

Illustration

DR. EDGARDO BADEL

(ARGENTINE CONTEMPORARY PLASTIC ARTIST. PSYCHIATRIST AT COLONIA CABRED, BORN IN LUJÁN, PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES)

In the 1897, Domingo Cabred proposed an open-door Institute for Alienated Patients, setting up a unique procedure for the treatment of the mentally ill, worldwide. This enabled the interrelationship of the patients with the villagers with the possibility of an active life away from prison walls. Quoting artist Edgardo Badel "...may this place be lived for the protection of the spirit, and not as the cemetery of reason". The works presented here are a proof of the new proposal of psychopathology in art.

PSYCHOSIS AND ART

There is no final point in art. From its essence, inherent to existential explanation, events emerge beyond consciousness, stemming from dreams and that which underlies reason and vigil. From passion it violates all thought devoted to harmonize with an outward world, alien to the motivations of the spirit. From the cultivation of the self. Accordingly, the being undergoes contradictions attached to the desire of understanding that substance, through consciousness; it has a perception of life in a given and finite time. The interpretation of artistic work lies in a magnitude that goes beyond its contour and vision, to penetrate in the psychological-intimate- interpretation of our earthly stay, through our state of mind. Art is an incomplete process. It balances between acceptance and rejection, albeit never-ending. It is always a previous step. The best stigma of human life. Its most complete and sincere mark, away from the frostiness of prejudices and social codes.

The magic of art comes from the state of depression that led it to become a work. This sadness leads to art, insanity or suicide. Madness that leads to creation accelerates the process. Rationality destroys creativity by means of its fears, judgments, guilt, rules, and codes and, fundamentally, with the hypocrisies that crowd social acts. Emotion is the origin of creation, the being's vibration towards his anguish and apprehension. The artist finds his sap in grief; in distrust he will find judgment and fear, those walls erected by the tormentor of eternal men.

There is harmony and aesthetics, the unity in art which defines in beauty and which cannot be reached through reasoning by the insane-artist, excluding him from the artistic process. The grays of human logic prevent the certainty and the limit of this concept, because here we are incorporating prejudice on creation and not valuing emotion, reliable source of all art. Subjectivism



Fig. 1. Work done by psychotic patient

in the artist's dream is in its depth the talent exposed to others but not to his own judgments. Art is divorced from the faculties considered normal or pathological by society. There is no normal or pathological art. The work, as a spiritual need developed in any type of personality, hoards the germ of emotion. Judgment upon the creator's personality deceives, corrupts, divorces and discriminates. Suffering leads to art and insanity. Somehow both sides always co-exist. There is a discredit towards the work of artists with altered behaviors. An apprehension which ends up disqualifying the work owing to the artist, within the canons established by society, exempt from accepting free will.

Art emerges as the artist's conflict from his feelings, when coherence collapses with reality. This leap, if measured, does it differentiate the normal from the pathological artist? May validating personal characteristics be ascribed to one of them and thus undermine the other? Pichón Riviére referred to the immobility he found in the work of the insane. Personality may be pathological, not the work. We may refer to Nerval, Hölderlin, Artaud, Van Gogh, Rimbaud, Fijman, Lautréamont. We must find here the undoubted development of a social prejudice based on class dominance. Even the work "before psychic disease", is it entirely before? Does this exclude it from the judgment concerning the date of disease onset? Perhaps unity (harmony, coherence) is a limit difficult to define in plastic art while more rigid in literature

or in music, both remaining as slaves of aesthetic preforms that go beyond the impulse given by surrealism in its challenge to undermine them. Literature and plastic mainly communicate suffering.

Music as well as dancing and singing can create with joy. Since vanguardism, plastic arts became independent of the judgment of consciousness and of technical codes.

We frequently find in the meridian that dominant classes impress upon the consideration of an artist the difference between accepted and rejected art. Between the normal and the pathological of human conducts there are infinite shades of gray which feedback and which in many opportunities make personalities difficult to define except in extreme disorders. "Unity" in the pictorial image of Pichón Rivière, does not seem to be the limit between normal and pathological art, especially in the analysis of the pictorial image. Poets and plastic artists labeled as "cursed" have transcended their art beyond their socially divergent personalities. The romantics exhibit a work based upon the hazard of emotional state. Picasso could decompose the image without the risk of being catalogued as alienated because his creative genius was accepted by the influential social classes. Suffering decomposes a life as well as a work. In the representation of the unity which resolves from decomposition it may be seen whether the artist has overcome the insanity of creation even accepting the fears that might convey adverse judgments to his work, or whether on the contrary, it has released him from all commitment with the surroundings, from which he expects nothing. It is true that in this case the artist's creativity has overcome all the judgments, guilt, sins and criticism that may be possible to impose upon it. Freed from this relationship he will burst with the most rebellious dream and subconscious level, breaking with the fear that emerges when detaching from that accepted by society. Van Gogh was the clear example of rejecting the consequences of his impressionism. From disaffecting from normality. This emotion is not submitted to the consideration of a world unwilling to break its rules. This is the subtle difference between normal and alienated art, not based on the work but in the author's behavior. Merging of art and personality. Art and Madness assemble. The work of art sends the artist back to his most primitive origins, in the expression of transmitting his first genes in the conception of a new being: man. The "alienated" artist exerts the biggest fracture with his surroundings. His mechanism of inhibition has collapsed amid the loss that will lead him to his work. The establishment of



Fig. 2. Work done by psychotic patient

a "value" in the work of art answers to the interests of the dominant classes, to the profiteering imposed by capitalism. Art in an alienated artist will naturally suffer the derision of its "plastic value". The unity of the work as a limit between normal and pathological art lacks consistency. It is an artificial border. It does not follow any absolute concept.

Each work is a conflict between the artist and his environment. Between the continuous and mechanic exterior that established the social conduct and the temporal suffering. Grief is the bridge between the soul and its expressions. Perhaps in "pathological" art the artist does not develop through his work. He brings his work to a standstill in the exact point of emotion that has distanced him from his surroundings. Unchangeable, not developing. Re-feeding from his suffering. Converting into a product forever modeling the same emotion which hurts him, unable to turn away. The artist tries to defeat or else to avert his work from a punishing mind. With his work he fights depression. He attempts immortality through his creation when the existential anguish approaches him to the certainty of his temporal body and the simultaneous death of his "self".

In art, Vincent van Gogh was the sublime disobedient. Through his sacrifice pursuing emotion he made of art a new starting point. The independence of his subconscious was an answer against dogmas established by the use of reason.

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