthesis and therefore of sensation and secondly as a distinction between the common sensations of pleasure or displeasure and the pleasurable sensation provoked by beauty and therefore a doctrine of beauty. But arriving at such a distinction and especially specifying what beauty is, has always been a difficult endeavour, given the variety of tastes and the judgement of what is effectively beautiful. It has become apparent how beauty is not a mere question of sensation, but one of judgement and therefore, the problem is whether it is possible to establish a universal measure of what is beautiful and a universal measure of taste.

The distinction between 'taste' or 'aesthetic pleasure of beauty' and 'judgement of beauty' underlines the difference existing between natural beauty, related to that which is 'pleasing' therefore based on taste and on artistic beauty, where judgement plays a stronger role. Our judgement of beauty in art-work is more problematic and varies from subject to subject and is not a simple question of taste, but requires reason. It would seem therefore that the judgement of art depends on various factors rather than on a canon of beauty based on natural beauty. Through Kant we have come to understand aesthetics not only as a doctrine of sensation or of taste and beauty, but especially as a theory of the work of art, providing a base on which our aesthetic taste can determine itself.<sup>22</sup> As a result, we expect aes-

<sup>21</sup> See *Il meccanismo del pensiero*, cit., p. 169. Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/1...*, cit., p. 708.

<sup>22</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, specifically §§ 2-7 and § 9, regarding the question of the judgement of taste, as to whether our feeling of pleasure

thetics to tell us what the work of art actually consists of: the distinction between artistic beauty and natural beauty; the determination of what distinguishes a work of art from a simple technical achievement<sup>23</sup>; how art of one period distinguishes itself from that of a later period; what aim or final end does it achieve.

What is understood by the term 'poetics' instead, is the working process, or *poiein*, of the artist, in other words, the sum of his working methods and the means he employs (something which has also been called style). For today's artist, this aspect has become even more important in achieving an objective, and for the art observer, an increasingly difficult concept to grasp. An artist can form his beliefs on the work of art, therefore his personal aesthetics and think about the ultimate goal he wants to reach with the means he intends to employ in order to communicate this to others. However, he will never be able to speak of or communicate his personal poetics, or exactly how he does what he does, because this is simply incommunicable and is also impossible for those, such as art students, to learn. It is for this reason that we observe de Chirico theorizing his metaphysical aesthetics in "Valori Plastici" as well as in many other writings, but not his poetics, that is, his composition, the combination and harmonization of colour and the geometric calculations used in the painting's set-up. Such clarification is meaningless for the art viewer and would be detrimental to the full impact of the artist's work on the spectator, who must be allowed to take the artwork in, directly and in its entirety.

It is the art critic who, for lack of something better to do, self-righteously takes upon himself the task of theorizing de Chirico's poetics, even though the artist (which is the case for many artists of the avant-garde) had already theorized his personal aesthetics. When one becomes familiar with an artist's work it is indeed possible to understand certain properties and the way in which certain effects are achieved, but this in no way makes one capable of inventing something similar. An artist's poetics do not consist of a devised and established method or a group of rules, as is true for technical works. For this reason, Gauguin's judgement of art critic Fontana is still valid: "Do you know what an art critic is? Someone who sticks their nose into other people's business!"

This is an important point to establish in order to resolve the much-debated question of the influence of Savinio's ideas on de Chirico, including de Chirico's supposed dependency on Savinio. Aesthetic ideas are of an absolutely general character, whereas a work of art is something absolutely unique, always different and exclusively connected to the artist's individual ability. The truth of the matter is that ideas on works of art or aesthetic ideas have little relevance to an artist's personal poetics and not only to what the artist *thinks*, but what he *feels* and therefore *does*! This brings a third element into this discussion on aesthetics and poetics and that is the feeling, *Stimmung*, or poetry, as de Chirico calls it, that animates his poetics, which is indeed the atmosphere of the Nietzschean autumn afternoon with its bright light and long shadows that the painter naturally desires to translate onto canvas. It is essential to understand that the translation of this poetry, or poetic feeling,

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precedes our judgement of the object or vice-versa, and also §§ 37-39: "pleasure in the Beautiful is neither a pleasure of enjoyment nor of a law-abiding activity, nor even of rational contemplation in accordant with Ideas, but of mere reflection."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, §§ 42-44 and § 45: "In a product of beautiful art we must become conscious that it is Art and not Nature; but yet the purposiveness in its form must seem to be as free from all constraint of arbitrary rules as if it were a product of mere nature." From this derives the necessary conclusion that beautiful art is the art of the genius"; § 46: "Hence it is probable that the word genius is derived from *genius*, that particular guiding and guardian spirit given to a man at his birth, from whose suggestion these original ideas proceed. Nature by the medium of genius does not prescribe rules to Science, but to Art, and to it only in so far as it is to be beautiful Art."

onto canvas is an entirely individual process and therefore, speaking of reciprocal communication between artists or between brothers is absolutely irrelevant. A differentiation must be made between this poetic feeling, as the founding element of a work of art, which we can call de Chirico's poetics and the expressive means and their inner relationships, which is what the critic refers to.<sup>24</sup>

This being said, the work of the art critic is indeed valuable to the art viewer, inasmuch as the art critic's considerations can reveal aspects hidden within the artwork. And although such aspects indeed effect our perception, they are often something we are unable to explain of our own. It is precisely here that we see how aesthetic contemplation comes after *poiesis*, or more specifically, how the artist's action is both manifest and hidden within the artwork. Such study can be helpful to the art viewer but is absolutely secondary to the *poiesis* factor and in fact, is irrelevant if not damaging with regard to the artist's intuition and way of working. In conclusion, the metaphysical aesthetics of de Chirico's work, which the artist himself theorized, is very different from the poetics of Metaphysical Art. Proof of this is found in the fact that while the poetics of Metaphysical Art came into being in 1910, metaphysical aesthetics, or the artist's concept, was only theorised ten years later. In any case, everything the two brothers could have heard or discussed between them including Nietzsche's poetry and similarly, what we feel in front of the artist's work are only suppositions on artistic creation and not artistic creation itself. One can speak of an eventual influence of aesthetic ideas of one on the other, but not of an influence regarding poetics and yet, we still remain outside the work of art, outside of that personal and immortal creation that I feel de Chirico's Metaphysical Painting is.

Bearing this in mind, let us now consider how Baldacci interprets the poetics of Metaphysical Art. In order to clarify what this means, it is naturally necessary to first define the term 'metaphysic', as de Chirico, possibly on Apollinaire's suggestion, would come to call his paintings and his art. There seems to be some confusion in Baldacci's exposition, as he first says that 19<sup>th</sup> century idealistic metaphysics considered the world as an enigma to be resolved and aimed to uncover the truth behind the screen of nature. However, he also sustains that the metaphysical essence of the world or the "thing in itself" is nothing but illusion, following Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Heraclitus' thought. While the philosophical discipline of metaphysics aimed at identifying an ideal and absolute reality hidden behind the veil of Maya, de Chirico with the word 'metaphysic' meant a kind of art that reveals the inexistence and inconsistency of such an ideal reality and through his work and creation showed the non-sense inherent in things, while demonstrating how art can bring a new meaning out of them. Now, to a professor of philosophy, this sounds like total confusion, as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel's idealistic philosophy is merged with Schopenhauer, who is in fact a direct adversary of this school; Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who are not dialectic philosophers, are placed beside Heraclitus, the first dialectic philosopher, of whom Hegel claims to have used every single sentence in his *Science of Logic*.

To all intents and purposes, understanding Heraclitus as a mere exponent of a mythical childlike

<sup>24</sup> If this poetic feeling is fundamental to de Chirico, the same can not be said for Savinio. De Chirico, who felt the poetry and soul of Nietzsche's writings, was in fact much closer to Nietzsche than Savinio, who was more taken by a nostalgic feeling for Greece and by the convergence of myth and his personal and family history. His approach can be linked to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's thoughts on folly and genius, personal memory and historic memory, fatality, and chance, in which he ascribes the metaphysical meaning of things. See P. Baldacci, *Savinio e il surrealismo*, exhibition catalogue *Alberto Savinio*, edited by P. Vivarelli and P. Baldacci, Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta, Milan, November 2002 - March 2003, pp. 20-21.

vision of the world, perceived as the artist's return to childhood games, is extremely reductive. For Heraclitus, Nietzsche and Heidegger, the child at play holds a different meaning, which is that of a superior philosophic truth in which positivistic reasoning has no place. This philosophic truth refers to the genius capable of expressing an authentic transcendence of the Being and of Life, hence the term metaphysics is used. Therefore, while Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's understanding is effected by way of vision or intuition, Hegel's dialectic reasoning recognizes contradiction as an inherent law of reality. Nor should the god of metaphysics (from Hegel, but also from Nietzsche and Heraclitus) be confused with Hermes, the god of interpretation.<sup>25</sup> Hermeneutics came into being only as compensation for the loss of metaphysics.

When de Chirico explicitly tells us "Schopenhauer and Nietzsche taught me the non-sense of life and how this sense could be transmuted in art", it means something different to us than that which Baldacci understands it to mean, especially with regard to Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. As we believe to have demonstrated through Schopenhauer<sup>26</sup>, the coupling of metaphysics and aesthetics is an aesthetic conception in which the work of art is understood as something which assimilates metaphysics, of a vision of the world and the universe comprising the self and its destiny in this universe. Such a vision occurs in a moment of isolation from the world, in which a fundamental revelation of the mystery of the universe, life and one's own destiny is perceived. This concept is derived from Schopenhauer, especially from some of the passages in his *Parerga and Paralipomena*, the French translation of which was published in Paris in 1912 under the title *Métaphysique et Esthétique*. For Schopenhauer, apparitions and dreams hold essential value. The same is true of Nietzsche, even though he thinks of vision and enigma in a very different way, that is, in a more philosophic and less naturalistic manner than Schopenhauer, especially with regard to his concept of the Eternal Return to the Same and of strength of will as a self-surpassing vision of life.

For the two philosophers, as well as for de Chirico, art makes sense of the non-sense of life when it touches on this vision that constitutes the metaphysical meaning of things. It could well be that for Nietzsche the "thing in itself" is only worthy of Homeric laughter and that for Schopenhauer the "will" as a representation of the self and of one's *principium individuationis*, intended as the individual's ever-painful fight for life, only causes pain and boredom. Nietzsche will recognize however, that a certain kind of vision exists that opens enigma and shows us pure will or strength of will (will to want) as that which surpasses all pain. The self thus overcomes life itself, understood as the inseparable root of every being and all reality, by this vision, which is ultimately the vision of art, setting us free from pain, unlike the will or non-will of Schopenhauer. It is a pronounced and desired "Yes for life" even in the most atrocious suffering, the 'yes' which Schopenhauer could not pronounce, that constitutes the authentic salvation and legitimization of existence to which art alone can lead us. If this also proves to be pure illusion, it can at least be considered as a necessary illusion: we have art, in fact, to avoid getting to the bottom of truth. This, for de Chirico, is Nietzsche's poetry and the base of his metaphysics.

<sup>25</sup> As Baldacci does, *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> See R. Dottori *Quid est rerum metaphysica?*, in *Giorgio de Chirico: Nulla sine tragedia gloria, Atti del Convegno Europeo di Studi*, October 15 - 16, 1999, curated by C. Crescentini, M & M Maschietto Editore, Edizioni dell'Associazione Culturale Shakespeare and Company 2, Rome 2002, pp. 165-200.

ical aesthetics, although it is Schopenhauer's prompting that allowed him to bring about his poetic feeling: the revelation to be had at certain moments when the individual, completely turned toward his inner self has a completely new sensation and vision of the world and of his own destiny.

It is here that the artist brought into play Böcklin's icon Ulysses, the oracle, poet, philosopher and priest. It was during the moment of revelation in which the world appeared completely changed to him, when he saw everything as if for the first time that the idea of Metaphysical Painting was conceived: the ultimate meaning of things revealed through the vision of a completely altered and strange world, accompanied by an infinitely sweet sensation which has its origin in melancholy, through which man feels redeemed. It is this feeling of revelation that completely changes reality, making it appear transfigured, mysterious, while heartening the spirit. This is the base of de Chirico's metaphysical aesthetics, although it is only the painter's actual undertaking and his incomparable metaphysical poetic feeling that managed to translate his interior vision into pictorial reality and by doing so, communicating the secret of his soul and his melancholy to others. This is Ariadne and thus Nietzsche's claim: "only I know Ariadne". To which we can add that only de Chirico knew how to represent the true Ariadne, that is, not merely a statue, but a statue simulacrum of his very soul. Do Baldacci and Roos actually believe that Savinio had all this in him at the time when the foundations of Metaphysical Art were being set? I believe this to be doubtful, for the following reasons.

In the first place, Baldacci interprets the source of revelation and what he calls "poetic sensations" as being "roused from literature" or from "the combination of words, which, thanks to their strength of evocation and a certain tone, create in the observer or spectator a feeling that produces the author's sensation", as if the poetic feeling of metaphysics consisted in literature, which is something that de Chirico had always strongly contested and which he considered as the worst criticism made against him, just as Gauguin did. There is more: "these words are never specific from a conceptual or descriptive point of view but rather are in some way 'open' to different interpretation and understanding: their strength in evoking sensation is more important than their capacity to define something. When the artist became aware of this, he began to search for ways to allow him to apply the same method even to painting and finally reach his goal, through the experience of revelation."<sup>27</sup>

In fact, the opposite is true. It is revelation that comes first and with it the translation into the painted image. The translation into words is last of all and its explanation resides specifically in the aesthetics of Metaphysical Art. In his Parisian manuscripts de Chirico explicitly states that literature had never been the base of his work. He affirms that the reading of Angelica and Rinaldo in Tasso, or of Ulysses and Circe in the Odyssey, only produced in him a vision of something that he already knew, telling how only at a certain moment did he have a completely new revelation, which led the way to the painting *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon*.<sup>28</sup> Literature has never been his source of inspiration, as

<sup>27</sup> Baldacci sustains this theory once again in his introduction to the Winterthur exhibition catalogue. In fact, Baldacci had already repeated this theory a number of times, beginning with his 1997 study and various exhibitions, for example the exhibition in Padova *De Chirico*, Palazzo Zabarella, January 20 - May 27, 2007, curated by P. Baldacci and G. Roos, exhibition catalogue, Marsilio, 2007, p. 11: "At the end of January, 1910, the de Chirico brothers and their mother moved to Florence. Their efforts at the time were directed at governing the phenomena of revelation in order to set in place an adequate method of visual communication, deepen the theoretical base and develop a theory of the poetics of metaphysical art." Governing the phenomena of revelation! This is not only an absurd statement, but absolutely false.

<sup>28</sup> It is strange that Baldacci quotes this passage, although not in its entirety: "I read; a passage from Homer enthralled me – Ulysses on Calypso's Island;

he said about his first paintings including *The Enigma of the Oracle*. He had the first glimpse of revelation, which is the name he gave to the source of his Metaphysical Painting, during his trips to Rome. He described it as something sudden that is neither constructed nor inspired by something else, as a formed image, complete in itself, that the artist sees and all he needs is to set it on paper or canvas.

The idea that de Chirico's poetics depend essentially on Leopardian poetics of the infinite, developed in *Zibaldone*, is not convincing even if de Chirico did in fact know and appreciate Leopardi. For Baldacci, the wall found in the artist's paintings from *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* on, would in fact correspond to the Leopardian hedge that hides infinity, or the unknown. But then, from a Leopardian point of view, what would the train running behind it represent? It is certainly impossible that movement and voyage, represented by the train or the ship can be considered as the unknown. This may be true for Savinio, but not for de Chirico, for whom the question is not only of the infinite but of mystery. Baldacci holds that from an iconographic point of view this wall derives firstly from Böcklin's painting *The Sanctuary of Hercules* (1884) and also from Max Klinger's *The Stroll* (1878).<sup>29</sup> In neither of these images does the wall represent a division of the pictorial space, which would supposedly separate the foreground scene from the unknown in the background, not do they have the slightest resemblance to the walls in de Chirico's paintings. As for example, *Melancholy*, where, instead of a wall we see a small hedge which certainly does not hide the horizon or the landscape behind it.

For Baldacci, all metaphysical paintings are based on a division in two parts by a wall that separates the forefront in which no movement occurs from the background where the train and ship represent the Infinite and movement, etc. But in reality, everything in these paintings is immobile, regardless of the smoking train, which is actually part of the forefront of the painting, positioned just outside the inner space of the piazza. Instead, if we want to see infinity or the unknown, we should look to the cloudless and starless sky of simple empty space. In many of the successive metaphysical paintings, the deep blue of the sky descends gradually into green and finally to the glimmering light of the earth. In the forefront, the light descends from above, bathing this area and then diminishing towards the background, as our gaze goes steadily further from the earth and gets lost in the infinity of empty space, the symbol of metaphysical nothingness. That all this is simply a literary motif derived from Leopardi and that de Chirico, fascinated by the mysterious and indefinite strength of words was driven to develop this pictorial poetic feeling, seems to be a total demystification of his painting. This is also in direct opposition to what the artist himself had always stated, through his denial that his painting had a literary source. This brings us to the second motivation behind the brother's relationship.

The second motivation behind Baldacci's interpretation of the de Chirico – Savinio bond, in which de Chirico is considered to be dependent on Savinio's ideas and poetics, is based on *Poema Fantastico*, which was to be performed in Florence, but then became the concert *Le Rivelazioni – La musica più*

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some descriptions, and the picture rose before me, and then I felt I had finally found something. Or while reading Ariosto: Roger, the typical knight-errant rests beneath a tree, he sleeps, his horse crops the grass nearby, all is silent and solitary, one would expect to see a dragon fly by, the scene enchants me, suddenly I conjure up the knight, the horse, the landscape; it is nearly a revelation, but I am still not satisfied..."; the quotation ends here, which would be enough. The passage continues: "Could Mantegna, Böcklin, Thoma or Max Klinger not have painted a painting like this? Something new is needed". P. Baldacci, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 55. See also *Il meccanismo del pensiero*, cit., p. 17. Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/L...*, cit. p. 611. The passage shows beyond a doubt that the question is one of revelation and not inspiration from literature.

<sup>29</sup> See P. Baldacci, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 79.

*profonda che sia stata scritta* (Revelations – the most profound music ever written). Just because de Chirico composed music early on in his career, (six of these musical compositions were composed by de Chirico himself), does not mean that they elaborated the poetics and aesthetics of Metaphysical Art together, or that these could have been inspired by Savinio. Similarly, the fact that Savinio painted does not mean he made 'metaphysical' paintings equal to the paintings de Chirico managed to create after many attempts. In fact, the only remaining work by Savinio of this period is the drawing *The Oracle*, which is absolutely insignificant compared with a painting like *The Enigma of the Oracle*. This drawing is indeed flat and divided in two by the door of the temple, with the oracle in the foreground, whilst de Chirico's painting with its extremely complex construction, develops the philosophic themes of Nietzsche and Heraclitus we have already discussed. After all, we can see how one dedicated himself fully to painting, while the other prevalently to music. The reason behind this is not because painting was just a form of expression the same as any other, such as music or writing, but because in painting de Chirico saw the direct expression of his 'revelations', as he called them. It suffices to read what the artist wrote on this subject in 1913 in Paris: "Music can not express the  *nec plus ultra*  of sensation."<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, to sustain that "Metaphysical Art is not so much a way of painting but rather a way of thinking that may be best expressed in paint, but could even be expressed with other means"<sup>31</sup>, actually means making Metaphysical Art into a philosophy, or an aesthetical system or even an ideology, instead of considering what it effectively was for de Chirico: painting as the expression closest to what he felt in an entirely individual manner and something he knew how to do in a way that remains unique. His ever-fascinating Metaphysical Painting achieved a level of quality that was never reached by Savinio, Carrà and all the others who wished to imitate it.

In any event, in his introduction to the Padua exhibition in 2007, Baldacci was finally ready to admit that de Chirico was the inventor of Metaphysical Painting<sup>32</sup>, while in his 1997 publication he held that Savinio's article *Le Drame et la Musique*, published in Apollinaire's review "Les Soirées de Paris" in April 1914, was the first manifesto of Metaphysical Art.<sup>33</sup> What exactly did this article propose as far as a theorization of metaphysical aesthetics? According to Baldacci, the article presents the concept of the meaning of fatality as the basis of the metaphysical non-sense of things. Fatality, deriving from Nietzsche and Schopenhauer's nihilism, is the means by which de Chirico searched, not beyond

<sup>30</sup> See *Il meccanismo de pensiero*, cit., p. 16. "With music you never know what it is about and then after listening to a piece of music, whether by Beethoven, Wagner or Rossini, or by Mr. Saint-Saëns, everyone has the right to say (and could very well say): "What is it about?" Contrarily, in front of a painting this is impossible, one must remain quiet when one enters completely into its depths, when one turns the corners of all its walls, and not only its walls." There is then a return to music, after entering a deep painting, which Gauguin called the painting's musicality, but this occurs after the artist has transmitted his revelation to the painting. This music is a consequence of the painting and of his revelation. "So light, shadow, lines and angles start to speak and even their music begins to be felt, the hidden music that is not heard." The passage ends with an indirect citation of a quote by Casper David Friedrich: "What I hear has no value, there is only what my eyes see when open, or even more, when closed". Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/1...*, cit., p. 609.

<sup>31</sup> See P. Baldacci, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, "At the time, the combination of the brother's work, aims and themes, as well as their reciprocal influence, was enormous and only the decision made in 1911 to separate their paths, at least temporarily (painting for Giorgio and music for Alberto) allows us to continue to consider de Chirico the inventor of Metaphysical Painting. What is certain is that at the beginning of 1911 neither two had decided for certain the means most suitable to express what they were discovering: music, painting or literature." This last affirmation can not be considered correct, given that since adolescence de Chirico had decided that painting was the right path for him and thus had decided to attend the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. Music was something secondary for de Chirico, an interest stimulated through his relationship with his brother, just as for Savinio drawing and painting were of secondary importance.

<sup>33</sup> Originally put forth in 1997, Baldacci has repeated this affirmation both in the previously cited article for the exhibition catalogue *Alberto Savinio*,

the 'thing in itself' but in the material substance of the thing itself, which leads us to the concept of the spectral quality of the 'thing' free from its exterior form and to architecture as the most suitable language of this spectral image.<sup>34</sup> But if Savinio could have in fact expressed these ideas in Paris in 1914 and in a more accomplished form in his article in "Valori Plastici", it is also true that he attributed these ideas to his brother's poetics, due to the fact that no architectural or spectral aspects exist in music and literature. When he began to painting in 1926-1927, we find no trace of architecture, nor spectral elements but if anything surreal or mythical aspects. Although Baldacci, when faced with this objection – which he knows is well due –, circumvents the point by saying that in any case what de Chirico had done had first been seen and theorized by Savinio.

This tentative answer is likely based in part on what Savinio wrote in his 1918 article in "Valori Plastici", where he affirmed that during their first period in Paris he had already maintained the importance of both fatality and spectral aspects in the work of art in his discussion with his brother. Whatever the case may be, theorizing does not mean painting or conceiving a work of art. If anything, it entails expressing ideas on aesthetics. However, as de Chirico wrote in his Parisian manuscripts, he abandoned music for painting because, based on his revelations he had understood that music could not express the *nec plus ultra* of sensation and theorized to a certain extent the relationship between revelation and his painting two full years before the so-called "manifesto of Metaphysical Painting" published in "Les Soirées de Paris". These manuscripts also provide much greater theoretical value concerning his painterly poetics.

With this, we come to the third aspect at the origin of Metaphysical Art, which according to Baldacci is also the work of Savinio. This area deals with de Chirico's consideration of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's thoughts on the convergence of folly and genius and the fact that the world is full of seemingly insignificant things and yet, if positioned in relation to each other, they appear full of mystery. This can be grasped if one frees oneself from the idea of a subject, if one leaves anthropomorphism aside and considers the subject itself as a thing. This is the Nietzschean method, which, as de Chirico had already written in these manuscripts, could give important and unexpected results in painting. Could all this be due simply to considerations concerning the spectral quality of things? Or more significantly, to poetic invention, or to a sudden vision and metaphysical revelation, which is precisely what de Chirico considers fundamental in this moment and the reason he had abandoned music. De Chirico wrote that things become "the eremitic signs of a new melancholy", in "Valori Plastici" when he was formulating his metaphysical aesthetics *after* his Metaphysical Painting had already been achieved. What he accomplished is based on his poetic sensitivity and his ability to see a poetical pictorial motif of invention in 'things'. Indeed, this could successively become the base of a philosophic idea or a "metaphysical aesthetic", but only insofar as it is based on de Chirico's original sensitivity or perception, or 'genius' as Kant specifies by saying that the artist "himself does not know how he has come by his Ideas; and he has not the power to devise the like at pleasure or

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cit., 2002, as well as in *De Chirico e Savinio. La parabola di una fratellanza intellettuale*, *ibid.*, p. 76, which is an article originally published in German for the 2001 exhibition in Düsseldorf, and used in part once again in the Padova catalogue, 2007, cit.

<sup>34</sup> With regard to the concept of spectrality, see the author's review of the exhibition *De Chirico*, Padova, 2007, in this Periodical, pp. 739-744.



in accordance with a plan and to communicate it to others in precepts that will enable them to produce similar products”<sup>35</sup>.

This brings us to Baldacci's last thesis in which painting is seen as a psychic process, fundamentally based on memory. This process, according to Baldacci, regards the artist's individual memory being connected to historical memory, which brings him to identify personal lifetime events with the historical world of ancient Greece, the country where the de Chirico brothers were born and raised. This process is supposed to have come about while Savinio was writing his *Poema Fantastico*, the writing and composing of which de Chirico collaborated upon. Here, one's personal world becomes a world of myth or rather, myth becomes the actual subject of the work and not a mere object to be represented: personal history was the motif animating the endeavour to create a new mythology or mythopoeia, regarding their personal history. De Chirico supposedly acknowledged this by painting *Portrait of the Artist's Brother* with Andrea dressed as Hamlet in front of the mythological landscape of Thessaly, home of the Centaurs, where Chiron raised Achilles and the place Jason departed from on his search for the Golden Fleece. It is from this same city that the brothers – the new Dioscuri of modern art – would depart from. A centaur is seen running in the background of the portrait. This is supposed to be proof that Metaphysical Painting came into being through the composition of *Poema Fantastico* and that therefore, Metaphysical Painting should be called mythopoeia, as myth would be in this case the true motor and agent subject of Metaphysical Art.

It is true that this is not far from what Nietzsche portrayed with the *Birth of Tragedy*: we can only live in a world surrounded by myth. But, even though *The Enigma of the Oracle* takes us back to the world of prehistoric Greece and its conflicts, which Heraclitus' philosophy is the very expression of, to consider philosophy, mythopoeia and Nietzsche's poetry as essential, would signify abandoning the poetics of Metaphysical Painting to its own destiny. Rather, the fact of the matter is that composition, architecture, colour, harmony and symbolic meaning are indeed at the very heart of the poetics of Metaphysical Art. Following Baldacci's theory, Metaphysical Art in general, and Metaphysical Painting in particular, would be a mere cultural product. Or in the best of cases, an event of European spirit and philosophy, thus ignoring the fascination and mystery of this painting forever. The place where the theorization of metaphysical aesthetics occurred must be taken into consideration and it is here that the authentic relationship between de Chirico and Savinio will be identified.

### **“Valori Plastici” – A True Cultural Laboratory**

The review “Valori Plastici” is often and justly called into discussions such as these because it is in this review that de Chirico theorized his metaphysical aesthetics and Savinio wrote some important contributions, particularly his theorization of the aesthetics of Metaphysical Art which he attributed to de Chirico. The majority of authors who wrote in the review were painters. An article by Italo Tavolato with a suggestive title is pertinent to the theme being treated and precisely the relationship

<sup>35</sup> See I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, § 46. This quote from Kant seems to be enough to clarify and silence the discussion of the influence of one brother on the other once and for all!

between poetry, poetics and aesthetics of Metaphysical Art: "In the beginning, art had no verb, that is, logos or concept. All art, which has form and style has magical and erotic origins. When we negate art's atavistic blood and resign ourselves to logos, art is destined to die. Because concept, this promotion of inexpressible things, destroys the intimate area that protects the creative act and takes the mystery out of love. [...] A return to origin is a return to love. A return to origin is a return to art. But the avant-garde searches vainly for a straight path in the dark wilderness of concept."<sup>36</sup>

The same year, in addition to articles by Carrà, de Chirico and Savinio, contributions to the review included an article by Theo Van Doesburg on the concept of plastic art being elaborated on in Holland by Piet Mondrian and De Stijl, as well as Wassily Kandinsky's article on the concept of pure art and spirituality in art in contraposition to naturalistic art. These were fundamental themes treated by almost all of the "Valori Plastici" authors. The following year, Maurice Raynal's article *Purism and Logic*<sup>37</sup> in defence of Ozenfant and Jeanneret's work *Plastic Logic* shown in Paris, is a response to the article just mentioned, which is also pertinent to an article published by Tavolato the previous year in the number I-V of the review, *La maschera della meccanica* (the mask of mechanics).<sup>38</sup> After pointing out to Tavolato that the work of art can not be a work of infinity, but must be something that is perfectly finished, he makes clear that even when animated by the finest sensitivity, the work of art must be closed in a frame, that this microcosm containing the whole world must be inscribed on a canvas on an easel and must employ conventions. He continues, saying that one has to be careful of the danger hidden in looking upon endless infinity. He then speaks of Kant and Hegel's aesthetics, which other critics quote in founding their negative judgement on *Plastic Logic*. His comments are useful in understanding the true relationship between aesthetics as art theory and art itself.

To critics Henry Eon<sup>39</sup> and P. Sentenac<sup>40</sup>, Raynal justly opposes the thought that "geometry is a language of which art is one of the themes" and continues with "due to the fact that certain volumes more than others have attracted our sensitivity in a unique way, through reason we have given them the label of geometry, in order to make canons, models and even master-keys". This delineates geometry as a language used by artists who, by means of their artistic sensitivity, see in natural form something more than immediate appearance. To R. De Nereys<sup>41</sup>, who referred to Kant and Hegel's aesthetics in his criticism of *Plastic Logic*, Raynal counters that he had not understood the meaning of these aesthetics (Kant in particular) and accuses him of looking at the question from a professor's point of view (rather than that of the artist). What Raynal writes is useful to our endeavour to define the rela-

<sup>36</sup> I. Tavolato, *Pavor nocturnus*, in "Valori Plastici", year II, n. IX-XII, pp. 50-51; the passage cited is found on p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> In this article, pp. 50-51, Tavolato criticizes all avant-garde art, starting with *Impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism*, Kandinsky and purist painting inspired by gestalt theory, encompassing even the work of the artists who Raynal defends: "Purist painting' was confusedly mounted on technical motives based on simultaneity, parallelisms, balance, mass, borders, functional relationships, mechanical localizations [...] Today, colour is used as a concept and form is a neologism, to a point where the painting becomes a kind of scientific prose. What becomes predominant here is analysis and painterly research and the visual properties gradually become anatomic pieces and geometrical bodies: lines and planes, spots and strips, crumbs and ashes. The thought of art as an organism and not as a system, has been lost. The work of art is a work of infinity, a microcosm containing the entire world and not just a technical elaboration, a material process, a laboratory piece." In his conclusion, Tavolato doesn't seem far from de Chirico's metaphysics: "Art is original creation, destiny, a fatal mission and in no way a rational construction, program, number or causality."

<sup>38</sup> See "Valori Plastici", year III, 1921, n. 3, pp. 54-58.

<sup>39</sup> Raynal cites Henry Eon's article *La Victoire* as published in "Croniques d'Art", with no specification of year, issue or page number.

<sup>40</sup> Raynal comments on a reproach made by P. Sentenac in his article *Les Arts* in "Paris-Journal" with no specification of issue or page number.

<sup>41</sup> Raynal's reference probably pertains to R. De Nereys' book *L'Homme Libre*.

relationship between true poetics and aesthetics and therefore the relationship between de Chirico and Savinio: "It is certain that aesthetics do not precede art, although by commenting on the manifestations that illustrate an epoch, aesthetics often illuminate the path of future generations. I insist that if aesthetics do not precede art, than neither does geometry. And therefore, I repeat, the discussion on geometry is founded on the need to sensitively express the world of natural forms. [...] Let it be said, once and for all, that if geometry is a speculation applied to plastic, painting is another. It is not a question of mathematical speculation on the cube, sphere, or cylinder, but rather, of speculating on the plastic elements that make these idealized representation". Here, plastic elements can only pertain to the poetic elements at the base of *Plastic Logic*.

This is of course pertinent to what was being discussed at the time concerning Cézanne and his conclusion definitively closes the case: "Art can not live on definitions, not even on the definition of beauty, which would indeed be its end; it must be nourished only with forms that it can make use of. Mathematical logic is incompatible with the logic of art. Maths have their own, more or less legitimate conventions and art has its own."<sup>42</sup>

Returning to de Chirico and Savinio, even if it were true that Savinio wrote the first manifesto of Metaphysical Art and theorized metaphysical aesthetics, as Baldacci and Roos maintain, this would have nothing to do with de Chirico's poetics, his artistic 'doing', which constitutes the essential value of his painting. The following must also be taken into consideration: the first article of value published by Savinio in "Valori Plastici" entitled "*Anadiménon*", *Principi di valutazione dell'arte contemporanea* (principals of contemporary art evaluation) is a theorization of the concept of Metaphysical Art made in defence of de Chirico and Carrà's art, as a point of rupture from academic codes and the revolution of painting instigated by Cézanne and Gauguin. At the end of the article he says this about his brother: "This painter, who has lived outside the centres of painting for them most part of his life, did not risk being dragged into the formal evolution mechanism rather, it can be said that since the beginning he has aimed at a spiritual affirmation. Nevertheless, I, who was present during his Parisian period, can say that even he at a certain point felt an obligation to retrace, on his own, the entire path of painting's formal transformation, to go through it all, in order to return to a spiritual end and thus establish it in full organic plastic."<sup>43</sup>

A part from Savinio's first attempts in 1908-1909 when he produced sketches representing fauna, woods, exotic landscapes, which his uncle Gustavo was afraid of, that have nothing to do with metaphysics, but tend rather toward Böcklinesque imagery, it was only in 1926 that he became a painter, when de Chirico had returned to Paris. De Chirico himself encouraged him to do so, as Savinio's wife Maria points out in her memoir.<sup>44</sup> It was the year in which Savinio and his wife were still living in Rome in via Appennini, near to Nomentana, which at the time bordered on the countryside and where Pirandello also lived: "At home, in the evening Savinio drew and painted"; "Giorgio, who was enthusiastic about Betti's work (Alberto's nickname) often wrote to encourage him". She also quotes from one

<sup>42</sup> See M. Raynal, *Il purismo e la logica*, in "Valori Plastici", year III, 1921, n. 3, p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> See "Valori Plastici", year I, n. IV-V, April – May, 1919, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> See M. Savinio, *Con Savinio. Ricordi e lettere*, edited by Angelica Savinio, with a note by L. Sciascia, Sellerio editore, Palermo 1987.

of Giorgio's letters: "Dearest brother, I have finally received the drawings. They are very beautiful and impressive. I have already showed them to a few people, all of whom were stupefied by them. I think an exhibition of your drawings would have some success. One must no longer mix with the surrealists – they are a stupid and hostile bunch –. We will get something going with Guillaume and Rosenberg. Keep working and if you have others, send them to me. I only suggest you avoid certain colours which are a bit raw and vulgar such as carmine red and pure blue; mix some grey into each colour and soften the shapes a bit. I advise you to avoid certain aspects like in *Orestes and Electra* and the *Royal Derby*."<sup>45</sup>

It is clear that de Chirico admired this 1926 drawing as it coincides with his early themes, even though the colour is very different from his initial metaphysical colours. In spite of his warnings, it was the surrealists themselves, specifically Breton, who tried to pull Savinio over to their side and put him against de Chirico, presenting him as the person de Chirico owed his ideas to or as the inventor of Metaphysical Art. He apparently succeeded in doing this, because an unspoken disagreement arose between the brothers, possibly because de Chirico felt that Savinio believed and consented to Breton's manoeuvre, after the success he had had in Paris from 1926 onwards.<sup>46</sup> However, the question remains: which Metaphysical Art? Metaphysical Art as a philosophy or rather, aesthetics dealing with the artwork's conception or Metaphysical Art as painting? Savinio could not have dealt with the last as he only began painting, encouraged by his brother, in 1926 in Paris. It suffices to read what else Maria Savinio wrote with regard to 1926 in Paris: "It was Paul Guillaume who put Savinio in contact with Fabre, the first art dealer to really understand his painting. When Fabre asked to come to the studio to see the paintings, we were very embarrassed. What to do? Not only were there no paintings, but we did not even have enough money to buy canvas and paint. My brother-in-law Ascanio (my sister Matilde's husband) resolved the problem by lending us one thousand lira and we managed to buy quite a bit of material. Finally, there were paintings! We could give into Fabre's insisting."<sup>47</sup>

Maria tells of how Savinio painted his first painting in a room at Hotel Jacob and how they went ahead with the help and expertise of de Chirico: "Madame Cutroll asked me to work for her: I had the idea of embroidering de Chirico's *Troubadour* painting (Savinio had not started painting at that time). Giorgio traced the drawing of a mannequin with various geometric objects on its chest on a rather rough piece of canvas and I embroidered it in arrowhead stitch. For the geometric objects I used an artificial silk that was very much in style in 1926, which gave the painting a great tone. Rosenberg bought this first embroidery work of mine. Immediately afterwards I embroidered a horse, with ruins on the right, also from a painting by de Chirico [...] Things started to get better and better. In 1927 a big exhibition of Savinio's work was held at the Chez Bernheim-Jeune gallery, which was the epicentre of the painter's Olympus in Paris at the time. Jean Cocteau wrote the foreword in the catalogue. The exhibition was very successful. Our life changed."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57. Maria was aware of this disagreement and wrote about an encounter the two brothers had in 1951 ca, which brought about a reconciliation after many misunderstandings: "the relationship between Giorgio and Betti fell apart for no real reason – maybe words wrongly attributed, touchiness, misunderstandings... They hardly saw one another anymore, and both suffered because of it. One day in via Capo le Case, Betti ran into Giorgio who, upon seeing him burst into tears and hugged him."

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

We can get an idea of the 1925 drawing by Savinio that de Chirico speaks of thanks to a drawing Maria published in her memoirs. During their courtship, Savinio used to write letters to Maria at night and would leave them in her theatre dressing room the next day. This drawing was given to her on one of those occasions. The drawing portrays a woman in a coat with a big suitcase on which the words “*Vers l'inconnu*” in block print are written; behind her is a radiant sunset with “Paris” written in large capital letters in the sun's rays. The woman is gazing into the void. On the upper right-hand side a large X is inscribed on a kind of cloud or foggy wall, like the one de Chirico painted in his *Self Portrait* of 1914, also known as *Metaphysical Composition*. The title “Maria's departure toward the unknown” is written at the bottom of the drawing. In fact, Maria was about to depart on a theatre tour to Berlin, with Pirandello, a tour she ended up not taking as she married Savinio instead. Under the title is written: “Note: the big black area on the right symbolizes the unknown and they say that symbolism is dead!” This shows how, in 1926, Savinio still confused Metaphysical Art with Symbolism.

In one of his letters to Maria, which today would be labelled as sentimental, he puts together a few thoughts about their way of being together, suggesting the presence of an invisible person, full of irony, who exerts a kind of power over them, from which they can not free themselves: “Maria, by now the thought of the dualism that divides our life is a continuous and painful torment for me; this play of scenes, of planes set in such a way as to bring the last act of *Rigoletto* to mind. And to live – just think Maria – to live of imperceptible signs, indecipherable at times and that often even take on a hostile aspect of harassment. What mythology our life is Maria!”<sup>49</sup> Both his drawing with its note and this last observation speak clearly and allow conclusions to this long discussion to be drawn.

First of all, it is clear that the brothers' ideas correspond on many points, which is not surprising given the similarity of the studies and interests the two cultivated, even if they developed analogous ideas in two different artistic fields, painting for the first and music for the second, while literature and poetry are artistic endeavours they both shared. Literature was the field in which Savinio was very productive in from the start and was his true vocation after music. Therefore, the themes they had in common and the ideas they saw eye to eye on, as we have seen, regard the spectral element of the work of art, fatalism and the undecipherable aspect of the future and of one's own destiny, or enigma for de Chirico and finally myth as an original life experience which enters into artistic activity, or rather, in mythopoeia. This is what their aesthetics consist in, which means their idea of the work of art and its relationship to life and society.

Secondly, it is clear that when Savinio desired to become a painter, it was de Chirico who showed him the way and supplied him with themes from his own poetics, for example the ‘X’ Savinio calls a symbol of the unknown. There is yet another important point to be made here: Savinio believed that these poetics and the accompanying aesthetics were still identifiable as *Symbolism*, which in fact would be a return to Böcklin and the poetics of *Romanticism*. This shows a limit Savinio had compared to de Chirico, for whom painting was not a mere means, as Savinio claims, but an end in itself. De Chirico was clear on this and communicated as much in his first Paris manuscripts, that is, from

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

his very first steps taken on the path of what would be called Metaphysical Painting: "What is really needed is that art free itself from all that it contains of the known until now, every subject, every idea, every thought, every symbol must be put aside. If I still accept something from Max Klinger it is not as a thinker, as a symbolist, or as a wise man; it is because he invented something that did not exist before".<sup>50</sup> A symbol has a link to the idea or the thing it is a symbol of and therefore pertains to a logic of connection, which is the logic of the painting. None of this is identifiable in de Chirico's painting, as he tells us once again with this passage: "It is necessary that the revelation one has had of a work of art, that the conception of a painting represent that thing which has no sense on its own, that has no subject, which from a point of view of human logic means nothing at all. I say that a revelation or concept, as you like, so strong within oneself as to cause such joy or such pain that one is obliged to paint, pushed by an overwhelming force like that which pushes the hunger-stricken man to bite the piece of bread that has come into his hands like a beast."<sup>51</sup> As we have seen, de Chirico's *modus operandi* is not the symbol, but his own language, that of geometry and architecture as enigmatic representations of the universe, set in the wings of the theatre stage where the undecipherable doubt, anguish, joy and pain of the mystery of the world and existence manifest themselves. Nothing of this sort is found in Savinio's art.

Thirdly, or in conclusion, it is clear that Metaphysical Art is not simply an aesthetical idea, even if de Chirico speaks of metaphysical aesthetics, but moreover an independently created oeuvre which is produced by employing, not only certain ideas and means of expression, but one's active know-how. Therefore it is indeed a question of poetics, which is firstly *poiesis*, a most personal thing, which is neither a mere question of understanding, nor the manifestation of ideas, but the contact one makes with one's own world in order to create, through one's own language, a completely new world, the world of one's poetry, the sad yet sweet poetry of fatality, regarding the game and enigma of existence. Therefore when Savinio spoke much later on (in 1948) of "that poet-ism we called 'metaphysical' of which we began to give the first examples of in 1909"<sup>52</sup>, we have to admit he is right, in spite the fact that the term 'metaphysical' was only proposed three years later by Apollinaire in his reviews of de Chirico's paintings. The disparaging expression 'poet-ism' is fitting, because it refers, not to the authentic poetry from which Metaphysical Art originated, but if anything, to discussions they had together that may have been the starting point for ideas destined to become an aesthetic, but never regarding authentic meaning – due to the fact that this is strictly personal –, concerning that which can be referred to as the poetics of Metaphysical Art, which animate the poetics of artistic creation, the result of which brought us the metaphysical work of art and is something that, Baldacci and Roos notwithstanding, Savinio never really had any knowledge of.

*Translated by Katherine Robinson*

<sup>50</sup> See *Il meccanismo del pensiero*, cit., p. 18. Now in G. de Chirico, *Scritti/1...*, cit., pp. 613-614.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 614.

<sup>52</sup> A. Savinio, *Si capisce in Val d'Aosta...*, in "Corriere dell'informazione", September 13-14, 1948.