# PLASTIC SURGERY IN THE NEW WORLD

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“THE YOUTH OF AMERICA IS THEIR OLDEST TRADITION. IT IS GOING ON FOR MORE THEN 300 YEARS.” OSCAR WILDE

Something that really intrigues people is the amount of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery performed in the New World. To understand it we shall analyze our Culture. In spite of being colonized by Europeans, Immigrants (either pilgrim or banished) usually arrive with a sense of rebirth, leaving the past in their original countries, beginning a new life. A new beginning even at 40 or 50, will maintains the sense of rebirth, restlessness, the need to accomplish ,produce, explore and several other characteristics of a young adult or adolescent. “Just do it”, “Plug and Play”, “Keep walking”, etc are good examples of our way of being, and we should look young and healthy to achieve success. In spite of being more than 500 years old, we can be considered quite young when compared to Europe, therefore as well described by Clotaire Rapaille in his The Cultural Code, an Adolescent Culture. What can be more unpleasant for an “adolescent” than the Ageing Process, the perception of a nose, ear or breast out of the current Aesthetics???

# AESTHETICS

The most important philosophers in the Western World tried unsuccessfully to define Aesthetics. We should not be naïve, and simply refer to Aesthetics as the “Science of Beauty”. Aristotle divided Aesthetics in what is in Harmony and what is in Disharmony. Afterwards he subdivided Harmony in Gracious, Beautiful, Sublime and Tragic. On the other hand Disharmony was subdivided in Laughable, Ugliness, Horrible, and finally what was Comic. Kant was more comprehensive and divided Aesthetics in Beauty and Sublime, leaving to the observer the definition of what was pleasant to him .Or as we may say: “Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder”. Roughly other Philosophers resumed Aesthetics in “The sensation or feeling that something (Art- Nature) or someone causes in the observer” which sounds more realistic and practical.

# THE DEFORMITY

The comprehension of a deformity includes several categories of data such as familial, social, Cultural, and an adequate evaluation of each one. All levels of data should be carefully interpreted since a deformity affects the individual, the group, and the behavior of the group will influence the final behavior of the individual. When something is not Harmonious to the observer (ugly) it maybe associated to evilness, as we often see in Classic Childhood Literature where most villains are sinister see Captain Hook, Captain Ahab, Long John Silver for instance, to understand the idea. Prejudice begins at schools when the child around 4years old begins to starts to form his self image, notice that he has a different ear for example and his colleagues remind him of that and then rests until 10 years old time in which parents think the problem was gone. From 5 to 10 years of age children are focused in discover skills and performance. When puberty begins they are not able to verbalize precisely his feelings about his deformity and tend to isolation and maybe depression. Girls with prominent ears do not like to jump in the swimming pool because wet hairs cannot disguise the ears as well as boys with gynecomastia do not change in front of the colleagues or always uses a loose T-shirt to hide his nipples.

# THE SURGERY

# Gaspare Tagliacozzi in Bologna 1597 stated that the purpose of Plastic Surgery was not to please the eyes of the observer, but to buoy up the spirits and help the mind of the afflicted. This may sound vaguely nowadays because afflictions may vary from subject to subject and it varies to the observer from “you do not need any surgery, you look perfect to me, down to “nobody is doing anything to help this poor soul.”Unfortunately what we are seeing in America and Brazil is what Max Horkheimer in his “The Eclipse of Reason”, calls the Alienated Consumption, when the Desire for the New (neophylia) impels people to buy things that they don’t really need. After all Consumption is the basis of Capitalism. That is fine for a pair of shoes, dresses, laptops, even cars. You can always trade or sell them. Increase your lips or breasts just because your neighbor did or a face-lift because the hair dresser said that a costumer that you know did and looks great after a couple of weeks (but he will not tell you her name), is at least dangerous. Surgeons cannot undo their operations neither the resultant scars. Worst of all, we leave permanent scars in surgeries that offer temporary results. What happens when patients are not satisfied or want a “little bit more or a little bit bigger”???In Brazil we do not have a nickname for overdone Plastic Surgery but in America they call them Beauty Junkies or Frankenstein Barbies.

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