

The discovery of the unconscious and creative *pathos* – reflections on the *dialectic of loneliness*

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The Devil is a reflexive effect: he is born when anything that is already ego has to become *Id* again.

Peter Sloterdijk, *Crítica da Razão Clínica*, p.459

We are going to propose that the construction of modernity has launched a new transcendence, not to the outside of me, which I must access by elevation of my spirit, but to my deep interior, like an abyss that I do not reach with my consciousness. It emerges as a subjectivity that is foreign to me, which seems to have its origins in the temptation of the Devil, as a perfidious and malicious *Id*: that this evil “*Id*” can also be a for-itself, this is the true metaphysical scandal that has been discussed since the end of the Middle Ages, in the form of innumerable analyses of the Devil.¹ It is like Faust’s Mephistopheles, a personalization of Evil that wrests morality from metaphysical comfort to come into play with the subject to disturb his discovery of Self, within his own anthropocentrism in order to lose himself there, in this adventure.

In the Enlightenment advance towards the light, which was a project and a path, it is the world itself that gains as much opacity as the subject itself, in an ego that loses unity and shatters, but agonistically, before the darkness that becomes part of it, not as a possession of the Devil, but as repressions of a Faust complex.

Peter Sloterdijk states that the illusion of transparency of human self-consciousness begins to be destroyed at least in the 16th century: “In magnetic lucidity, a zone of knowledge is expressed that remains inaccessible to surface consciousness. (...). That thing follows consciousness like a shadow or like a doppelganger that never accepts to meet the firstself. But it follows it without ceasing without saying its name.”²

“But the Enlightenment is dissatisfied,” says Peter Sloterdijk³. On the other hand, we can rather consider that it was fatal that the Enlightenment was a failed project when it began to know man himself, because he would inevitably fail and there is no Enlightenment

¹ Peter Sloterdijk, *Crítica da Razão Clínica*, Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 2011, p. 454.

² *Ibidem*, p.83.

³ *Ibidem*, p.132.

without him. He himself sets foot on this path, especially with the two losses of innocence of Reason, between Schopenhauer and Marx, or between the principle of the *Id* (of the unconscious), interior and profound, and the principle of the real, of history and the class struggle. The ego cannot be fully pure and free.

It is the first one that will interest us here. The enlightened and enlightened Enlightenment discovered a psychological Enlightenment that is an imperfect Enlightenment, in which reason was confronted with the darkness from which it did not detach itself because it was added to the very discovery of the Self. But what was a trace of the evil one, a threat, emerged unfathomable to challenge, like an intrepid vertigo, the modern subject. To discover Man in the recent invention of the Self was to immerse him in that strange guise of spirituality inside out that, instead of ascending to heaven, descended into hell like Orpheus – who we know cannot look at his beloved again, because what is found in that immersion has no return to the light. And this is the profound universality that we can disenchant him. If the lights were what separated me from the world, the darkness was what merged me back into it.

We will propose this journey in three moments: 1) the discovery of the individual Man in the Enlightenment as *a subjective* (and *receptive turn* in art); 2) the shattering of the subject into several layers where he compared himself with his unconscious as an opaque abyss (*Id*); 3) and the subsequent cultural and artistic adventure in this abyss, where he lost his individuation (*ego*) to echo a deep collective expression.

1. Subjective and receptive turn

“(...) producer and consumer are two essentially separate systems (...) the ideas that both have of the work are incompatible”

Paul Valéry⁴.

In the interweaving of historical displacements that have been substantiated since that century, we are interested, in a preliminary way, in the context of some in the field of the arts, which for us are implied: a) a *subjective turn*, whether in the relationship between the author and production, or in a relationship with the valorization of reception, c) an *autonomy of the artistic sphere* b) and the passage of *authority (and the predominance of discourses) from production to reception*.

⁴ Paul Valéry, apud Michel Guérin, *Les Temps de L'Art. Anthropologie de la création des Modernes*, Paris : Actes Sud Éditions, 2018, p.227.

We also consider that these changes, articulating multiple processes of socio-cultural transformation, structure a passage that we consider decisive: from a time of the «Fine Arts» to a time of «Art». As a hinge, this paradigm shift underlines the question of the *autonomy of the artistic sphere*⁵, or the constitution of a «world of art»⁶, «field of art»⁷ or a «system of art». As Michel Guérin says, the regime of autonomy is inseparable from the destiny of modern art⁸, launching this articulation that can be summarized in the following sequence: autonomy of the sphere of art, after the medium of art, then of «art» as an institutional dimension.

The Academies of Fine Arts, born of the *culture of the palace*, were undermined by the very success of their *Salons*, an exhibition instrument with which an authority beyond the training and production of the artist was asserted in the public space: the «*Grand goût*» of the *Salon*, previously guaranteed in production, would be confronted with the small tastes of the public sphere: liberalism (social, but also economic) and subjectivity (individual) advanced. The *Salon* was born inside the Palace of Fine Arts, but its discussion passed outside. Throughout the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth centuries it was a place of social formation of tastes by determining the quality of the works of the artists it trained. But by arranging this exhibition place, they opened a receptive and public dynamic, which experienced the process of subjective turning while shifting the authority of art from the institutional places of production of works to new institutions of exhibition and consecration of works already conceived, therefore, of reception.

From the prior authority of the value of works in the institutions of artistic production, we moved on to the judgment of works in another institutional dimension of art centered on the places of exhibition and reception. This is a first and decisive subjective turn: the one that is affirmed in the valorization of tastes in the receptive sphere. As Michel Guérin points out, it is a passage between classical rhetoric and the age of aesthetics, or between the age of Beauty and the age of Taste⁹. It was the predicate of *the aesthetic experience* that was linked to the pleasure of the *subject*. The focus became the effect of the work on the subject. No longer the work as the mediation

⁵ For a synthesis of this historical "institutional consolidation of the system", cf. José Jimenez, *Teoría del arte*, Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 2006, pp.92-103.

⁶ Cf. Nelson Goodman, *Manière de faire des mondes*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 2006.

⁷ Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Editions du Seuil, 1998; Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 2001.

⁸ Michel Guérin, *Nihilisme et modernité. : Essai sur la sensibilité des époques modernes de Diderot à Duchamp*, Nîmes: Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 2003, p.196.

⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.13-14.

of an ideal Beauty (and of a metaphysical nature), but the aesthetic effect on the subject that must be stimulated from the work itself¹⁰. There is another reason for the work, another place of the subject and another valorization of the temporal circumstance of reception that were consolidated.

Registered was another journey. That of the artistic centres of Florence-Rome-Italy, the place where the Fine Arts was founded, to the birthplace of the *Salon*, the Academy's public exhibition: Paris. David is for us a paradigm of this change, between the old authority of production and the new authority of reception: the *Oath of the Horatii*, which had appeared in the theater and Diderot considered a good *subject* for painting¹¹, was painted in Rome (1794) but exhibited in Paris, at the *Salon* of 1785 – and, as the first pillar of the dialectic of *the isms* of the adventure of modern art, it was also the first *ism* born in historical consciousness of itself: Neoclassicism. Against this emerged shortly afterwards Romanticism. The dialectic of “isms” began, a dynamic proper to this public sphere of reception.

The protagonism of discourses in the field of the arts also changed. The discourse of treatise was emptied, with its rules that sought to guide the good production of the work. Treatise was a discourse that incorporated dimensions of demand in function of *know-how*. On the other hand, something emerged that escaped the domains of academies and studios. In this eighteenth century, Diderot already criticized the artifice of the poses of academic painting, defending the need for another dazzle and capture of natural gestures¹². Art emancipates itself from the authority of legitimation in production, therefore, from a power of consecration in the hands of master producers, therefore, of artists (in relation to the patronage power of commissions), to expose itself to another emerging public sieve with new dynamics and agents. Another gap opens up between production and reception.

¹⁰ "The aesthetic experience does not treat the religious statue and the painting that is on the altar as a mediating factor". Valeriano Bozal, *Historia de las ideas estéticas I*, Madrid: Historia 16, p.19.

¹¹ The theme was treated by Corneille, a play whose performance David attended. Diderot praised the dignity of the theme. David himself would say about the painting: «Si c'est à Corneille que je dois mon sujet, c'est à Poussin que je dois mon tableau.». Cf. Jean-Jacques Lévêque, *La vie et l'œuvre de Jacques-Louis David*, Paris : ACR Editions Internationale, 1989, p.74-80.

¹² Cf. Denis Diderot, *Salons* (Texts chosen, presented, established and annotated by Michel Delon), Éditions Gallimard, 2008, pp. 173-175.

Thus, the crisis of Beauty (guided by an Ideal¹³) is also the first of the work of art: if in the Modern Era, in what we call the time of the Fine Arts, it was the well-made object, the work in which beauty participated, that justifies art, with the turn of the eighteenth century the work was going to throw itself more and more into the decisions, judgments and effects of public reception. The guarantee of the ability of the maker to launch itself into the game of an art system begins to be lost. From the concept of «Beautiful», which guided artistic reason rooted in the works, which were the ones to justify art, we moved on to that of «Art» as a judicial system where *the quality of the work* is discussed in reception.

In fact, the work of art is a reality, while art is a concept. The concept is in fact based on the definition of the work. It encourages us to think of the work not as the work of an *artist*, but as a work of *art*.¹⁴

The pole of reception was affirmed as a new jurisdiction of the value of art. Michel Guérin quotes Paul Valéry: “(...) si le producteur fait de l’art une machine à produire des effets, le consommateur, lui, est « un producteur de valeur » (Paul Valéry)¹⁵». To de-center the production of the work is also to say that it is no longer a matter of legitimizing the work from something that is *artistically well done*, but from its *aesthetic effect*. We could speak of another control of the common imagination, in a kind of “économie du visible” as “choix politique”, an “économie” dans “le commerce des regards”, to use Marie-José Mondzain’s felicitous expression¹⁶. We can then say that the social and economic liberalism launched in the eighteenth century was also the liberalism of the gaze, altering this “commerce des regards” with the possibilities of *the subjective turn* in art.

In this paradigm, we can say that art ceased to be ontologically sustained by the work – or the being “art” justified from the entity of the “work”. The previous authority of the Beautiful, relativized by decentralization or overflow, was deprived¹⁷. The work no longer carried “in itself” a good execution (production) that manifested itself in it as guaranteed *to be fine arts*, exposing itself (reception) in a field with other tensions and dynamics to be judged (and discussed). This is not a space of rules or guarantees, but of discussion. The

¹³ Cf. Erwin Panofsky, *Idea. Contribution to the History of the Concept of the Ancient Theory of Art*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984.

¹⁴ Hans Belting, *L'Histoire de l'Art est-elle finie?*, Nîmes: Éditions Jacqueline Chambon, 1989, p.85.

¹⁵ Paul Valéry, apud Michel Guérin, *Les Temps de L'Art. Anthropologie de la création des Modernes*, Paris : Actes Sud Éditions, 2018, p.227.

¹⁶ Cf. Marie-José Mondzain, *Le commerce des regards*, Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 2003,

¹⁷ Simón Marchán Fiz proposes a "disorganization" and an "overflow of the beautiful", especially from the first manifestations of Romanticism. Simón Marchán Fiz, *Aesthetics in Modern Culture. From the Enlightenment to the Crisis of Structuralism*, Madrid: Alianza Forma, 1987, p.243

effects and impacts of the work in this new liberal and public dynamic were different – no longer blasphemy, but scandal; no longer the refusal of the commission, but the refusal to enter *the Salon* or its judgment... that is, criticism.

The “critical and creative spectator” epitomized by José Jiménez emerged¹⁸. And we could talk about the ways of the aesthetics of reception (made famous by Jauss, but which was already a matter of great authors of the first Frankfurt School, or even in the history of art, as in Pierre Francastel), of open work (Umberto Eco), among others of contemporary hermeneutics, such as Gadamer, or the possibilities of a relational aesthetic, from the situationists to Nicolas Bourriaud. The work escapes the artist: It is part of that subjectivation that accompanies the famous “invention of Man” referred to by Michel Foucault¹⁹, where the “subject” of the monarchy was replaced by the “citizen subject” of the bourgeoisie, a paradoxical process in the Modern Era, between his affirmation as a rational subject, a first process of the subjective turn that brought with it a power of domination, of legislator and master of his destinies, while a second process was discovered, the plunge into his inner subjectivity that was the shattering of the unity of the first²⁰: “The moment it [work of art] is created, it detaches itself from its creator”.²¹ The author puts the cards on the table, but he is no longer the one playing²².

At this crossroads, there was not only a change in the models of discourse, but also the emergence of new concepts. It is due to this century that Aesthetics, Art History and Art Criticism were formulated, at least in their modern forms. Aesthetics (Baumgarten) was born, and no longer the philosophy of beauty, just as art criticism (Saint-Yenne, Diderot) and the history of modern art (Winckelman) were born, which replaced the praise of the lives of artists as illustrious citizens (Vasari’s model). Michel Guérin refers well to the relationship between art criticism and the “*goût du public*” with marks on romance literature, connecting that the era of the *Salon* and art criticism coincides with the great novels, with fame on a European scale, and with «an autonomy of aesthetics and a specificity of

¹⁸ Through authors such as Duchamp, Gadamer, Jauss, Umberto Eco or Jacques Derrida. Cf José Jiménez, *Teoría del arte*, Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 2006, p.226-231

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *As Palavras e as Coisas*, Lisbon, Edições 70, 1998, p.421.

²⁰ Cf. Hélène Védrine, *Le Sujet éclaté*, Librairie Générale Française, 2000.

²¹ Bernard Berenson, *Esthétique et Histoire des Arts Visuels*, Paris : Éditions Albin Michel, 1953, p.28.

²² We are based on an expression that Peter Sloterdijk explores from Adorno in *Minima Moralia* (aphorism 140: «Consequence»). Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, *Crítica da Razão Cínica*, Lisbon: Relógio d'Água, 2011, p.461.

the judgment of taste indexed on pleasure, freedom and imagination»²³. The devaluation of the traditional authority of *Beauty* valued the effects in the sphere of reception: «The discussion about beauty shifts to the search for rules to produce or recognize it in the consideration of its effects that it produces (...).²⁴ »

We underline three fundamental concepts, which became dominant in artistic theories from that eighteenth century onwards and all of them relevant in the process of valuing reception as an *aesthetic experience*: *Taste*, the *Sublime* and *Aesthetics itself*. All of them are placed, with greater or lesser intensity, more at the pole of reception than at that of production. Just as the *cultic dimension* passed from the church to the museum²⁵, so the privatization of aesthetic contemplation seemed to pass into the relationship «not only private, but interior, intimate»²⁶ with the artistic object. More than the understanding of the reason of forms to justify the quality of the work, what came to dominate was its effect on the subject, allowing art to become a way of understanding human passions²⁷. From the centrality of the foundations in art in the work, there was a relationship with the subject, and the modes of this relationship became determinant, ranging from sensory and emotional apprehension to judgment in relation to the work, as a «form of rationality coming out of the sensible»²⁸. Basically, it was an appreciation of the subject's aesthetic experience and, consequently, of aesthetic judgment²⁹, which came to relativize Beauty. In principle, none of these three concepts can function *without* a subject, since the determination of art passed from the presence of the object to its *agreement* with the subject:

«(...), the aesthetic experience is the privileged site where this hypothetical equality of rights intuition and intention is in fact untenable; and insofar as we agree to confer the status of truth where the adequacy between what is aimed at and what is given as such is accomplished, the work in its

²³ Michel Guérin, *Les Temps de L'Art. Anthropologie de la création des Modernes*, Paris : Actes Sud Éditions, 2018, p.191-192.

²⁴ Umberto Eco (Director), *História da Beleza*, Lisbon: Difel, 2009, p.275.

²⁵ Cf. Walter Benjamin «A Obra de Arte na Era da sua Reprodutibilidade Técnica», in *Sobre Arte, Técnica, Linguagem e Política*, Lisbon: Relógio d'Água, 1992, p.82.83.

²⁶ José Jiménez, *Teoría del arte*, Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 2006, p.147.

²⁷ Cf. Fabienne Brugère, *Le goût. Art, passions et société*, Paris : PUF, 2000, p.11.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ The idea that experience is a necessary stage prior to judgment, especially in its conscious fullness, was defended by Michael J. Parsons, whose theory of the «five stages of aesthetic development» was based on an interaction between the medium of expression and the effect on reception, in this case in the context of pisco-cognitive studies. Cf. Michael J. Parsons, *Understanding Art. An Approach to Aesthetic Experience from the Point of View of Cognitive Development*, Lisbon: Editorial Presença, 1992.

anamorphosis, according to its rise and its form, according to whether the movement seems to be perpetuated from me to the work or from the work to me, is the framework that compromises this equation»³⁰.

A guise was inscribed in the adventures of Modern Art and the Artistic Vanguards. It will be accompanied by a crisis of criteria for the good conception of the *perfect work of art*, and consequently of the traditional processes of teaching to *be an artist* (which had to be reformulated from the paradigms of the previous rules of treatise and principles of good execution: no rules to follow, no masters to imitate), as well as the failure of definitions for *what is or is not art* (a subsequent crisis, now criteriological, of art).

2. The intimate abyss of the shattered Subject

“(…) the will is the substance of Man, the intellect is his accident; (…)» (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and as Representation*)

“I have moments when enthusiasm grows to the point of madness or prophecy” (Vincent Van Gogh, Letters to Brothers, no. 562)

Let us come closer to our question. The discovery of this liberal place of the subject, this invention of Man, has a parallel with the freedom of the artist who no longer wants to respond to orders from the palace and the church. If between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Era the consciousness of the author was discovered, the eighteenth century is the one that legally invents “copyright”. In the field of a *sphere proper to art*, the artist decided more and more about the entire *poetic process* of the work, from the choice of motifs to the ways of doing, in order to, on the other hand, with this freedom have to risk its exhibition and legitimation in a public sphere of reception. It is the invention of the *critical power of the work*, parallel to the *power of the criticism of the work*.

But the very place of the subject provoked by the century of the Enlightenment, with its desires for emancipation, opened up risks that shattered the subject itself. The history of Western philosophy in the Contemporary Era, starting from the modern rational matrix of Descartes, and with immediate continuities in the Enlightenment, is also the history of both a crisis of absolute and universal truth, and of a disturbance of the freedom of the subject that Kant had worked so hard to guarantee. We consider that in the middle of the

³⁰ Alain Bonfand, *L'expérience esthétique à l'épreuve de la phénoménologie. La tristesse du roi*, Paris : PUF, 1995, p.20.

nineteenth century there are two decisive losses of innocence in Western thought, two philosophical projects that launch two distinct paths of determinism on the subject, making the emancipated Enlightenment subject hostage again:

1) On the one hand, with Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), the internal order of the rational ego was shattered, placing its essence in the blind and irrational Will. The rational and one subject was stiolate from within. For Schopenhauer, the satisfaction produced by a thing can only result from its relation to our “Will”.³¹ On the other hand, for the philosopher, it was the world as “Will”, as “intuition”, which preceded the world as “Representation”, the latter being an “abstraction” derived from the former, so that the latter could not substantiate an abstract and prior universality that decided things: “Nous le savons : le monde comme volonté est le premier (*ordine prior*), et le monde comme représentation le second (*ordine posterior*)”.³² Will is aspiration and pain which, as the essence of the World, is an absurd and profound, blind and irrational will. Representation is an abstraction without pain, the surface of the World and a mere mask of the Will. More than a relationship with Truth, the Will is essence insofar as it becomes blind, never realizing itself (even when it is satisfied). The subject ceases to coincide with the order of Reason, which is no longer its essence, to become a mere artifice, the mask of the *persona*. Its essence is determined by a blind vigor, whose opacity and obscurity do not allow it to be revealed to the conscious exercise of Reason. The subject shattered into layers that escaped itself.

2) The other, with Karl Marx (1818-1883), confronted us with a determinism that came from outside, from the outside, as a result of the class struggle and a sentence of the victors of History. Truth results from history and imposes itself from those who overcome it: it is not absolute, but determined from the outside, from the context and from power. If for Schopenhauer “the entire rational sphere of man is produced by the Irrational and Unconscious Will”, in Marx this irrationality is attenuated, in the sense that it is the *praxis* of “life (the economic structure) that determines consciousness (i.e., the superstructure)”.³³ In Marx’s famous sentence: “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being; it is its social being that, conversely, determines its consciousness.”³⁴ The “Idea” is the product of human consciousness, and the Absolute is built from below, from the infrastructure, and from outside the subject.

³¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, "Esthétique et métaphysique du beau", in *Esthétique et métaphysique*, Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 1999, p.165.

³² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-173.

³³ Cf. Emanuele Severino, *A Filosofia Contemporânea*, Lisbon: Edições 70, 1987, p.65.

³⁴ Karl Marx, *Contribution to the critique of political economy*, Lisbon: Estampa, 1973. p. 28.

“Truth” is an instrument of alienation because it represents the ideology of those who dominate the structure of production — it is an instrument of power. Philosophy emerges from a state of innocence and *self-belief*; and it could only save itself by assuming a critical position within the superstructure (of consciousness). The subject is trapped in a condition of social and historical context.

From these *losses of innocence*, neither the subject is one and pure reason, nor can “truth” be universal and absolute. If criticism and doubt already had a philosophical tradition, as a way of arriving at truth, now these dimensions are installed in the mode of *Being* of Truth made critical. The absolute truth of traditional Western ontology, with a rational basis, was thus discussed by contemporary philosophy itself, while philosophers are increasingly interested in Aesthetics and Art as means for new questions and understandings of themselves and the world.

In the face of art, these two losses of innocence provoked two distinct explorations. The first forced art to probe deep areas of the subject, as a pleasure from the unfathomable abyss of the indomitable unconscious. The second to a necessary emancipation that would free the deepened subject from external limitations. It is the first that we will be interested in deepening here. The subjective and perceptive turn of art was to be found with this disturbance thrown at the unity of the rational subject. While the subjectivity of reception and an aesthetics of effects were valued, creative production itself was absorbed by an *author* who was increasingly opaque to himself.

A primordial dimension, with an increasingly deepened and desired sincerity and subjectivity, emerging at the end of the seventeenth century with the question of feeling and taste, debated in the following century and expanded throughout the eighteenth century, with the romantic and symbolist paths, would be intensely researched in various movements of the first avant-garde, as pure creative forces with an anti-rational basis, fascinated with primitivism, infantilism, the unconscious or even madness. Romanticism would destabilize the classicist order of the traditional Beautiful, preferring imbalances, due to lack or excess. If it explored in the sublime a mode of positive unmeasure, it also achieved the immeasurability of a negative abyss by temptation by the unconscious and irrationality. The classic History of Art exposes several examples of this immersion, at least since Goya, who figured asylums and states of ecstasy and dementia, from Géricault’s portraits of psychological illnesses (*Monomane series*, 1819-1922) to Füssli’s nightmares. This would continue in the twentieth century with various *aesthetics of the unconscious*, from the beginning of the fascination of “art” with *naïve* expressions at the beginning of this century (the “modern primitives” of Wilhelm Uhde), such as Henri Rousseau or Séraphine Louis, through

movements fascinated by manifestations that disturbed rationality, such as Dada or Surrealism, to the “Art brut” consecrated by Jean Dubuffet, many relationships and complicities were established between art and the unconscious or even madness. Negative inordinateness analogous to those of the sublime emerged, not as a function of an infinity of elevation, but rather, as if its inside out, a downward dive, a kind of dive into a place of the subject where rationality neither decided nor³⁵ acted.

It was the valorization of *the naïve look* of the artist. This would have a fruitful history in the field of the arts, especially due to the disconnection from academic rules and its most rational principles. In the eighteenth century, the issue was already addressed by Diderot in the appeal to a kind of *naïve dazzle*:

«In addition to the simplicity which he [*naïve*] expressed, we must add to it the innocence, the truth and the originality of a happy childhood which was not constrained, and then the naïve will be essential to all production of the fine arts; (...); the naïve will be very close to the sublime; the naïve will find himself in everything that is very beautiful; in an attitude, in a movement, in a drapery, in an expression. It is the thing, but the pure thing, without the slightest alteration. Art is no longer there»³⁶.

The *naïve gaze* also became a mark of a dimension of openness in aesthetic contemplation:

«A naïve gaze, a primitive gaze, a gaze that begins, without prejudices, without blinders, are often referents of the aesthetic experience. In all of them, the effect that is proper to it occupies the foreground, and there is nothing particular about the fact that the artist has often been compared to a child or a primitive, such is the sincerity, authenticity and originality of his way of seeing-representing things. A naïve gaze discovers unprecedented aspects of objects and also discovers the conventional gaze that turned over them, now offering an equally original figure of it. The naïve gaze refers both to the object contemplated and to the gaze with which it was perceived. The aesthetic experience rejects the closed and given of the things contemplated, the naïve gaze opens, in its rejection of the given, new and endless interpretations»³⁷.

³⁵ These are questions that interested us and developed in: Fernando Rosa Dias, «Editorial: Institutionalization of madness and autonomy of the artistic sphere», in *Convocarte – Revista de Ciências da Arte*, Lisbon: Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa, CIEBA, n.º 11 (Thematic dossier: *Art and madness - Art in Asylum, Art Brut and Art History*), December 2020, pp.10-28.

³⁶ Denis Diderot, *Salons* (Textes choisis, présentés, établis et annotés par Michel Delon), Éditions Gallimard, 2008, p.468.

³⁷ Valeriano Bozal, *Historia de las ideas estéticas*

The invention of the Man of modernity of which Foucault spoke to us, carried in the end several figures of the subject, precisely because it went beyond the classical *subject-substance* of ancient thought to open itself to a modern *subject-cogitos*, a passage from a time of formal metaphysical reason to instrumental reason as an exercise in the mastery of nature³⁸. This first rational subject of the subjective turn brought with it a power of domination, of legislator and master of its destinies³⁹, while discovering its subjectivity. But self-consciousness was not a knowledge of itself, so fatality would be a confrontation with an introspection in the modes of contingency of this *subject-cogitos*. The discovery of the Self unfolded the rational ego into layers of unconscious drives (Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Freud), immersed it in the becoming of *Dasein* (Heidegger), in the nausea of existentialism (Sartre), in the impossibility of disintegrating from flesh (Merleau Ponty) or emotion (Antonio Damasio), etc. \u2012 therefore, ways in which *reason is always drive* and circumstance. The ego shattered while the subject revealed itself as a mystery before the effort of consciousness of a knowledge of itself. It accused a plural and opaque alterity of the subject in the effort of transparency of itself.

In this process, art allowed itself a paradoxical movement in the relationship with madness. Closing and completing this relationship: while Enlightenment reason isolated the voices of disorder from “madness”,⁴⁰ it let out another voice that acquired greater autonomy and cultural expression in order to free itself from a previous dependence on reason: *the voices of immeasurability and disorder moved to place themselves under the protection of the autonomy of the sphere of “art”*.

This openness to a *non-rationality* allowed for a whole exploration of the destinies of art and aesthetics. The great contemporary aesthetic theories not only went beyond the good measure of the work but also the agreement with the subject, still desired at the origins of the process of *aesthetic subjectivation*, the sublime being a first great moment of an aesthetics of *disagreement* and *imbalance*. Opening a challenge to both order and agreement, it triggered a time of transgression dynamized under the sign of *agon* (agonistic). The *subjective turn* was followed by its intensification with a dive into that opaque and blind intimate depth. If the aesthetic field became a place of socio-cultural transgression, this was undoubtedly also due to the fact that it was accompanied by a necessary process of diving into the

³⁸ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *La Dialectique de la raison – Fragments philosophiques*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1974.

³⁹ Cf. Hélène Védrine, *Le Sujet éclaté*, Librairie Générale Française, 2000, p.24.

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1972 ; e, sobretudo, "A casa dos loucos" ["La maisons des fous" (1975)], in *Microfísica do Poder*, Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979, pp.113-128.

less rational dimensions of the self, with which the subject simultaneously confronted and explored. The transgression was not only outwards, but inwards, deconstructing the unity (and authority) of the ego. For art, the combination of the scrutiny of the two was one of the most striking paths of art in the contemporary era, in a crossing at least since Romanticism, followed by various movements such as Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism, Art Brut, Informalism, etc. In these movements, in different ways and intensities, a pressure of *Pathos* (from the Greek *πάθος*, meaning “suffering, passion, affection”) in which pathetic and tragic are united⁴¹.

As a lyrical way of explaining this dive, let us explore as a metaphor the mythological narrative of Orpheus, who plunged into Hades, a place where he could not contemplate his beloved Eurydice whom he wished to bring to the surface. Orpheus was not refused to see, but to look towards Eurydice, his beloved who followed behind him. Eurydice was the very past or desired reminiscence and, for Orpheus, there was no future without her. This is Orpheus’ contradiction. His fatality was not being able to resist that gaze that was in the past to place it in the light of the future. Orpheus could not see Eurydice and prove his presence by looking; seeing her was his disappearance. But it was precisely the fear that she would disappear, that she was not the one who was there, that made him look back. The return to the surface, the return to the light, is paradoxically the place of Eurydice’s dissipation to visibility, where Orpheus can already look, but where Eurydice disappears. Too late for the gaze as confirmation, leaving the perpetual doubt of when can I look? Orpheus could never contemplate Eurydice face-to-face. But the question remains whether Eurydice was ever there, if she was not always a spectre of shadows, because it is exactly when she arrives at the surface, at the light, where the gaze can be tried, that she disappears. All the way back, Orpheus touched Eurydice and heard her footsteps, but he did not look at her. Orpheus could never contemplate Eurydice face-to-face. The gaze (the arrival at enlightenment) was the place where everything escaped.

This is the metaphor we want. Just as Eurydice’s spectre does not return to the light for Orpheus’ gaze, so too do the dives into the unconscious remain there – just as Nietzsche’s Apollonian allowed us to give a mask and visibility to the tragic background, which could not be faced, of the Dionysian. What remains is this journey of signs (in the case of Orpheus and Eurydice never optical, but only haptic and auditory challenging the gaze; in the case of the Apollonian, only in the optical appearance) that are never face-to-face with

⁴¹ Cf. Valeriano Bozal, *Historia de las ideas estéticas II*, Madrid: Historia 16, 1998, part «Sublime pathético», pp.91-98.

the subject's consciousness. There is no light, there is no transparency. What remains is the melancholy of loss and the intangible. It is with this consciousness that we are interested in this relationship with the dimensions outside the control of rationality and it is with this that we are interested in its manifestation within the arts. The artist's plunge into unfathomable zones is important precisely because of its richness and difficulty, in the awareness of its disappearance and irreversible loss, and not in the illusion of being in front of these dimensions in the luminous fullness of a face-to-face — just like Eurídice. Orpheus knew that his beloved was there in the darkness of Hades, and ventured into her search and impossible return to the transparency of light. In this metaphor, art acts as Orpheus' journey, in contact with deep desires and reminiscences. The *id* is like the deep darkness of Hades. However, where interpretation does not dominate, there is a challenge to the effort of language that fascinates art. In the delirium of hermeneutics, in the abstract primacy of interpretations, there is a separation with the “primacy of the object”, which always resists with this remnant of the opacity of an “in-itself” closed to our knowledge. Here is this attraction that emanates from the things that make the artist move:

“The artist, the critic, lives under the impression that it is things that want something from him more than he wants from things, and that they are what embark him on the adventure of experience. He goes towards them, surrenders himself to their impression and, as a true researcher, is fascinated by them”⁴²

Projected by the subjective turn, plunged into the abyss of this unconscious (of the Self) opaque to rational consciousness, the artist increasingly had fewer external dictates for the know-how of the work, to let inner enthusiasms happen. To allow this unconscious “it” to be expressed, to give visibility to its blindness, to bring to light the expressiveness of its opacity, this is the new adventure that had always been there, like a new spiritual journey of art like a walk in Hades. That what returns to the surface are only torn remains, indirect samples of these reminiscences, or other emotions and pains, is part of the regrets of this journey. What will interest us now is that we do not return from this journey with a collection to be displayed in the light, but that from this depth, individual as ever, a

⁴² Peter Sloterdijk, *Crítica da Razão Cínica*, Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 2011, p.451-452.

voice will no longer be individual but collective, because it is viscerally human and more intense and profound than the individual constitution of consciousnesses.

2. The Universality of the Deep Individual

“But I, who never begin and finish,
I was born of the love that is between God and the Devil.”

(José Régio, «Cântico Negro»)

We have pointed out how Schopenhauer's philosophy was one of the great modern foundations of an irrational aesthetic, which accompanied the strength of Romanticism and anticipated the great paths of Expressionism or Surrealism. It founded that place where Aesthetics found a marked detachment from the integral and rational Subject. Cartesian Reason ceased to justify the subject and he plunged into an internal abyss where he shattered into layers, with striking continuations in the thoughts of Nietzsche or Freud. It is this new mode of the subject as an artistic author of the Contemporary Era that we underline as a new line of scrutiny and discovery of the Self. What we will extrapolate next is this proposal of a dimension of spirituality, more in fall than in flight, more to scrutinize in the darkness than to reach the light, but where the author's strength escapes the limits of the consciousness of his own egotistic apprehension. We know that without this trait almost everything would disappear from the art of the Contemporary Era. To close this question, as a corollary of the adventure of the invention of Man, and of the subjectivity of the Contemporary Era, we will attend to Adorno's thought.

We are interested in *Nietzsche's proposal* regarding the breaking of the principle of individuation⁴³ that characterizes the Dionysian spirit. The *principle of individuation* existing in the *Apollonian spirit* and annulled in the Dionysian. Nietzsche affirms:

⁴³ We retrieve ideas from the texts: Fernando Rosa Dias, «Introduction to Expressionism», in *Proceedings of the Conferences «Ciências das Artes»*, n.º 1: *The Visual Arts and the Other Arts - The First Vanguard*, University of Lisbon, Faculty of Fine Arts, 2007, p.11-28; Fernando Rosa Dias, «O Expressionismo e a Estética do Feio», in *O Feio Para Além do Belo*, Lisbon: Centro de Filosofia da Universidade de Lisboa, 2012, p.147-155.

“Contrary to those who apply themselves to derive the arts from a single principle, which would be the source of life necessary for every work of art, I gaze fixedly at the two artistic divinities of the Greeks, Apollo and Dionysus, and recognize in them the living and striking representatives of two worlds of art so different in their deepest essence and their highest ends. Apollo hovers before me as the transfiguring genius of the *principle of individuation*, the god who can really arouse liberating joy through the cloak of aesthetic appearance; while by the cries of mystical jubilation of Dionysus the yoke of individuation is broken and the way is opened to the Mothers of being, towards the very essence of things.”⁴⁴.

Apollonian imposes a necessary distance to his oneiric and contemplative dimension, and it is this distance that determines the principle of individuation, because subject and world are separated, or because the sign separates from the subject. We would say that it is the mark of the consciousness of the sign, of its formal materiality that undoes the psychic experience that connects man to the world. Contemplation implies what is and what is seen (the sign), and presupposes the two poles as the support of their relationship in distance: it is *noese* and *noema*, which will mark the destiny of a fatal separation. For Nietzsche it is the separation and autonomy of the beautiful appearance, that illusion of *the veil of Maya* that covers the chaos and enigma of the world, the measure and fantasy that erases the pain of the world. It is the sign that becomes symbol and form, that makes culture, separating the subject from its animal matrix to erect culture.

Dionysus wants to break this distance, merging the subject with the whole, recovering that intense experience of things, in which there is no sign, no form or symbolization, but intensification of life until it is no longer stopped from the world. There is no longer separation, but there is also no principle of individuation, no harmony or beauty. Harmony is replaced by an intensification of life that has a tragic background. Beautiful measure is replaced by delirium. There is no protection from contemplative distance, but a convulsion that breaks poles and oppositions. The ego annuls itself to live the intensity of a soulful and rapturous present. There is no consciousness, but delirium. There is no image or symbol to contemplate, but participation. There is no subject or points of view, but experience. Instead of separating the *author* from *his* individual voice, we merge with the world in a collective voice.

In this fusion, beauty and harmony lose their place. There is no longer an extension of space and time for beautiful forms and their relations of proportion, harmony and composition, but intensity. If the Apollonian was a figurative and dreamlike instinct, functioning in *the sensorial extension* of the world, the plane of distance and contemplation, the Dionysian plunges into *intensification*. Hence the

⁴⁴ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *A Origem da Tragédia*, Lisboa Editora, 2002, parte 16.

Apollonian is sustained in a *sensorial* dimension while the Dionysian is thrown into an *emotional dimension*. One refers to an *external world* from which he demarcates himself as a subject; another prefers to plunge into ecstasy into an inner world *breaking the boundaries with the external*.

In *the Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, written by Adorno and Horkheimer,⁴⁵ we sought to analyze what we could call a meta-history of Western reason in its contradictory course: by defeating myth - a primordial discourse about the real, constituting, as such, a prehistory of rationality - the enlightening thought of the Enlightenment also becomes a kind of new mythology, because it repeats the same procedures of the magical act; worse, reason remains mythological by not supporting an exteriority of itself, a moment that could oppose it as *another* within its modes. It is in this sense that the Enlightenment is seen as totalitarian. Myth surpasses the Enlightenment, but the latter regresses towards mythology in its own desire to seek to be its most decisive opposition.

The Enlightenment as *thought in continuous progress is a movement of thought itself*. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the danger of the *dialectic of the Enlightenment*, as a dialectic of instrumental reason, is the very separation with dominated nature, that is, the substitution of the relationship with a living nature for a “still-life”, a “mimesis of death”.⁴⁶ The original relationship between man and nature that myth nourished is lost, in order to superimpose a logical discourse on myth, mythology as systematization and separation. Instrumental reason acts in a quantitative dimension that dominates over the qualitative dimension of things, coming to dominate technique, operation, efficiency, economy, etc. Between the work of Prometheus, the curiosity of Faust, and the rational astuteness of Ulysses, the mythical figures of this dialectic of the domination of the Enlightenment that passed through the expulsion of Orpheus were defined.

Totality, Universality and Unity⁴⁷ are the modes of control of instrumental reason. Alternatively, Adorno defended the end of prior meaning and a reality without intentions, highlighting a hermeneutic of the world based on the enigma and the small focus (micrologia), defending the fragment as resistance and insubordination to such totalitarian principles of reason. Hence, dialectics must be the consequent consciousness of *non-identity*, a negative force, opening a passion for possibility as a contestation of truth.

⁴⁵ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *La Dialectique de la raison – Fragments philosophiques*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1974.

⁴⁶ Theodor W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *La Dialectique de la raison – Fragments philosophiques*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1974, p.70. For synthesis and problematization of this perspective, cf. Albrecht Wellmer, *On the Dialectic of Modernity and Postmodernity. The Critique of Reason after Adorno*, Madrid: Visor, 1993, p.139-148.

⁴⁷ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Actualidad de la filosofía*, Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós, 1991.

For this reason, for Adorno, just as in philosophy truth is fragile and not lasting, alterable and not perennial or absolute – and hence the search for difference as ethics or non-identical as a principle – so its aesthetics will be negative and of refusal, in the continuous demand for critical activity. The strength of art is exposed in the “irreducible sensibility” of its materiality, which underlines the immanence and autonomy of the work of art as the basis of an opacity that imposes difficulties of understanding as a negative mode of a hermeneutic horizon. Art illuminates meanings in the confrontation with the opacity of its materiality and its intransigent refusal of the transparency of signification. Just as dialectics can only be negative, art is the attention of this place of withdrawal of hermeneutic opacity: to be *an enigma* is the poetics that is based on its negativity.

“The enigmatic character of art is not the same thing as understanding its works, that is, objectively, producing them, so to speak, from one’s internal experience, (...). In comparison with the enigmatic character, understanding itself (*Verstehen*) is a problematic category. Whoever understands works of art by the immanence of consciousness in them does not truly understand them; and the more understanding increases, the more the feeling of insufficiency also intensifies, blindly inscribed in the spell of art to which the very content of truth is opposed. (...): works of art that are presented without residue to reflection and thought are not works of art”.⁴⁸

For Adorno, the “survival” of works “lies between the refusal to let themselves be understood and the desire to be understood”.⁴⁹ The opacity of the material (and the attached enigma of art) is not what prevents its meaning; rather, it is what nourishes and founds it, negatively and critically. The enigma results from this interplay between the objective immanence of the work and the subjectivity of reception in the very effort to apprehend it: “Also in reception, subjectivity mediates objectivity”.⁵⁰ For this very reason, it is not immediate and founds the spiritual dimension:

«Aesthetic objectivity is not immediate; (...). If it were something unmediatized, it would coincide with the sensible phenomena of art and conceal its spiritual moment; (...). Aesthetics means the search for the conditions and mediations of the objectivity of art»⁵¹.

For Adorno, the aesthetic subject is not reduced to the empirical subject and the thing-like materiality of the work does not yet make it artistic. If it is from material immanence that the aesthetic is founded, it is precisely because it finds there that irreducible dimension

⁴⁸ Theodor W. Adorno, *Teoria Estética*, Lisbon, Edições 70, n.d., p.141-142.

⁴⁹ Idem, *Experience and Artistic Creation. Paralipómenos à «Teoria Estética»*, Lisbon, Edições 70, 2003, p.75.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p.16.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p.17.

where the subject confronts the limits and possibilities of the spiritual dimension, that is, it is the *thingness* of the work that acts as a «medium of its own overcoming» – in a mutual mediatization in which the «spirit of the artistic works is elaborated in its thingness, and its thingality, the presence of the works, emanates from its spirit»⁵².

If “art *aims at truth*” it is because it does not coincide with it. In the effort of the works to be self-sufficient, they encounter what they are not – hence the expression that in art their “own reality seems unreal to it”, because it is itself and at the same time an other different from itself⁵³. This “other”, from which the whole spiritual dimension is propagated, where subjective and intersubjective interference is founded, has as its mediating element this presence of the work of art, the mark of a subjectively imagined “in-itself”.⁵⁴ The spirit of the works is not what they signify, but what “appears in them as truth”,⁵⁵ which is their *critical content*. What interests us in these reflections is that they suppose that no discourse can be made, as *another* of the work, without a link to that irreducible place that is at the origin of the subsequent developments, which is the work. Between the thingly presence of the work and the subjective relation, the immanent reflective process of aesthetics is elaborated.

But if «what is intellectually known in the work radiates to its sensible perception», it is because this dimension ratifies as a previous presence the paths of the first. Therefore, if every critique needs a meta-critique to protect itself from the abstract character of the categories with which it feeds, this same critique also needs to link itself to the work, seeking to apprehend itself from what it can never become and which is to become an *immanent critique*⁵⁶ – it is a matter of, on the one hand, resorting to a second reflection and, on the other, of pointing to the plane of immanence. One can never consider a pure immanence, to which the work is reduced, but the way in which, by prostrating itself with its presence to sensible perception, it founds and dynamizes reflective planes of subjectivity. Concluding this perspective, it is from its objective sensible irreducibility that the work becomes affective reception, a possible

⁵² *Ibidem*, p.35. See also, idem, *Teoria Estética*, Lisbon, Edições 70, n.d., pp.239, 288-289.

⁵³ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Experiência e Criação Artística. Paralipómenos à «Teoria Estética»*, Lisbon, Edições 70, 2003, p.43-45.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p.46.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p.47.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-95.

cogitation in discourse, therefore, subjective spirit; It is from her anti-hermeneutic rebellion that she feeds hermeneutics – it is there, on this material threshold of silence that she provokes emotions, challenges comprehension and attends to this subjective spirit.

The whole of Adorno's aesthetics defended a position of art as a critical exercise and a negative force: "The truth content of works of art merges with their critical content. That is why they exercise criticism among themselves. (...); one work of art is the mortal enemy of the other".⁵⁷ The unity of art history is the dialectical figure of a determinate negation. Adorno's consideration of art as negativity goes beyond the historical dimension from which it arises as an avant-garde situation. It belongs to a dimension of art that is self-referential for reasons of self-awareness and of its history. The "power to forget" lies in the strong awareness of tradition. It is not the quotation of those who ignore what there is to forget and deny, but the reorganization of what is remembered and known, as a dialectical process. Only in this way is a process of *negative cultural dialectics* possible. It is a destruction of the existent in the consciousness of its existence, a way of *constructing* through destruction (negation), dialectically harboring a positive only after this negation. Only by inverting the Enlightenment light is the negative of Enlightenment society revealed. That is why Adorno was against the word experimentation, which was confused, resembled something worse: anarchy. Therefore, a deception of the dialectical negativity of avant-garde art⁵⁸.

In the uncompromising defense of a dialectical and reflexive avant-garde art, Adorno defends a radical individualism in which Art manifests itself as opposition to the social to reveal the expression of the collective. The Universal takes place through personal language, where any possibility of authorial style is founded, and the individual is ecumenical. In *The Philosophy of New Music*, he makes an analysis of the confrontation between the composers Schönberg and Stravinsky that helps us to understand their readings of the defense of individualism. To defend the *individualism of the author* (as he will also defend, symmetrically, that of the receiver), Adorno is very critical of the «connivance with the auditor», in «guise of humanism»⁵⁹. For him, the taste of the public and the quality of the works diverge and the quality is safeguarded only in the author himself or in the competent critic. The dictatorship of profit over

⁵⁷ Theodor W. Adorno; *Teoria Estética*, Lisbon, Edições 70, n.d (1970, original edition), p.49.

⁵⁸ Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie de la nouvelle musique*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1962, p.16.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

culture isolates culture while accusing the avant-garde of intellectualism⁶⁰. For Adorno, the possibility of being understood by many is at the basis of *musical objectification*, which is reduced to something almost fictitious, falling back on the arrogance of the aesthetic subject who says “we”, when it can only be “me”. Advanced music (art) must act without concession to this “human” who, where it continues to exercise its charm, it recognizes as a mask of humanity. Following the general trend may expose the social, but it does not transform it. Art reifies itself when it exists for something else to better serve consumption, therefore, to be an article of consumption, dragging with it the reification of all that is spirit in the market society⁶¹.

Attention must be given to the material. The transformation of musical material into expressive elements from external contents endangers its own expression, which is impenetrable. The very idea of *method* is about discovering the implications between technical processes and works. Adorno refers to an “immanent method”, not in the transcendence of the object, but in that immanence of the material that gives shape to contradiction, and reappears in the marks of *imperfection*. It is a matter of exposing the demands of the material to the subject’s gaze, but of a material understood as a “sedimented spirit”, which already has traces, of history and of the social. Hence, precisely for this reason, it should not go in search of a purely external and heterogeneous element, as a consumer or opponent. The genuine author is confronted with the material in an “immanent interaction” and not in front of something external (auditor, market, critic, etc.) ⁶².

Hence the «dialectic of loneliness»⁶³, which can be underlined in the aforementioned irrational paths of Aesthetics, from movements from Romanticism to Expressionism (the latter referred to by Adorno). For Adorno, Schönberg’s music is «an expression of anguish», as a «presentiment», which manifests the «impotence» that removes us from comfort. It is by insisting on loneliness to the point of paroxysm that Schönberg reveals the social character: «Solitary discourse “says more about the social tendency than communicative discourse”». ⁶⁴ Trata-se de uma “solitude as style”. Nela “o monada absoluto” na arte é simultaneamente: “and resistance against bad

⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.20-25.

⁶¹ Cf. *Ibidem*, p.28-35.

⁶² Cf. *Ibid.*, 1962, p.45.

⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.52-58.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

socialisation, and disposition for even worse socialisation»⁶⁵. The absolute subject is not, after all, absolute, and it is in its isolation that the social appears. And quoting Schönberg himself, in one of the verses that he himself set to music:

«leugne doch, daß du auch dazu gehörst!

bleibst nicht allein.»

[deny that you are one of them! You don't stay alone.]

(*Sechs Stücke für Männerchor op. 35*. Texte: Arnold Schönberg)

But this impossibility of remaining alone in this individualism is evidenced by the fact that the pure expressions of the material, in their closure, free the elements of aesthetic objectivity and, therefore, of social intersubjectivity. By rejecting communication, in refusing to communicate outside itself, it insists precisely on this autonomy that can only be affirmed in the very consistency of the work. Hence this aforementioned anti-hermeneutic mark of Adornian aesthetics, which functions as an enigma in function of the irreducibility of the material. It is a refusal of subordination installed in this *being-there* of the work. By freeing itself from the social, the particular of the work assumes a strong relationship, polemical and dialectical, with the collective.

On the other hand, out of a desire to identify with the collective, Stranvisky is the manifestation of a false collective. The individual stimulus that yields to conformity with an integral and blind society, “almost a society of castrated and idiots”, leaves nothing but the denial of oneself, a crushing of individualization, in a magical regression to collective power in which the subject, also of reception, identifies himself with the collective in order to be a victim of it⁶⁶. As Adorno states, “imposing style on the material is the will to style that replaces style and sabotages it»⁶⁷.

«Perhaps this art alone would be authentic, which would have freed itself from the idea of authenticity itself, of being-so-and-not-otherwise»⁶⁸.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Ibidem*, p.57-59.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p.164-166.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibidem*, p.218. [tradução nossa]

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibidem*, p.220.

Philosophical language itself takes on the mythological form as an allegorical mode, to construct arguments that do not end in rational explicitness. Such is in the exploration of the myth of *Ulysses and the Sirens* by Adorno and Horkheimer⁶⁹. Ulysses is rational and cunning humanity. The song of the sirens is the return to the deep and intense man-nature meeting (recalling the tragic Dionysian rapture, our cold abyss). Ulysses wants to listen to the song of the sirens, but on the other hand he wants to control it. Hence the idea (the cunning of Reason) of tying himself to the mast of the ship. To resist the song is to maintain the control of Reason, of man over man, therefore, to maintain relations of domination. Ulysses' cunning, as the "light of reason", as order (homeland, family...) pretends to be the overcoming of the false sacrifice to Poseidon, a dissimulation to escape. The deception is in the word ("Nobody"), because the word frees itself from the thing designated, it frees itself from its spontaneity that binds it to the background of reality, the word becomes a *concept-idea* that begins to deceive reality itself and the gods.

However, Ulysses does not resist and cries out to be freed from his moorings to immerse himself in the deep relationships of Nature. But the rowers have been protected with wax in their ears so that they do not listen to the sirens and they do not listen to Ulysses' orders either. The boat, symbol of technology, follows its indomitable path. For its part, art as an insolent enigma remains obscure. It confronts the enlightened-technological consciousness of the world from its own darkness in the abyss. Isolation (that dialectic of solitude), just as Ulysses had to isolate himself, is irreducible to technology and the consumption of the Cultural Industry. Only in this way does culture act as rupture and redemption, in negative force. On the other hand, affirmation and pacification are the end of art.

The question has its nerve in the desire for a broad reception, of masses, interfering in the creative decisions themselves. This cult of the horde is collective as leveling, but it annuls the self, which is devoured by this formless collective. The subject must decide in terms of a reception without subjects and not think of a social space of reception, where he is not in function of a social effect of reception, of intersubjectivities, but of an abstract general mass – therefore, not *social* or *anti-social*, but *without social*. Because in this production *without social* the subject of creative decision is removed in direct relation to its material, which has placed itself in function of a collective

⁶⁹ Theodor W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, *La Dialectique de la raison – Fragments philosophiques*, Paris : Éditions Gallimard, 1974, capítulo "*Digression I: Ulysses, ou Raison et morale*".

alien to the abstract exteriority, and not alterity, so that no individual mode of reception is being considered either. In the mass, like a swarm, there is no *other*.

The production of the “*Cultural Industry*”, for Adorno another mark and legacy of the Enlightenment, does not deserve the (authentic) name of Art (but only of “culinary art”), it is pure, gratuitous and blind delight. Ethically compromising, it presents itself as a mere distraction from repressive mechanisms, not criticizing or evaluating them, but only resting on them to better sustain them. Confusing the mere virtuous effect («trick») with true value, it is repeated in a false originality, a useless oscillation of the same homogeneous and tyrannical dimension. It presents itself as an antidote to dehumanization, a compensation (balm) to robotization – a false light that hides its own darkness. The art of “cooking” is served as *a dessert of the Enlightenment*⁷⁰.

Man becomes a customer and an employee, pursued by industrial cultural production to his innermost consciousness. The more he believes that he emancipates himself from work by *enjoying it*, the more he reproduces and maintains the presuppositions in his consumption of his cultural goods of the commodity-cinema, commodity-television, commodity-music. *Mimesis* and behavioural passivity are suitable for reproduction: he ceases to think autonomously, everything is replaced by automatisms of adherence. What is lost is critical consciousness, which would be the basis of the movement of an authentic culture: leisure in leisure time is what is gained. The worker is guided by production until his leisure time as a consumer. Freedom of thought is replaced by an uncritical summary of the commodity. “Authentic art” does not fit into the totalitarian unity of the system of industrial production: it can only be external and radically critical of it. The consumer is not a perceptive subject of art, because he is part of the very structure of production from which he does not free himself. Emancipation can only be outside, be a critical or negative moment. On the other hand, the consumer subject of industrial culture only *consumes consensus*⁷¹.

Adorno contrasts the reception of the masses, with the production of a few, to an individual reception, centered on the subject, as collective expression. This is how his proposal of the dialectic of solitude moves, as a solitary protest, in which the individual ego manifests the opposites of the social, being both *social* and *anti-social*. Collective expression (“we”) is sheltered in the ideal of the

⁷⁰ Cf. José Guilherme Merquior, *Art and Society in Marcuse, Adorno and Benjamin. Critical Essay on the Neo-Hegelian School of Frankfurt*, Rio de Janeiro: Tempo Brasileiro, 1969, p.57.

⁷¹ Cf. Theodor W., *Sobre a Indústria Cultural*, Coimbra: Angelus Novus, 2003, p.99.

subjective artist, while creation destined to the collective voice is suffocated as individual fantasy, a moment in which the hasty desire of this “*we*” is strangled in the self-forgotten self that forces the ontological authenticity of the material into an exteriority to itself. The human social is lived in art as a negative of humanity, in an inhumanity as an individual artistic expression that is an authentic and profound aspiration to humanity.