Liberties and Servitudes of Art, or About the Temptation of Existence

This study departs from the premises that the idea of freedom determines a paradoxical condition of the relation between art and politics. The author uses the concept of freedom in a Kantian manner, as a transcendental condition of the co-ordination of the historically constituted values in the fields of art and politics. Metaphorically speaking, the experience of freedom can be understood as a temptation to existence. Analytically speaking, from the perspective of the practical reason, one can observe that freedom funds the paradoxical relations between the competences of a certain field of culture and the creative performances of the artists. More exactly, political persuasion can be rediscovered in what recent history calls "the Manicheist spirit of the artist".

Florea Lucaci

Assoc. Profesor, Faculty of Humanist Sciences, Aurel Vlaicu University, Arad, Romania. Books: Creație și ființare în ontologia umanului (2002).

The title of this paper could be perceived as a prosaic, awkward even, reformulation of the state of history suggested in Emil Cioran's fascinating essays. Undoubtedly, the seed of scandal in his spirit is manifest here too, especially since the reference is liberty and they who act it out paradoxically: the artist and the zoon politikon. Cioran himself reached the status of the moralist by long exercising liberty in his capacity of writer, artist and philosopher.

We do not know whether the Romanian philosopher, self-exiled in France, was fated to live

KEY WORDS:

art, liberty, experimentation, faith, existence, postmodernism

his life in the metaphysical fury of words, or whether like Socrates, was served devotedly by an adviser-daemon. What is certain is that a paraphrase of one of Luther's maxims befits him: to be a genius writer and not to be at once divine and devilish is almost impossible. This Manichean image expresses the temptation of being for all those who experience liberty. It is like playing life - the commedian's subtle trick. We are fully aware of the deception, still we enjoy the circus show.

Should we believe that the artist is the man who can hear voices?! We could start our journey through history with the case of Socrates, as if he were on display in a museum. We would point at him and his demon that turned a diabolical dictator into a sun god, or, on the contrary, that demented writer who plunged a blessed country into calamity and plague, as did Yahweh with Egypt. This survey could equally be a pathetic indictment or an apology. Either way, the philosopher should be realistic.

Personally, I do not belong to Cioran's group. In his The Temptation to Exist, he depicted Socrates, Saint Paul, Luther, Gogol and others; I, for one, neither the moralist nor the judge, do not hand out sentences nor good conduct certificates. I want to sublimate the total sum of empirical facts into one unitary whole, into the substance of a question drawing on Kantianism: If Art and Politics are forms of liberty, how is it possible for Politics to play the master's role, and for Art to play the role of the faithful or unfaithful subject?

1. Formal delimitations

The concept of liberty is rather problematic, for it is applied to variable states ranging between a set of opposites. It should not come as a surprise, then, that the Political and Art, as sui generis forms of liberty, are not defined but rather characterized. More precisely, the notions of Politics and Art are rather vague, so two of the inherent consequences should be considered:

a) In the process of classifying the objects and activities generically named artistic, or the activities, events, phenomena and processes regarded as political, intervenes the arbitrary and the accidental, that is, the strictly necessary condition for falling into the denoted class. In this respect, for instance, in the class of Art, besides the elements consecrated by history (painting, sculpture, literature, etc., of Ancient Greece, the Byzantine epoch, the Renaissance, Romanticism, etc.), room has been found for such elements as the so-called prolecultural (?? "pre-cultural" poate?) art, the ready-made objects of non-art. Likewise, in the class of Politics, we find such hybrids as the democratic monarchy, scientific socialism, Islamic fundamentalism, etc.

b) Within the content of the notions of Art and Politics are manifest opposite properties, theorized as, for instance, the aesthetics of the beautiful and the aesthetics of the ugly, in the case of Art. As regards politics, these opposing properties are legitimated by theories described by such collocations as peace politics and war politics. Paradoxically, the race for nuclear armament during the Cold War was claimed to be peace politics by both the Americans and the Russians. If an ideal peace founded on the elimination of conflict-generating causes is not possible, then the solution is the real peace, albeit built on a fragile equilibrium of forces, enforced by politico-military bodies of the NATO type.

A brief analysis reveals that Art and Politics are in a quasi-paradoxical relationship. If in a strictly logical sense, by paradox we mean a formal contradiction generated by ignoring some suppositions so that p a" q does not exclude the relation q a" ~p and p ! q and q ! p, the relationship Art-Politics cannot be reduced to a logical situation. Since the notions of Art and Politics accommodate both material and spiritual elements, practical activities depending on "n" variables (the creative subject, the axiological reference of the concrete historical context, the style, the material that gives birth to the idea, etc.), the paradox of this relationship is carried too far and becomes paradoxical.

Some delimitation is necessary to distinguish between the logical paradox and the type of paradox manifest in Art and Politics.

i) On the logical plane, p & ~p represents a false universal formula for any interpretation of the prepositional variables within it. In Aristotle's words, in order to express the truth, one has to separate the affirmation from the negation "declaring that what is, is not, or that what is not, is, constitutes a false statement; on the contrary, a true statement is that by which you say that what is, is, and that what is not, is not."[1]

Examples of the formula in a natural language (English, for instance) might read as follows:

(1) The wolf is flesh-eating and the wolf is not flesh eating.

(2) The genius is divine and the genius is not divine.

(3) Minister x is virtue embodied and minister x is not virtue embodied.

One can easily notice that in any of the three examples there is a false statement, and according to the formula (p & 0) = 0, all the conjunctions are false.

ii) On the artistic plane, p & ~p does not represent an inconsistent expression, a logical contradiction. The history of art and literature has recorded no crises of agnosticism. Aristotle himself noted that the statements in a literary text

could be neither true nor false. This situation is generated by the absence of any reference relation, and thus annuls the principle of correspondence-truth.

Paul Ricoeur points out that within artistic literature a special type of truth is operated with, metaphorical truth, which assimilates is not into is, causing a tension within the substance of the verb to be in poetic language. 'The paradox lies in there not being any other way of justifying the notion of metaphorical truth but that of including the sharp critical edge of is not (literary) in the ontological vehemence of is (metaphorical)."[2] From among the consequences of operating with the notion of metaphorical truth we note the affirmation of the signifying rationality, hereby bringing to an end the language-word relationship crisis. The competence of the literary language tends to become an equivalent for the artistic performance, for this language is the essence of a world as such, a world rather rashly called fictional. Consequently, in the world as literary work, sentence (1) is no longer false. Since the negation is assimilated within a harmonious structure, (1) becomes a valid formula opening up the world of fairy tales, namely:

(1a) Once upon a time, the wolves and the sheep were playing in the same meadow.

This sentence opens up a world where the principle of non-contradiction is invalidated, that is, the logical 'false' is converted into an imaginary harmony where something is and is not.

The passage from the real to the fantastic is not a completely obscure process. Truth holds within the metaphor, although the relationship between the logical poles of the supposed comparison is short-circuited. An argument in favor of this idea is offered by Petre Botezatu in his "Horizons of Negation": the forming of "negative predicates." When we say: "S is non-P instead of S is not P", we initiate a process of transforming the "negative predicates" into "positive names", which in time lose their negative resonance and slip quietly into the world of "positivity". So it is difficult for anyone to argue that such words as eternal (endless), calm (unagitated), firm (inflexible) still carry a halo of negativity."[3]

Looking at the second illustration (above), we notice that in it the logic of yes and no must remain silent, as suggested by Wittgenstein in the last sentence of his Tractatus. The negation expressed by "it is not divine" becomes the name "diabolical." It follows then:

(2a) The genius is divine and diabolical.

The conjunction of the opposites finds its ultimate, even absolute, expression in the warning by Saint Paul in the Second Letter to the Corinthians (11:14):

(2b) Satan turns into an angel of light.

Obviously, statements (2a) and (2b) are no longer cognitive sentences, for faith and experi-

ence substitute cognition. The harmony denoted by coincidentia oppositorum is first of all the basis for the artistic construct as well as a form of catharsis. On the other hand, these ideas of the conjunction of the opposites can be traced in a theory construed by Karl Rozenkranz - the aesthetics of the ugly. The assertion of the negative beauty concept annuls the contradiction between beautiful and ugly. The ugly is subjected to beauty, frees itself of "its hybrid and egotistic nature," and "becomes comical." Thus, "the comic is the form in which, by opposition to beauty, it frees itself once again from its negative character." Thus beauty "fraternizing with the ugly through the comic leads to the purging of the aesthetical 'hell' of the diabolical significances of monstrosity."[4]

(iii) On the political level, where everything is or seems real, the metaphorical truth persists. One possible proof is the recycling of old Romanian folk wisdom into the political program. Thus, the saying "Call the bear 'uncle' till you are safe across the bridge" – an autochthonous variant of the coincidentia oppositorum formula – has become the fundamental principle for opportunism and gaining access to political power. Thus, the practice of the Romanian transition validates the general principle of sophism, that is, one can assert opposite things about the same thing, meaning that p & ~p is not a universally false but rather a conjecturally true formula.

The Cretans were not the only liars! When the wise Romanian ponders and eventually concludes: there must be something, for it never happened for something not to be one way or another, then the future can no longer be contingent but rather necessary. However, in this case the modal qualifier does not refer to what is logically true, i. e. "it is necessary that p v ~p", but to what is conjecturally true, i.e. "it is necessary that p & ~ p."

Let us reconsider sentence (3) and analyze it, not from the logician's, but rather from the politician's angle (the politician as an instance of the lying Cretan). The predicative expressions "he is virtue embodied" and "he is not virtue embodied" can be abbreviated resulting in the following components of the conjunction in (3):

(3a) Minister X is honest.

(3b) Minister X is corrupt.

If these statements are uttered by a member of the minister's party then (3a) is true and (3b) is false, whereas if they are uttered by a member of the Opposition, then (3a) is false and (3b) is true. It follows that the truth-value of the statements is not validated by the rules, but rather by the interests of the subject.

By generalizing, the significance of the sentence in the form of F(x) will be (F(x))s.

Yet, in politics people do not behave like the stone that consistently falls in the same direction under the pull of gravitational force. The Roma-

nian transition has produced and keeps producing countless examples of political people "falling" from one party into another, from the left to the right, or vice versa. It follows that the subject (s) may alter his/her assessments, and therefore we must include in the formula the time (t) factor: the moment of achieving or of blocking interests.

Then we have: (F(x))st.

Political opportunism is favored by the people's ignorance; the "honesty" of the opportunist is based on false reasoning with the following syllogistic structure:

It's not impossible for it to be so.

That which is impossible, is possible.

So, it is possible for it to be so.

Since in politics we deal with pragmatic statements whose purpose is persuasion, the logical is disseminated. We can't say that the imperatives, the promises, or the advice, etc., made or given by a politician are either false or true, but rather that they are correct or incorrect. "The problem of the correctness of a pragmatic statement, says Gh. Enescu, implies: a) a logical position of the fact; b) a logical position of the sender-subject; c) a logical position of the receiver. The logical position indicates a conversion of some vague exactness in the sphere of the possible, that is, "the fact is achievable," "the sender-subject is justified to emit the imperative" and "the receiver is capable of responding."[5]

The analyses of Raymond Aron point out that in democracy in particular, liberty is a paradoxical political exercise. One can sense a touch of subtle irony in his definition of democracy as the "regime of debate" where the political spirit is confiscated by the magic power of the verb, by a particular rhetoric[6]. But then the possible is perceived as the real. Politics tends to conceal the state of fact behind words and the legal state becomes a sophisticated ideological construct. When we apply this analysis to the particular case of the so-called socialist democracy, one of the consequences of this paradoxical situation finds its expression in the "theoretical anti-humanism" pointed out by Louis Althusser in the structure of Marxism.

If we take into consideration all of the multiple significances of defining liberty as a political exercise, when sketching the possibilities of Art we will certainly consider "resistance through culture" as more than simply a rhetorical formula justifying a camouflaged dissidence.

2. Art – A Form of Experiencing Liberty

The (F(x))st formula is a suggestive expression of the pragmatic limits to the liberty of nonconformist behavior, artistic creation included. If s (subject) relates explicitly to the person, t

(time) implies the existence of a referent. Thus, we have to distinguish between the artistic practice, that is the individual action whose performance is possible on the line connecting aptitude and genius, and the theory of Art, whose competence it is to legitimate a style, a theme, an ideal, etc. To put it briefly, it acknowledges a historic-cultural model, which implicitly limits the liberty of the artist. More specifically, it involves a composite referential structured on political, economic, religious values and interests, etc.

In what concerns the matters of political, religious, etc., liberties, I believe that by analogy we can acknowledge the artistic liberty as a distinct species. The idea of artistic liberty can be traced both in Kant's theory about the genius and in the revolutionary - anarchical manifestos of the artistic vanguard of the 20th century.

Kant conceives of the genius as "the soul's innate disposition (ingenium) by which nature prescribes rules to Art". The rules prescribed by the genius itself are the very rules of the genius' liberties, the undetermined and variable rules of creation. By not being determined and invariable, the rules establish that the foremost quality of the genius is originality, namely the tireless capacity of renewing the creative approach. As unique and exemplary, the products of the genius "serve others as models to copy, that is, as yardsticks or rules for assessment". It follows that the genius manifests itself as a principle generating existence.[7]

In the same vein, Constantin Noica speculates about genius but he transfers the analysis to the ontological plane, operating with the instruments of ontological logic. Noica gives the holomer as the equivalent for the Kantian genius, only he takes the thought farther by developing the logistics that reveal the dynamics of this ontological structure. His intention is to connect Aristotelian syllogistics and Hegelian logic. By defining it as an environment, it follows that the substance of the holomer incorporates the structure of the syllogism, and thus implicitly lends harmony to the rules of the genius' liberties, that is, to creation. Hence, if harmony is possible in the liberty of the individual act of creation, then it is possible for the same liberty property of the holomer-genius to be found in the created work - the reality of a new existence. According to Noica, "the genius has fed on the substance of his outer environment which he has turned into the inner environment to the point where he has turned himself into the outer environment of other persons and other realities"[8]. A deeper analysis of Noica's speculations yields the conclusion that the relationship mediated by the holomer-genius between the inner subjectivity of the person and the outer objectivity of the general which unites the multiple into one, may be defined as a whole. In this whole, unlike in the

Hegelian whole, the stress lies on difference rather than on identity. True indeed, contemplating the individual-general relationship (or part-whole relationship), Noica uses the concept of secondary multitude defined as "the multitude of multitudes with one element". In a symbolical way, the relation controlling this multitude reads: "A=/a, where = / could show that the whole A is equal with part a, that is, part a is a carrier of the whole, but the part is not equal to the whole"[9]. We think, however, that if we equate the holomer-genius to a dialectical type of structure relationships, then the whole as a form of onto-axiological integration based on difference is defined by the following properties: non-transitivity, non-reflexivity and non-symmetry.

These properties express the liberty peculiar to artistic creation and implicitly the ontological difference in the creation and establishment of the new reality.

To make intuitive the complexity of the relation defined by Noica through the formula A = / a, we have in view the proposition:

X (holomer-genius) is the creator of work Y, and Z (the epigone or the critic or the disciple or the admirer) is the beneficiary of work Y.

a) The relationship is non-transitive. We notice that, although "work Y" is the common codomain of both relations, the former only transfers itself into the latter under special circumstances, so that x - y is non-transitive. But let us go into more detail. As regards the epigone that copies the aesthetic view and imitates the means of expression specific to the genius X, the relationship is transitive. As regards the critic-work, the relation is intransitive since the rules of the critical endeavor are not the rules of inner liberty specific to the genius, but rather of the outer constraints as set by the cultural-historical model. By analyzing a piece of work, the critic defines its rapport with the cultural whole, determines its value and function in the context of the spiritual life of the moment, etc. In the case of the disciple-work relation, there are both transitive and intransitive elements, which means that the relation is non-transitive. By definition, the disciple continues and develops the work of the master, and also by definition adopts the master's principles of creation, which is the source of the difference between the two. Finally, the relation 'admirer-work' is intransitive.

To conclude, since it is not always transitive, nor always intransitive, it follows that it is non-transitive.

b) The relation is non-reflexive. In the relation (x& y) '" (z& y) equality is only apparent. The holomer-genius, in the liberty of its mediation, apparently creates a balance between the two relational structures through the determinations that give unity to the individual and the

general. The becoming of the genius, i.e. creation, is a confirmation of the identity of the self and of the difference for others.

To conclude, since the relation is at times reflexive and other times irreflexive, it follows that it is non-reflexive.

c) The relationship is non-symmetrical. Since, at times the relation is symmetrical, i.e. it is also valid in reverse (for example in the case of the disciple, X is the creator for Z and Z is the creator for X), and other times it is asymmetrical (in the case of the critic, X is a creator for Z and Z is a critic for X), then the relation is non-symmetrical.

Where the genius theory is concerned, it is clear that a work is the domain for experimenting liberty. Yet, what type of liberty is upheld by the revolutionary manifestos of the artistic vanguard of the 20th century? How is the artistic creation possible in the context of - isms?

History has recorded the tendency to evade the civilized world as early as the 19th century. Countless musicians, writers, and painters took refuge in exotic lands. The crisis of values climaxed in the manifestos of Dadaism, Surrealism and Futurism. The liberty of expression took on the consistency of madness. Thus, Tristan Tzara considered liberty some sort of abolishment of logic and the expression of utter disdain. The Dada Manifesto of 1918 ends as follows: "Liberty: DADA DADA DADA, a yell in undulating colors, the meeting point of all contraries and all contradictions, of any grotesque motif, of any incoherence: LIFE"[10]. The liberty principle of the Dada type is illustrated in the recipe for composing poetry, a lottery of cutout words from newspapers.

Andre Breton, too, in The First Manifesto of Surrealism defines liberty as a form of exaltation, something "that is able to keep, ad infinitum, man's ancient fanaticism."[11] Such liberty is possible only by eliminating any form of rationalism and by abandoning the self to dreaming, to the hallucinatory creations of the imaginary. The Futurism of Marinetti contains a set of "commands", from among which we quote: (3) "We want to extol the aggressive movement, the febrile insomnia, the double quick step, the somersault, the hand and the fist!"; (9) "We want to glorify the war - the sole hygiene for the world - militarism, patriotism, the destroying gesture of the anarchist"; (10) "We want to destroy the museums, libraries, academies of any type, and fight against moralizing..."[12]

It is not difficult to notice that experimenting with liberty in art leads to anarchy, to spiritual and moral terrorism. In this sense, the history of the 20th century has witnessed "a series of assaults" such as the exhibiting by Duchamp of a urinal renamed Well or the The Box of Excrements displayed by Manzoni.

In this case, when the artist's liberty is anarchy, when the random is creation, the emergence of a "piece of work" of this type is a necessity. That is, by eliminating all contradictions we get: possibility=necessity. Only common sense, now a form of dissidence, believes that the random may be understood as a scale featuring the following stages: impossible, improbable, doubtful, plausible, almost certain, certain. One certainty, though, is that everything is possible in the free world of Art.

2.1. About the Liberty of creation

Apparently, the exercise of artistic liberty is described by a disjunction, i.e. art as the creation of a genius or art as a random product. We think that the first term designates an ideal, more precisely, the genesis of a piece of work under the auspices of the founding values: the sacred, the truth, the good and the beautiful, whereas the second reduces art to an indeterminate empirical diversity impossible to define.

Overused by the Romanticists, the notion of genius has now fallen into desuetude. Moreover, Art itself is eclipsed by the economic and political play. The pleasure afforded by sheer contemplation is rare, foreign even, in times such as ours. What if today were an accident? If it is an accident, then we know that it carries no defining purpose or ideal for us to assume. Yet, we are at liberty to judge the world. Indeed, thinking becomes salvation or sin.

Back to Kant! Resuming our analysis, let us note a distinction, namely, the conceptual delimitation between the creating liberty of the genius and the value judgment of a genius creation. Although Art seems to be a harmless domain, Kant offered priority to the critical reception of the work rather than to its creation. He considers that "the richness and originality of ideas is as important for beauty as is an appropriately free liberty for the legitimacy of the intellect." We may say that the liberty of the genius is sacrificed on grounds of the assumption that "imagination, when its liberty is devoid of laws, only produces absurdities.[13]"

The sacrifice of the genius is, obviously, a metaphor. Still, this "sacrifice" indicates the starting point, which rules that an object is what it is and the way it is, in a society where art is either merchandise or nothing. This involves: a) disciplining the productive impetus of the artist so that society can integrate his creation: b) recycling of the creative energy into a useful and profitable activity, so that the measure of the work's value is the profit-measure; c) reciprocal compensatory gain - artist and society – a gain legitimized by interest.

Therefore, the problem is what is art, and why does something fall under the concept of

art. Answers that are justified culturally could be: value crisis, alienation, snobbism, abolishment of formal conventions, etc. In his essay "Do whatever Crosses Your Mind", Thierry de Duve shocks us by saying: "the circularity of the empirical definition Art is everything that is called Art, far from being a sophism, constitutes the ontological particularity of the art work." It follows then that "Art is a self—instituted, self-named, and self-justified autonomous process."[14] The answer of the economist – the sage in the consumer society – can be only one: it sells.

The artist's liberty in relation to a society that is judgmental inasmuch it judges can be described as such:

i) If society accepts the artist's creation either as value or as merchandise, then the artist is confirmed as servicing the public welfare, that is, as a cultural exponent or a profitable investment.

ii) If society rejects the creation, denying its artistic value or its merchandise quality, then the artist may be either an exponent of the society or alienated. In this case, the non-determinate nature of the artist is not significant for the artist-society relation, but the impact of the creation is, for its novelty unbalances the scale of values and interests in society.

iii) If the artist creates under the authority of the assumed values or of market demand, then the society may accept or reject his creation. In this case, although the artist is determined as an exponent of the socio-cultural and economical values and interests and his creation is beneficial, the significance of his creation may be occulted by the limits of society.

iv) If the artist is a professed rebel, alienated, then society rejects his creation.

Yet, the liberty of the artist is not a logical relation but a practical one. The sense of creation, its finality, is not accounted for exclusively by a logical rationality, for there intervene numerous variables by nature political, economic, cultural, religious, etc.

2.2. The Freedom of Creation in Postmodernism

The identity of every nation, and by derivation, the identity of every creator, artist or thinker lent by his/her affiliation to a cultural paradigm, is denounced as simply conventional. First and foremost, it is historians who "no longer spin the thread of time but rather tear it to pieces, teaching us not to identify our image in that of our forefathers."[15] Other disciplines within the Humanities also disregard the sense and unity of history. Thus, sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron state that "the range of meanings that objectively define the culture of a group or of a class as a symbolic system is arbitrary; moreover, the structure and

functions of this culture cannot be inferred from any universal principle, be it physical, biological or spiritual, as they are not linked by any kind of internal relationship to the nature of things or to the human nature."[16]

The nihilism manifest in postmodernism brought about a kind of freedom characterized by cultural perversities. If reality is deemed to be a convention, then anything is possible. For instance, history is pervaded by the imaginary, whereas real historical personalities become fictional characters. Classical visions are compromised; heroes are turned into derisory, ridiculous or comical figures. For instance, in our country an obsession of one of our ministers' to revive a page in our history in the form of a theme park - Dracula Land - has become governmental policy. This is the age of vampires! They sell well. Money talks! In this vein, Eminescu's lines in the last stanza of his poem Scrisoarea III (Letter III) should be censored! Long live Vlad the Impaler, the Vampire!

Under such circumstances as preserve in the postmodern world national and even tribal reminiscences, man's identity in this old-new world is rather a surrogate. Justly, Harlem Desir believes that "the reality of our references is a sort of cultural half-breed."[17] In this hybrid world, the visual arts are released from any extra artistic determination or constraint. In this respect Jean-Francoise Lyotard points out that the arts are "free from iconographical and iconological connotations (in Panovsky's meaning),"[18] so that the meanings of a work of art are no longer decoded by means of an external reference, culturally and historically determined. This rebase (??) was called by some theorists "the death of Art", whereas the ideologists of postmodernism think that this is only the end of an art displayed in museums, subjected to foreign ideals.

In an open world in which tout est art and rien n' est art, the freedom of creation cannot be limited. Among the consequences of this boundless freedom the necessity of again conceptualizing the term reality and, in this connection, of defining the concept of semblance becomes obvious. Perhaps even the question: "What is reality?" needs to be reshaped in such a way as to eliminate the faintest suggestion of a split between subjectivity and the external world. The reality of postmodernism cannot be built on anything except a lavishing ontology, wherein the role of ratio essendi (the reason of existence) is played by imagination. As shown by the aforementioned example of Dracula seen as an alter ego of Prince Vlad the Impaler and Dracula Land as an expression of a revived medieval Walachia, the model of postmodern imagination is parody. The new concept of reality denotes a world with no rules and restrictions, where even the fanciful becomes reality, a parody, a piece of reality withstanding integration into an ensemble.

In what concerns the term semblance, we find that it denotes the manner in which parodying reality is embodied. Thus, in the postmodern way of life, the reassessment of, let's say, Kant's Criticism through a promotional offer is not considered a gesture that could affect philosophy. At this stage, where money is the supreme god, "the semblance and the simulation of a bag of noodles has become both the real concept and the present, while the philosopher, the concept-character, or the artist have become the merchant of the work of art." According to Gilles Deleuze, the current stage is the beneficial stage of the professional trade, which has replaced - due to successful capitalism - the encyclopedic and pedagogical stages of thinking.[19] This semblance or commercial image of paradoxical thinking rejects the rules of classical reasoning.

Therefore, everything is image. Hence, the freedom of creation is the ability to imagine something in which by chance and chance only one again finds the reality of old-fashioned common sense. The epidemic of postmodern freedom has created a new Babylon - the "collage town." Any American can live in two worlds, in the States and in Chinatown, in the States and in Little Italy, in New York and in a Latin barrios, etc. Reality has become fiction, or maybe vice versa, and semblance has turned into an undeniable truth.

3. On the Artist's Manichean Spirit

In his freedom, the artist has sometimes dreamt about changing the world, in the concrete meaning of the word given by Marx in his 11th thesis about Feuerbach. Perhaps in every artist's soul there lies the moralist, the fighter for justice, or perhaps the dictator, for that matter. Any philosopher seriously pondering the condition of the artist would detect the existence of the antinomy. More concretely, the starting point of the analysis could be the following question: Is the artist's freedom an innocent game or is it a specific way of assuming certain ideals? This is the source of several disjunctions: aesthetic purity or moral commitment? Fiction or reality?

There were moments in history when artists placed the world in an exclusive disjunction of the type everything or nothing. This was the age of revolutionary artists. Thus, the productivist group of Moscow published in 1920 a manifesto that engaged art in political activity. The assumed ideology was "scientific communism" based on the theory of "historical materialism" and the aim envisioned was "the building of a communist culture". Therefore the following slogan was established: "Down with all artistic traditions, long live the constructivist technician!"[20] Maiakovski, too, published a similar manifesto in

1923 in the first issue of the Lef (the magazine of the Left Front of the Arts).

Obviously, the artist was backed by the competent and qualified ideologist, who formulated the theory of socialist realism. The artist is no longer inspired by muses but rather draws upon the program of the communist (Bolshevik) party. In the Soviet Union, art is unequivocally defined as "the ideological weapon for class struggle." The writers' task - as promoter of the "proletarian art" – "was to castigate relentlessly everything that hinders our advancement on the road to communism," according to the documents of the XIXth Congress of the P.C.U.S (The Communist Party of the Soviet Union).[21]

Obviously, the proletarian culture was exported to all the other socialist countries. Today it has vanished, or perhaps only lies metamorphosed, dormant like a butterfly nymph.

We have no intention of insisting upon empirical aspects, partly experienced first hand and partly "learned" from documents, but the least we can do is sketch the philosophical dimension of our object.

In his freedom, the artist may unconsciously become an exponent of the Manichean ethics, of a Manichean spirit. When Goya produced the cycle of caprices, and more precisely, when he wrote on one of his engravings that "Sleep of reason begets monsters", he illustrated the pact between reason and imagination, between Good and Evil. With Goya, and not Goya only, the latent Manichean heresy is involuntarily manifest as a drama of human life. Everything thus seems deceivingly simple: when reason is asleep, imagination plays freedom, and when reason is awake, imagination becomes canonically obedient.

At face value, the issue appears as a moment of twilight, when reality is confused and Good seems to be the twin brother of Evil. Isn't art a field of surprise? The artist is the one who turns the proud king into the humble beggar, the prostitute into a saint, or discovers spots in the sun and luxuriantly grows flowers of evil. This is the game of light and darkness.

The poet Lucian Blaga says: "Like a heretic I ponder and wonder: where does the light of Heaven come from? - I know: It is hell that lights it with its flames!"

But let's stop for a while at the two limits suggested by Goya's engraving:

a) When reason is asleep. Imagination is the child that dwells in the artist's soul. His state is play. In his considerations about Art, Freud shows that "in German the relationship between the child's play and the literary creation has been very well preserved: the world Spiel (play) designates those creations of the writer that require the support of tangible objects and that can be represented: Lustspiel (comedy), Trauerspiel

(tragedy), whereas the person who embodies these creations is called Schauspieler (actor)."[22]

The play is a form of rebasing (??) from Pandora's Box forbidden instincts, unfulfilled desires, sinful obsessions, dirty thoughts. Like another god, the artist creates an endless world.

In his world by means of his characters the artist robs, rapes, kills. He does whatever comes to his mind. And when reason is asleep, the monsters enter the souls of the wretched people. Levels can always be reversed, i.e. character x may be the mentor of a real person x. When the artist's reason is sleeping, he himself can mix up the levels and can, for instance, turn his art into an efficient ideological weapon.

b) When reason is awake. Like any other child, imagination can be subject and can be obedient. Obedient towards the political reason, as reason of the citadel, the artist is the one who offers the daily circus. This is especially so when bread is missing. Under the guidance of the party's ideologist, the artist himself can become an ideologist, preaching an aggressive Manicheism.

To conclude, if Lucifer is a light carrier, then the artist too can enlighten spirits. Because this is art: sweet temptation.

Notes

[1] Aristotel, Metafizica, Academiei, Bucureşti, 1965, p.155 (IV, 7, 1011b)

[2] Paul Ricoeur, Metafora vie, Univers, Bucureşti, 1984, p. 392

[3] Petre Botezatu, Semiotică şi negaţie. Orientare critică în logica modernă, Junimea, Iaşi, 1973, p.196.

[4] Karl Rosenkranz, O estetică a urâtului, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1984, pp. 35-36.

[5] Gheorghe Enescu, Fundamentele logice ale gândirii, Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1980, p. 201.

[6] Raymond Aron, Démocratie et totalitarisme, Gallimard, Paris, 1976, p. 136.

[7] Immanuel Kant, Critica facultăţii de judecare, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1981, p. 202-203.

[8] Constantin Noica, Scrisori despre logica lui Hermes, Cartea românească, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 71.

[9] Idem, pp. 145-146.

[10] Mario De Micheli, Avangarda artistică a secolului XX, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1968, p. 272.

[11] Idem, p. 283.

[12] Idem, pp. 329-330.

[13] Immanuel Kant, Op.cit., p. 214.

[14] Thierry de Duve, În numele artei: pentru o arheologie a modernităţii, Idea Design & Print, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, pp. 14-15.

[15] Alain Finkielkrant, Înfrângerea gândirii, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 1992, p. 50.

[16] P. Bourdieu; J-C. Passeron, La reproduction, Editions de Minuit, 1970, p. 22.

[17] Harlem Desir, L'identite francaise, în Espace 89, Editions Tierce, 1985, p. 120.

[18] Jean-François Lyotard, Le Travail et l'Ecrit chez Daniel Buren. Une introduction à la philosophie des arts contemporains, p. 6, www.nouveau-muse.eorg/documentation/publications/amejfl.html

[19] Gilles Deleuze, Les conditions de la question: qu'es-ce que la philosophie?, pp. 5-6, www.philogera.net/deleuze.htm

[20] Mario De Micheli, Op. cit, pp. 356-358.

[21] M. Rozental; P.

Iudin, Mic dicţionar filosofic, Editura de stat pentru literatură politică, 1954, pp. 30-31.

[22] Sigmund Freud, Scrieri despre literatură şi artă, Univers, Bucureşti, 1980, p. 8.