

# Illustration

**MARÍA FARAONE**  
(ARGENTINE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST)

*This is an inspiring picture because it reveals a baffling situation that extends with certain similarities all along human evidence. In this case it belongs to the expression of a race but it can be reflected in any interest of power when it oppresses men. It should not be judged as a state of pessimism when it makes us see reality. There is understanding in this work which bares distressing circumstances by their mere presence. By unravelling the drama, man progresses in the comprehension of his own situation. Enlightening when faced with the anonymous existence and the omnipotence of power.*

The social plot in María Faraone's art is valid with a conclusive reality. The three characters of "*The food portion*" have in their attitude different answers to hunger, misunderstood and fundamental evil of our world. On the left, there is in the woman an instinctive expression of joy; in the middle the central character strips visceral outrage; on the right, the character expresses deep resignation, a state of faith. The philosophical identity with social exclusion present in the work reveals the behavior with which man built his history.

When men talk about peace, they do not realize or prefer to ignore that it is intrinsic to the deprivation of meeting basic needs, such as hunger. And this fragility is the fundamental act of misunderstanding among men. Power has used Malthus as the champion of its dark interests at the expense of social justice. Colonialism profited from this quarry, dividing the natives to achieve its goals and use conflicts in its own interests. Faced with a critical situation, such as hunger, Faraone reveals in her characters different positions, which conspire against the act of mutual support in the face of the poignancy of the scene. Hunger being a force, perhaps the greatest in the generation of social unrest and demands with immeasurable consequences (French Revolution, current immigration mobilizations), is an unpopular topic in human intellectual activity. But these renewed truths of greed are the foundations of motherland. The banners of faith are also camouflaged. And on behalf of the gods those stories dilute their agony on the defeated. Man must understand that he only knows about existence



*"The food portion"*  
Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm, 1999

through the eyes of another man and that he is disappointed nature by the gnosis that assists him.

The different response of the needy beings in "*The food portion*" reveals the spectrum of human reaction when urged by the pressure of hunger. This awareness present in the painting is the revelation of the true reality we traverse. There is no other. What we carry in our memory or desire are unobjectionable reflexes of times unrelated to ours. And the scene imposes seduction by the inner fear, the imposition of some men over others. These beings that plunge with resignation, joy and outrage render their freedom to the prison of hunger and social power. Tolerance in the starving, intolerance in power. And so is the dogma. They sow an evident dispute in the face of the vanquisher, he who assumes the perversity of using starvation, the most vital human survival.

In spite of the systems and the ideas that turn man's social problem a confluent of his humanism (dignity and freedom in Heidegger), there has not been in the history of civilization a metamorphosis of ideas concerning his fellow men. Man always returns to live at the expense of his mirror. He does not evolve with knowledge. He is grounded in the favorable inertia that gives him the tribute of power. In his rest and

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reflection, when he resorts to art and the resignation of the systems, expanding in the vital thought of the real issues that concern him -existence, death, pain- he finds in that pessimism a revelation to his disappointment. Man separates from his brother in search of myths. That which is mundane turns him imaginary and he resists the spirit's real fire surrounding his heart, far from the coldness of knowledge.

Society engenders a materialism that leads to a collective hypnosis where it exhausts without finding a solution to the authentic human reality: the ethical in the face of existence. In this interregnum, the citizen's lucidity and the rebel's freedom shield against the burden of the spell distilled by power. On becoming aware of its essential state of freedom and rebellion, consciousness bares the instinct that lies hidden in the conduct of the being. In this accomplishment, consciousness finds the passion of the struggle for the vital things and a rejection of the consolations and fanciful solutions.

Power has corrupted man by pinning instincts as his true foundation; it has led him to subdue the social reason, to revile the spiritual man, to cling to the knowledge away from the existential logic, in favour of the prison bars of materialistic and imaginary systems. At the beginning of consciousness the fear of others killed by instinct. Just in case. Ignorant of the knowledge and ideas to defend. Now man kills on behalf of interest. And this leads to man's struggle for the land, for the goods and for other men, as mere commodities. Before, war by instinct, today by conviction.

Atavistic fear not only concerns infinity but also man himself, those who act as symbols. Man exerts abstraction to overcome reality. Between abstraction and reality fear rises. And this is channelled into a place where it can be endured. Knowledge has been man's device to break the wall of fear, but it just pushes it a bit further. Power is the main consequence of man, who does not accept being mediocre in the struggle with which he faces existence. He needs the transcendental to avoid the influence of the universe. In response, man becomes more precarious accepting

the trap set for him by nature to sustain him on earth. If man were merely lucidity he would cease to be in force. He would have retreated to the unconsciousness of matter. He would not run after the mundane and would avoid contributing to survival and eros. What is the force that makes him doubt his lucidity, but fear? In the end he surrenders to his conviction, kneeling his insight to the natural God, that who waits behind the mystery of death.

When man no longer imagines a project through his consciousness he enslaves, questions or rebels himself, essentially the three characters in Faraone's work. This work does not require words. There is no need to pronounce them. It only remains to accept or to scream. Power knows that free will crashes against a horizon of relentless occurrence: hunger. That geography which occupies the spaces of the world, choosing who to damage, reducing the dignity of satisfying the most primeval instinct. "You will satiate your hunger through my power" states the backroom of the scene in "The food portion", hiding the emitting face which lies external to it, not participating in the scene but performing the act.

*Despite Malthus's followers, hunger is not the consequence of overpopulation. Cultural, economic and political factors are complementary, enhancing the problem in a humanity whose powers and men are used to confront other powers, other men, and not to satisfy hunger. It is the history that continues to elapse at the expense of "marginalized races." Acute hunger (climate scourges) is added to chronic hunger (colonialism, mercantilism, economic plunder) on these populations subjected to a history that drags a tragic and interested legacy. History does not exalt us, in the words of Malraux: "Men only have in common the act of sleeping, when they sleep without dreams ... and the fact of being dead." Power over others entails usurpation of knowledge, arrogance as position, marginalization as outcome. In "The food portion" Maria Faraone bares this dramatic synthesis by which man understands existence.*

**Jorge C. Trainini**