

APETITOS DE FAMILIA – Family Appetites

With *Apetitos de Familia* [Family Appetites] Clemencia leads us likewise into a ritual situation. In this instance the rite utilizes metaphors extracted as well from the common cultural patrimony of the West. The theme here is the butchering of a pig. The slaughter of a hog recalls for us the narratives of Greek and Roman mythology regarding sacrificial ceremonies in honor of Demeter, goddess of fertility and patroness of the unifying links of kinship and marriage.

The first image to appear before us is a broad one of blood filling up the entire space of the projection at the base level of the ground. Blood impregnating the earth stands as an allegorical occurrence of the eternal life-and-death cycle – the cycle of perpetual rebirth. Such is the nature of fertility: it is the succession from one generation to another and, consequently, the link with the ancestors that is inherent to fertility and blood. This is a constituent and primary symbol of culture; from ancient times, along with animal sacrifices and slaughters, it has been a part of the ritual traditions of all peoples; and it is, moreover, the central symbol of Christian ceremonies. Sacrificial blood and death are elements of an atavistic language that speaks of the belief in a rebirth: Christ himself on the cross, and the consecration of his blood. At play here is a cult of the ancestors, which renews the promise of a common-cause cohesion for life.

The “feast” of the slaughtered swine has persisted up to our own days in the rural zones of Latin America and Europe. Such rites are performed in and by the congregation. The family – as a core emblem of union, of the notion of a people, of community – comes together on the occasion of this performance that gets replicated year after year.

As recreated in *Apetitos de familia*, the blood, the slaughtering, the extirpation of innards, the making of sausages, the scenes of familiar congregation with their physical expressions of affection, all of those are proven to be part of the western iconography of the still life. In the aesthetic treatment of this video, the use of the chiaroscuro sharpens with preciousness the emotional proximity of the piece with the tableaux of everyday home life – which is, ultimately, the locus for the still life as symbolic representation. The sound of heartbeats, which has a central role in the scene, underscores the vital pulsation of the moment as well as the intimacy of the – perchance womb-related – bond whose renewal is attempted by means of this ritual.

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