

Illustration

MARIA FARAONE
(ARGENTINE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST)

*Consciousness is a commotion
because man is unable to humanize it.*

“The Mask” is an inedited and recent painting contained in its own space. It does not exhaust in the observation of its limits; it is the vision of human reality that extends occupying diversity, that characteristic which transforms a solidary project into a fragmenting distance. Each figure occupies a place within a controversial relationship by individually looking into its own interests in an exclusive life vision. An extreme individualism that denies the totalizing-detotalizing action, in the words of Sartre, (1) that human society needs. Its characters’ covered faces denounce the hypocritical position initiated by the Greeks in the representation of tragedy. Men converge but are careful not to become obvious to the observation of power; they are close but distant in this universe. Men converge unacquainted, in a scene in which a carnival or a party is recreated and where fun is precisely to go unnoticed; accidentally together in an anonymous spontaneity in which the meeting does not ascribe to an identity, it sneaks among the characters where concealment prevails. Maria Faraone recreates contemporary man in its social dimension. A growing information travelling at the speed of its occurrence but isolating man, on the verge of exasperation. The words become symbols without reaching expressiveness or without making contact with a participant who enjoys the same privilege. And this representation is present in the work in which some characters invert their figure, in an alienation of being torn between the materialism of life and spirit; between physical needs and consciousness.

This representation exists from a latent observation. Someone –with the skills of the master- contemplates the scene. The goal of always taking the world’s human drama through the reduction of a “surplus value” has never ceased to be present in the story that man builds without significance, being ignorant to the sense of man-being, and even more so through a refined consciousness. Small and peculiar from the relative, tragic in the absolute.

Man now assimilates it. He understands that there is no tree of life guarded by cherubim and paradisiac gardens. Nor fires lurking cults or blames. He has lost the fears that bound him to a prejudiced existence. Fear of punishment turned into chimera. No more panic to the divine revelations loom on the work of men. We are



“The Mask”
Oil on canvas, (100 x 100 cm.)
Maria Faraone

surrounded by emotions and in the best of chances left to destiny. Each of the feelings becomes alchemy between the need, the forbidden and the magic.

We have not assumed our failure. We wander in search of happiness. We convince ourselves as being the center of the small temporal act that contains us, idealizing projects and performances. Inevitably we face our passions -which humanize consciousness- and at that moment we return to mud. To the needs of a land verging with mud. This unfortunate circumstance does not exculpate the ambitions forcing us to existential despair. We descend to the caverns. With this attitude we believe we prevail. That is the battle of man against his own spectrum, since he fights without an opponent. Devoid of antinomy, he moves envisioning a target counting with the mercy of fate and with fervor handed to the contest. He remains seduced by the utopia imagined in the transcendence of the undertaken struggle and in the reward he concocts to justify his days. (2)

All confrontation with reality alienates. Man is driven to wear a “mask” in order to bear it. It has a lot

of the imaginative, a theatrical scene where everyone attends with his own character to stage existence. This theatricality has a central axis accepted by the most extreme ethics and attitudes that become recurrent during certain times and blend in the education accepted by society. This “mask” which leads man’s behavior obeys to globally understood survival principles, but whose tributaries are constituted by Eros and power.

Contrasts alienate: reality/imagination; spirit/flesh; need/moral; ethics/power. Man is doomed to these alienations, but their source is always in the relative human consciousness that prevents from knowing the meaning of its presence. Misfortune is in it; forcing man to alienation and annulling freedom conditioned by the limits of its own conscience, which is inadequate for the comprehension of existential freedom. From the accumulation of power rises the deformation of human relationships that lead to the master and the slave. (3) The neighbor becomes a competitor due to the power that hides a greater alienation: the unconscious quest for immortality, determinant of human relations. The “class struggle” that derives from it does not end with the dilemma. It is linked to the contest of smaller social groups and finally to the neighboring individuals. At its end the controversy is from the body against the soul, the strongest bond of human society.

Quarks are the basic components and strongest bonds in matter. From them to the latest evolutionary systems (e.g. human society) bonds become progressively weaker and easier to break. In this development man builds a scale that starts in the individual and through the extended family, to small social groups and ultimately society. As he increasingly participates in these scales, bonds weaken. The isolated man establishes a bond between body and consciousness. Therefore, bonds -among different individuals (clan, social groups, whole society) -are undermined and become fragile.

Man establishes a link between matter and conscious act, an alchemy that alienates him in his decisions. In each of the levels leading to the whole society, he will find reasons for this alienation determining a behavior that bestows power and eros. This proves that

human social problems are not only “class struggle.” It arises within the individual himself in a body-consciousness link weakening even further in the different scales of social organization. Thus, man retains his integrity, survival and instinctive act above any other social behavior. It is held in family clans, small groups and society provided they are favorable to their interests. The so-called “class struggle” [we cannot deny that man tries to progress without pause] is given in each of the social classes ranging from the individual to the community. This growth of fragility in human relationships lies in the simplicity of the individual’s anonymity as the number of components increases and advocacy is not provocative to a certain man.

There is an endless succession of scenes in the “The Mask” by Maria Faraone as if various interests concurred in unison, but it retains the vital unity of the author’s ideological act. The work depicts a living organism that is seen marching in a continuous change of characters who do not betray their symbolism. It resembles a Venetian stamp with atmospheric and color depth effects that uninterruptedly succeed to the virtuous tune of violins and cellos.

Need has the power to exert a negative effect on human freedom. This situation leads to that holding the possibility of alleviating necessity- of converting the needy into a slave. Man by exercising his materialism is forced to curtail the libertarian spirit and surrender. This sale of freedom is man’s greatest tragedy which adds to that of existentialism. Then society seeks to create in the slave a freedom idealism which is actually a natural condition. He appropriates of what he holds. In the end, human existence is an inexplicable improvement. It is a consolation exempt of the faculty to be judged by the conscience.

Jorge C. Trainini

1. Sartre J. P. *Crítica a la razón dialéctica*. Buenos Aires: Losada; 1963.
2. Trainini J. C. *Solo como un Cura*. Buenos Aires: Dunken; 2012.
3. Hegel G. W. F. *Fenomenología del espíritu*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica; 1966.