

REBUS: SYMMETRY–WORK OF ART–HEURISTICS (ART AND SCIENCE)

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Abstract: *Is there any rebus in art? When there is, where, how and what kind of is it? What is the meaning of rebus e.g. in a work of art? This paper focuses on some hypothesis. The ideas discussed are connected to each other, therefore illustrate them with some representative examples rather than look for the possible conclusions. I define rebus as a puzzle in which a word or a phrase has to be guessed from pictures or diagrams that suggest the syllables that make it. I think, this word is synonymous with the word: enigma, mystery, sometimes riddle. The rebus and its solution are symmetrical. In the following example: "set the axe to the root of an evil" the phrase, - metaphor, which includes tales, histories, experiences, - in our minds conjures up abstract meanings, such as "axe" (cf.: axis, axiom/atic etc.) The common figure is heuristic, both in the puzzle and the solution.*

1 REBUS: SYMMETRY IN A WORK OF ART (E.g., Oedipus)

In the case of Oedipus' *rebus*, we can think at first of the explicit *rebus*, the *rebus*, the question the Sphinx puts to Oedipus. (About the *man*, in pictures). This *rebus* is solved by Oedipus. He will become the king and not a dead man (unlike other men before him, who could not guess the solution). Oedipus will be (in this case), victorious, and the Sphinx dies. But, - as we know - essentially - Oedipus is the real loser. This *rebus* is important. But it is only a prelude: the "game" between Sphinx and Oedipus is a micro-variation before the great game of Fate. In the continuation of this real "game"/ quasi-struggle, the oracle appears, from the birth of Oedipus, along every basic stage of his life, (very much like as in the former Sphinx-rebus.) Every oraculum has all the properties of *rebus*. Oedipus, the self, the man, the king and mainly a cripple, beggar is at the heart of this "puzzle"/ "mystery". His fate, all career, and his name (*Oedipus*: *gummy-legged*, *swollen-legged*) equally hint at these oracles.

The *rebus*-es are symmetrical, however different look on the surface, and the multiply symmetries in the structure of the play (of the work of art). E.g.: the parallels/repetitions of the several oracles; the repetition/parallels of the meaning and visual figure of rebus, embodied. (The "Sphinx"- figure is the picture of rebus.). The "Oedipus-complex" is not only an drama-poetical and psychological point. This is a figure of the man's Fate, and the (figuratively) point of symmetries, too.

2 REBUS: SYMMETRY OF ELEMENTS / MOTIFS OF A WORK OF ART (E.G.: LABYRINTH)

In the myth and in the play (works of art) Oedipus *rebus* is multiplied. (*Rebus* of Sphinx; the figure of Sphinx, oracles, all Oedipus-fate etc.). These several *rebuses* are elements/ motifs of the work of art, but at the same time every single one includes the totality of the work, too. This totality is also an advantageous, secret way, "voyage" in time and in space (stages of life, Thebes, Colonus, etc.) The *line* of this way is hidden, itself is "*rebus*", too. There is a via, or rather a *labyrinth*. Similar to the line of Theseus, or other variations of it. There are basically important some symmetrically points: the entrance and the way out; the possible of aberration or finding his way out. Both in a literal sense and figuratively as well.

This symmetrical alternative (unavoidable choice) is the question of life or death. At the same time it is parallel with the double-possibility of other *rebuses*. This dichotomy is the same in all *rebus* (*riddle*, *enigma*, *mystery* etc.): whether the hero/heroine can find the solution (key, way out) or not. The question and answer, the task and solution,

guessing could be by word, phrase, picture, diagram. The common essence is in the ancient figures (circle, square, serpent, several kinds of crosses, etc.).

3 REBUS: SYMMETRY, INTERPRETATION - HEURISTICS

The quoted figures, - as a “holy geometry” - are some special interpretation, too. As the work of art solves the universal *rebus* (*mystery etc.*), other kinds of the interpretations as in plays from reading to performance and analysis are essentially “interpretations of interpretations”.

CONCLUSION

These hypothetical, symmetrical characteristics in the elements and total work of art; and in several ancient signs and cods, and their interpretations share the common basic problems of Heuristics. The “*rebus*” is an example, maybe means, of demonstration.

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