

Variants, Constants and Dominants of Surrealism

In the book *Twenty Years of Surrealism (1939-1969)*, in which Jean Louis Bédouin offers an evolutionary review of the movement, he presents as the main constants of the otherwise variable surrealist thought the Hegelian *dialectics*, some sources of *Hermetic philosophy*, Leninist *Marxism*, Freud's *psychoanalysis*, psychic automatism and a basic *anti-artistic stance*. These elements indisputably belong to the cardinal components of surrealism and its artistic and philosophical formality could also be defined out of them. For the determination of the inner dynamic of surrealist thought it would be, however, more significant to ascertain in where it changes, wherein lies its substantiality and what dominants provide it with orientation. For these questions, Breton's formulation of the progressive components of surrealism would probably be more authoritative: *the displacement of sensation (dépaysement de la sensation)**, *objective chance* and *black humor* provide three sources of energy for the surrealist resolve to reconcile natural necessity with human necessity and to defend the human EGO from the hostility of the surrounding world. The fact that Breton's formulation originated in a period of deep decline of humanist understanding does not diminish its currency.

It would be more difficult to look for the variability of a single basic idea in time, space and causality than to limit oneself to the simple conclusion that on the one hand, the movement, which was in the past able to develop to an extraordinary extent and definition, has nowadays practically ceased to exist and on the other hand, contemporary art is forced and predetermined to operate on a completely different basis, which nevertheless, has not so far been characterized. However, this simple approach is defied by a number of important questions. Is a movement always and under all circumstances the only possible form of existence and the only proof of vitality of a specific basic idea? Have there appeared any new facts which would substantially change or devalue the principles underlying surrealism? Or do these new facts influence only the manner of application of these principles by currently preventing any movement whatsoever, that is to say a completely spontaneous and non-administrative movement, a movement as a certain psychosocial phenomenon?

If we turn to historical examples, we see that not even in the past did there exist significant, extensive and defined movements permanently in the form of a compact organism – without their basic idea being therefore affected. The peak of Romanticism is usually defined as the first third of the 19th century, and yet there can be no doubt that Baudelaire's, Rimbaud's and Lautréamont's work, which developed in the next thirty years, does not represent any decadent values of the Romantic mentality, but the very contrary – its most intensive impact. Similarly *psychoanalysis*, which between the wars still had the character of an organized movement, with an even more firm centralizing structure than surrealism, has nowadays become a wide platform, common to numerous and mutually distinct opinion groups, in which the initial principles function in as much as they evolve. To be precise, this comparison with psychoanalysis points not only to the fact that the existence of a more firmly constituted movement is not a condition and proof of the vitality of such a basic idea which is capable of penetrating deep into the dark zones of the spirit, but also offers a certain point of departure for the examination of obstacles that appear in the path of those collective forms of artistic and scientific creativity which in the inter-war period manifested themselves as movements. These obstacles certainly do not lie only in the different conditions of the period, but also in the abrupt and penetrating politicization of cultural life brought about by the war and its aftermath. They are at the same time a consequence of the fundamental development of these movements, which are gradually differentiated and modified by the pressures of changing ways of life towards increasingly more specialized questions, which despite being related genealogically to the basic principles of the original movement, are nevertheless widening and deepening the initial concepts and methods to such an extent that they already defy these centralizing tendencies. Despite this, in a higher and not specifically narrow rational sense, a necessity of the consciousness of the original affiliation persists in these functionally differentiated opinion groups, and this necessity, of at least a potential collectivity, exists above all in those cases where the artistic and scientific methods are oriented towards the unconscious sources of psychic life and probably corresponds to those very quintessential tendencies of the human spirit, from which myths have originated from time immemorial.

It is evident that what unites Hegelian dialectics, some elements of Hermetic sciences and Leninist Marxism on the platform of surrealism is a consciousness of opposition, which becomes within Leninist Marxism a revolutionary consciousness. The oppositional character of the *dialectic triad*, so characteristic of both Hermetic sciences as well as of Hegel's "dark philosophy", (in which the "more light places" – i.e. the tendency to anchor his ideas in contemporary Prussia– are in this context the least acceptable of his systems), not only enables here a connection between seemingly incompatible elements (*Hermeticism* and *Marxism*), but also, what is surely of equal importance, a connection between the oppositional forces of human consciousness with the world of the unconscious, and it was precisely *psychoanalysis* which has made this world accessible. This mutual connection of seemingly heterogeneous elements of the human spirit could take place within surrealism above all because surrealism, due to the influence of certain historical conditions, recognized in dialectics the dynamism of magical thought. Everywhere where the dialectical law of thesis, antithesis and synthesis forms the movement of thought, this thought acquires a magical character, be it in the sphere of religion, ideology, science or poetry.

Hegelian dialectics has a very rich tradition within surrealist philosophy and undoubtedly belongs to its constants. After a temporary inclination towards Marxist dialectical materialism it became one of the pillars of Breton's "return to the principles". Later, in the forties and fifties, it is mostly associated with the sphere of consciousness, while the sphere of the unconscious is described as the domain of the principle of analogy, which together with the dialectic principle represents within this concept a dynamic synthesis of conscious and unconscious processes of human spiritual activity. This system of dialectics and analogy, upon which the understanding of mythogenetic tendencies in surrealist anthropology is based, was strengthened by the inspiration, which surrealism received from the Hermetic sciences, but this inspiration nevertheless did not lead to metaphysical considerations, as was often mistakenly claimed. It was also most substantially motivated not only by the failure of the revolutionary Romantic perspective, which surrealism envisaged in the political applications of Marxism, but also by a desire to penetrate the secrets of imaginative invention. For this reason the question of post-Leninist Marxism, as expressed in the divergence between Stalinism on the one hand and the Leninist opposition and Trotsky's Fourth International on the other, could not have had any other impact on the social considerations of surrealism than a growing reserve towards political practice as such, despite the fact that it never ceased to adopt political positions towards historical events that posed a threat to human freedom. Breton's relationship with Trotsky is above all an expression of admiration for a revolutionary, whose revolutionary consistency after Lenin's death bordered on utopianism and who gradually lost all positions of power. This admiration, based on a predominance of emotional and affective ties, could not become the political theory of surrealism, not even at the time of the "Manifesto For an Independent Revolutionary Art", which Breton and Trotsky wrote together in Mexico in 1938, and could not be more concrete in a political sense than the appeal of Garry Davis and the Human Front of Mondialism from the late 1940s. Nevertheless the respect towards Marx's and Engels' revolutionary Romanticism does never completely end in surrealist ideology, despite the fact that it acquires ever wider philosophical dimensions.

This retreat from direct political engagement cannot be unequivocally characterized as an inclination towards Fourier's utopianism, as it is simultaneously an expression of the awareness that the causality of political revolutions and their outcomes does not lie only on the surface of the basic economic structure, but also deeply underneath it in transpositions and sublimations of instinctive forces within man, which no economic form and no political system has succeeded in permanently dominating. The need for a new humanist synthesis and integration, which stems from this awareness, can seem to have too romantic and utopian contours only from the perspective of vulgar practicalism, the opportunistic nature of which in the sphere of the intellect and imagination is even more powerless. This very orientation towards the instinctive life, however, doesn't create the specificity of surrealism, but rather the *manner* by which the instinctive energies should be harmonized with the psychic and social liberation of man.

"Nothing less is at stake than the rediscovery of the secret of language, the elements of which gradually turn into ruins on the surface of the dead sea." Unconscious sources of imagination,

deformed by violent marauding, on which social systems have been founded so far, are predetermined so as to distinguish in them the socially reconstructive potential as a psychological necessity. In this function imagination is a generalizing factor of human subjectivity, an intersubjective language of human desire for higher forms of freedom. In the precondition of this general, instinctive desire for freedom, the complex problem of individual interpretation persists, and reaches both to the questions of inspirational mechanisms as well as to the principle of invention – that is to very substantial elements of surrealist activity. A disposition towards creativity, which also means a disposition towards surrealist activity, is not based on the fact that certain psychological phenomena (libidinous energy, sublimation processes, concrete irrationality) are common to all humans, but rather in the manner of their interpretation, in the meaning, which is ascribed to them in the ontological and gnoseological sense, in their systematization, which modifies not only individual inspirational and cognitive methods, but also basic notions such as freedom, love, poetry and the revolutionary reconstruction of human society. Here, over these common sources of imagination, the surrealist, existentialist and psychoanalytical approaches to concrete irrationality differentiate themselves as distinctive systems, which ascribe to these generally existing psychological phenomena different critical functions.

Breton's "universality of human subjectivity", an imaginative fund of man, on which the *surrealist* problem of intersubjective communication is focused, and to which Závěš Kalandra drew attention for its connection to the basic questions of Marxist ideology, has a lot in common with Jung's theory of archetypes. According to Jung the source of a symbolic work is often not in the general unconscious of the author, but in the sphere of unconscious mythology, the primordial images of which are shared by all humanity. This collective unconscious exists only as a possibility that is predisposed to us from times immemorial in a certain form of mnemonic images, or, viewed analogically, inherited in the structure of the brain. These are not innate notions, but innate possibilities of notions that place certain limits even on the boldest of fantasies; they are categories of the activity of fantasy and to a certain extent a priori ideas, the existence of which, however, is considerably dependent on experience. In every one of these notions an element of human psychology is enclosed together with an element of human fate, pain and joy, which occurred throughout human ancestry innumerable times and in general always took the same forms. The moment, when a mythogenetic and mythological situation arises, is always characterized by a special emotional intensity, as if hitherto unheard strings begun to resound in ourselves, or as if powers were set loose in ourselves, of which we were previously unaware. When we reach such a typical situation, we have a feeling of unusual liberation from atypical individual conditions. In such moments the voice of the whole of humanity rises in ourselves. From dissatisfaction with the present, the desire of the artist flees to where the unconscious reaches that primordial image, which is most likely able to effectively compensate for the insufficiency and one-sidedness of the contemporary spirit.

Even though Jung's notion of the phylogenetic predetermination of artistic creativity and the processes of symbolization on the one hand emphasizes too unequivocally imaginative determinism, and on the other it lowers the significance of dialectic relations between psychic individuality and the specificity of the collective medium in which questions of evolution also assert themselves, it nevertheless opens considerable perspectives for psychoanalytical examination. Not only here, but also in the determination of a magical mentality, in which the germs of art inseparably unite, in this undifferentiatedness, which Jung associates with elementary psychism, surrealist ontology comes into contact with the Jungian version of psychoanalysis.

However, surrealism distinguishes the rational and the irrational only as a dialectic relationship, which through its variable contradictions widens the sphere of human consciousness into those of its extreme moments, in which its depths can be seen and the incisiveness of its critical introspection can be tested. It is not an attempt to turn the values and meanings upside down, in the sense that instead of suppressing irrationality, this time its opposite – rationality – would be suppressed. For instance in poetry or only as a theoretical hyperbole. "In the process which from time immemorial leads rational cognition against the intuitive one, the poet is entitled to stand as a crown witness, and thus bring the contention to an end." – This does not mean a mechanical identification of rational and intuitive cognition, but on the contrary the distinguishing of their dialectical relationship, which creates a dynamic of inspiration out of this contradiction. In the sense of these inspirational abilities surrealism

raises the ancient question of the processes of symbolization, especially in their esoteric meanings, to a new ontological level, from which the functioning of imaginative methods appears as a specific type of speech in the sphere of emotionality. For instance Pierre Mabille searches with a similar focus for the connection between the modern, especially psychoanalytical thought, and old, classical and oriental concepts, which would open the way to new investigations of the quintessence of human psychism. It is a “question of human expression in all its forms”, an issue so basic, that Breton in his *Second Manifesto* understands the question of social action in its revolutionary dimension as one of its aspects. It is a

“... special ability of a thought to be thought by all at the same time without being aware of it. In any case it cannot be denied that in this way very surprising relations are created, very striking analogies manifest themselves and most often an inexplicable and undeniable factor intervenes here... — — — but we are still not advanced as far as to be able to do more than point them out.”

In the manner in which surrealism points out these factors, in the significances it ascribes to them, and in the ideological conclusions which it develops out of them, there is a persistence and modification of the surrealist tendency to unite human existence and consciousness, to harmonize unconscious sources of imagination and conscious systems in a reconstructive perspective of a new psychological and social foundation of life. In this dominant, the vitality and currency of the surrealist perspective manifests itself, rather than in psychological or sociological models, which delimit and characterize only its individual historical stages. “Surrealism deals with problems that are perennial inasmuch as from ancient times until today they constantly inspire fear in man.” If, through the influence of the conditions of a period the external forms of this fear change, whether it is by a predominance of horror from a hypertrophy of political myths or, on the contrary, from an ideological vacuum, each time the fear remains a symptom of the split between the instinctive basis and the cognitive abilities of man. The critical intervention of surrealism persists in the overcoming of this contradiction, in the uncovering of its dialectic character on which the evolutionary dynamics of history is based.

Anti-aesthetic and anti-artistic, or more precisely the extra-artistic position of surrealism is contained not only in its own ideological essence, but also in its genealogical affiliation to the post-Impressionist artistic avant-gardes, the evolutionary principle of which manifested itself by a permanent conflict with the natural constitutive character of aesthetic understanding. However, here this evolutionary principle reaches a higher state of awareness, it becomes an active element of ideological non-conformism, the critical scope of which stretches up to revolutionary consciousness. If there at the same time exists a sort of “surrealist aesthetics”, it is necessarily contrary to surrealist concepts and it is used only in those instances, where for some reason the authenticity of concrete irrationality is diminished in the sense in which it is the very own source of surrealist inspiration, in other words in the expressions of epigones. This extra-aesthetic point of departure is by no means altered by the fact that authentic surrealist expressions are sooner or later subject to the laws of the artistic market and despite their non-conformist orientation they often end up on the walls of New York banks (Ernst, Miró, Tanguy). This hegemony of the social system over surrealist ideology is not insignificant when considering their real possibilities under the given economic and political conditions, but at the same time it does not diminish the significance of the impossibility to domesticate poetry, which unquestionably belongs to the real and realizational energies of artistic creativity.

In this integrity, in which psychological and social factors of the creative process condition each other mutually and dialectically, in order to search for an ideological rather than aesthetic outcome, the question of the evolution of means of expression becomes so complicated that it does not allow us to presuppose that their transformations take place in a seemingly linear way, that they can be cultivated as autonomous methods of visual art or that they can be separated from the philosophical foundations of the movement with which they are genetically connected. If especially from the beginning of the 1960s we can observe on a very large scale the influence of the surrealist creativity between the wars on the general inclination of contemporary art toward irrationality, an irrationality concretized or abstracted in most variable ways, this does not mean that surrealism would in this way be receiving a deserved historical satisfaction or achieving a sort of Pyrrhic victory. The adherents of modern eclecticism agree to a certain extent consistently, though not very aptly, on separating the Great surrealist art from the

“sectarianism of surrealist orthodoxy”, because they are indeed most often concerned only with passive permutations of given models. The surface of exemplary creative expressions is in the aesthetic sense made absolute into more or less elaborate compositions; the meaning of creativity is reduced to a skillful craft, which is nevertheless the more problematic, the more the pathos of destruction or decomposition as a period stylization settles in the aesthetic consciousness. Here the quantity of this period stylization necessarily starts to change dialectically into a new quality, the amorphous character of the general aesthetic element becomes gradually differentiated and this differentiation can be realized only in the form of ideological concretizations, this time on the basis of a new form of imaginative thinking. Only in this ideological concretization of irrationality the very own essence of surrealism, its integrative models and its methodology can be verified.

If we follow the variability of those theoretical and ideological preconditions of surrealism, in which its period profile is reflected, we find in the concept of the psychosocial functions of concrete irrationality along that, which is fundamental and constant, also a mutability of the kind which in its consequences permanently enlivens the surrealist constants. Before the war, when surrealism was to a large extent oriented toward political forms of social revolution, the predominant focus was on the questions of the subversive functions and values of creativity. Precisely in these tendencies the permanently extra-aesthetic position of surrealism and its ideological character can be discerned. To the variability of this concept of social, but also psychological subversiveness of concrete irrationality contributes above all an immense adaptability of aesthetic conventions which, as soon as this subversiveness acquires a wider audience, transposes such a subversiveness from the ideological sphere into an aesthetic one, where it, however, becomes critically sterile, aesthetically decorative and it turns into its constitutive antithesis. Even though this fate does not diminish the dissident character of surrealist thought, it nevertheless influences its period orientation and ultimately also its organic nature. If social structure has simultaneously undergone sweeping changes both in its class stratification as well as in its political forms, and if this change has noticeably affected the psychology of contemporary man, then new forms and functions of these dissident tendencies also necessarily show their influence here. These newly formed critical functions of concrete irrationality, representing the dialectical element of surrealist thought and capable of updating its intentionality, deepen and diversify those psychological, social and philosophical concepts which have formed and form the ontology and ideology of surrealism.

In the psychological sphere it is above all the permanently renewed question of *psychic automatism*, which has been since the beginning, according to Breton, marked by a chain of failures mainly because of the recurrent disrupting influence of self-stylization which disrupted the authenticity of expression. Despite this, the aforementioned question has been recognized as the basis for the investigation of poetic inspiration, and it was expected to facilitate the access to its roots, because this inspiration should not have been a merely accidental gift. “Nothing matters so much and will not matter so much as the artificial provocation of that ideal moment in which man, fascinated by a unique excitement, is suddenly seized by ‘something stronger than himself’...” (André Breton: *The Second Manifesto of Surrealism*, 1930) A mere step separates this from the “key of the mythical essence, capable of opening any manifestational aspect of the world and facilitating the penetration toward its latent secret”. (*Les surréalistes à Garry Davis*, February 1949) Even though surrealist ontology sees psychic automatism as having such a fundamental significance, it was never defined with sufficient clarity so that it could be judged where do its constant or variant characteristics lie. For this reason the criticism of surrealism oriented precisely in this direction could not have gone too far and it mostly and characteristically appeared as a more or less unintended attempt to contaminate surrealism with aesthetic criteria, which are, however, completely alien to it. Surrealist theory nevertheless gradually more emphatically distinguished between the notion of psychic automatism and the so-called automatic texts, which were the earliest attempts of recording the real movement of thought, but none of the methods related to it could achieve a weakening of rational censorship to such an extent that it would not influence the record toward self-stylization, toward the production of a characteristic diction and aesthetic determination. In contrast, the composition of a poem, realized on a high imaginative frequency, be it surrealist or created with means own to surrealism, is, as we know from many confessions of authors, to a large degree dependent on extra-volitional pressure, which was already mentioned by Marinetti and which was later detected as the psychological phenomenon of endophasia. This extra-volitional

urgency toward expression manifests itself here in the form which could be described as primary or rudimentary “sentence melodies”, compelling the poet to manifest them in words, the context of which has due to the immediacy of expression an unconscious, irrational nature. (J. Cazaux: *Surréalisme et psychologie*, J. Corti, Paris 1938) The analogical process can be thus traced also in visual expressions, where such a kind of automatism leads to the stabilization of the so-called inner model, which is the visual concretization of unconscious visions. However, these endophatic phenomena do not explain the problem of psychic automatism, but on the contrary, they deepen it. It was admitted more than once that a surrealist poem never was and probably was never meant to be an immediate record of psycho-automatic associations if at the same time certain socio-critical functions were ascribed to it. In the same way that we know dreams only in their narrative form, when they are even partially interpreted by recollections after awakening, the poem thus becomes a transcription of consciousness of that “real movement of thought” which corresponds to the automatism of audiovisual associations. Even though the conscious intentionality of creativity can be reduced to minimum, it is nevertheless again and again affected by the process of consciousness. When such an intervention of consciousness into the poetic composition introduces certain elements of stylization, the composition is at the same time oriented by it in a critical sense in relation to a certain context of reality, against the stagnant and depressive phenomena of which it acts with its inspirational charge, and in this way the inclination toward aesthetic autonomy is also considerably paralyzed. In this sense style-formation appears as an individual diction, as a concrete semantic structure which is not in conflict with the psychic automatism of the “inner voice” or unconscious visions, if it does not subordinate itself to external aesthetic criteria and if it authentically contributes to the construction of the creative individuality on which the principle of discovery in the emotional sphere is based. Hence the active proportion between the unconscious processes and the critical consciousness becomes a significant problem, for consciousness can be critical only when it reacts to a certain concrete situation with which it is confronted and which determines it, and through this determination it constitutes itself in this case as a surrealist consciousness. From these concrete positions, and not from a sort of abstract and universalistic standpoint, the access to the unconscious processes becomes open, and these processes thus acquire a specific emotional coloring and a dramatic accent, through which, in those forms that are described as concrete irrationality, objective chance or black humor, they become profoundly significant, significant in the sense of surrealist intervention as the most immediate form of psychosocial criticism. This emphasis on the specificity of the surrealist system, which probably will even in the future correspond only to a certain mental type, departs from the original surrealist presupposition of the universal solution of the question of poetry and the “human expression in all its forms”, but not from the fermentative character of this specifically surrealist intervention, although it might manifest itself under a different name.

Similarly as concrete irrationality and psychic automatism, the dream, as one of the most formative unconscious processes, cannot be a phenomenon independent from interpretational aspects, which complement its external formation and thus concretize its irrationality precisely into those positions, to which consciousness is most sensitive. In *Communicating Vessels* Breton turned against the literary exploitation of dreams at the expense of action, against their subordination to socially conservative views, which see dreams as a medicine distancing human beings from thinking about revolt. On the contrary, Breton sees in dreams that form of *omnipotence of desire*, which leads to the action of revolt, which inspires a change of life and the world. It is clear that dream irrationality, if it is not de-actualized and paralyzed in the direction of metaphysics, is more easily reconciled with elements of revolt of the human consciousness than with any conservative order and with those constitutive tendencies that are oriented toward such an order, and Breton devoted all of his considerable effort to this contradiction. If, however, this omnipotence of desire means above all a certain form of activation of the human psyche, then it is again critical consciousness that provides the authenticity of dreams with significant connecting impulses. Even though according to psychoanalytical theories this sovereign desire has a libidinous basis, and even though the erotic element constitutes in any case its essence, it is unquestionable that its dynamic has a persistently dialectical character. This means that it produces or governs the forces that are not predetermined to idealize and delimit constitutively the amorous model, but to stand in *conflict* with those constitutive powers of life that are in a psychological and social sense conservative and stagnant. With these forces, which in this conflict gain a critical capability, the original libidinous desire reaches over from the unconscious sphere of the instinctive life into the stage of

realization, in which it disposes of the lures of utopianism, idealization or superficially romantic stylization. It is forced to enter into real relationships in harsh conditions set not only by the ideological confrontation, but also by its most forceful intention to assert oneself *in reality*. If we could see the *libido* as a certain kind of psycho-biological hunger that introduces movement into unconscious processes, then the forces that control such a movement react to external impulses, or to real phenomena in such a way that their unconscious character is to a large extent contaminated with elements of conscious interests. Unconscious impulses partake here in the conscious intentionality of an ideological nature, as well as a conscious ideological intentionality represents an effort to filter and channel irrational impulses of unconscious psyche. In this form the *sublimation of the libido* manifests itself in the intellectual, cultural and artistic sphere – and thus also in the sphere of surrealism – in a more real way, in spite of the fact that there might certainly be other, perhaps more direct forms of such a sublimation. Whenever a revolutionary model comes into the forefront within the sphere of the spirit and culture, it is foremost a demanding intellectual activity. The path of such an activity toward immediacy and instinctive cores is made difficult by an a priori notion, even though this model alone can be and in most cases is genetically formed by instinctive and unconscious forces, which, in a social and political sense, often have a completely different effect on it from that of its philosophical content.

Thus in the very essence of surrealism there is not only a revolutionary romantic will to create a new unity of the social and psychological existentiality of man, but also a dialectical relationship between the unconscious and conscious components of the human psyche, between the authenticity of the instinctive forces and their cognition, between the EGO and SUPEREGO. It is even possible to ascertain that such a dialectical relationship has in all forms of surrealist manifestations a far more serious role than the integrative models of revolution, love or poetry, which stay too inert, too lyrical and thus lifeless in their states of manifestation. Despite the fact that these models have their initial significance in surrealist processes, what constitutes their concretizing effectiveness is the manner in which the dialectics of the unconscious and conscious forces is oriented in a critical sense against specific phenomena, be they in the sphere of imagination or in the questions of cultural or revolutionary politics. The greatest works of surrealism and the most significant impulses of the movement are related precisely to this oppositional intervention.

In his last reflection on the characteristics of surrealism from May 1951 Karel Teige admits that the surrealist suppositions on the transformation of life had a utopian accent, but they nevertheless have contributed to a limited extent to the enrichment of the human sense for the gifts of the chances of life, dreams, love and poetic forms of life. However, in all these values, which, in comparison to the revolutionary suppositions, represent a relatively modest, though certainly not insignificant contribution, the stylistic aspects of surrealism, in other words a secondary product, predominate. This stylistic element, characteristic of every movement, has a period limitation and a conditioning by period conflicts precisely in that in which it overreaches from the psychological sphere into the social one. To this period conditioning determined by the revolutionary integrity of psychosocial forms of life, also unquestionably belongs the model of bourgeois lifestyle as an economically and psychologically motivated oppression of the greatest human forces. The attack led by surrealism against the notions of *fatherland, family* and *religion*, in order to replace them with a consistent internationalism, free love and a rational foundation of a social revolution, had its significance under the conditions of time and place, but its original non-conformism had become more and more fictitious due to the influence of historical evolution.

The notion of *patriotism*, permanently misappropriated by political tacticking, has lost all its reality long time before surrealism could launch its attack against it, especially in the sphere of its reach. In those instances where the notion was meant to serve as a moral backdrop for the unleashing of mob instincts, for their militaristic exploitation, the notion could be interchanged with any other depending on the circumstances, whichever would prove more effective on the occasion. Also the disintegration of the *family* evolved through the increasing economic and psychological crisis of man and society more rapidly than the surrealist arguments could cover it with their full gravity. In the conflict between the principle of the den and the principle of free love the ambivalent relationship of man to family manifested itself and this relationship could represent less and less the firm walls of the prison of instincts and human pride. *Religion and church*, which together with patriotism represented the paragons

of the darkest forms of spiritual servitude, have been in this sense overtaken by non-religious regimes and the gradual political compromising of these regimes raised the rating of the church credit simultaneously with a certain modernization of the dogma, with which especially the catholic church accommodated the new situation.

On the other hand, *internationalism* has not manifested itself in the most seductive way throughout the stormy waves of historical struggles, in fact as every time when it was heavily tested; free love has proved itself so reduced in its freedom and so strongly ambivalent as its counterpart; and the rational foundation of a social revolution, in terms of political and social practice, was infiltrated by tendencies toward the irrationality of personality cults. The significance of the enrichment of lifestyle by surrealism was probably relevant only to a very narrow intellectual layer, perhaps only to few poetic existences, and even there it was in danger of becoming a somewhat inert and pedantic mask of social reformism.

If it would be possible to see in this intentionality of surrealism its essence and not just its period stylization, then it would have to be evident, that this experiment has perished in the crisis of the forties and fifties. But the force of surrealism was not substantially linked with the integrating models of revolutionary maximalism in the emancipation of the spirit, in the same way it was not wholly characterized by social or cultural provocations, which at the beginning represented dadaist residues within surrealism. Its romantic mentality with tendencies toward the furthestmost social and psychological consequences could have temporarily seen in the affective aspects of the social revolution its widest orientation, but such an intentionality cannot be equaled to the substantiveness formed by the very own medium of surrealism: the dialectics of relationships between conscious and unconscious components of life. Historical experience leads us to the thought that the influence of this conflict, of this dialectic relationship between rationality and irrationality, on the crisis of integrating social and psychological systems is not only significant, but also perhaps constitutes one of its sources. If such a historical experience has brought Breton from specific political questions to questions of new concretization of mythogenetic forces, oriented against the general decline and disintegration of the spirit long time before the social revolutionary rationality proved to be in its political dimensions too flattening and schematic, then it at least does not attest against the ability of surrealism to channel ontological questions in the most acute direction.

Such an orientation, however, represents a far more difficult position than a situation in which it could rely on a real and generalizing supposition of a social revolution, but such a difficult position corresponds more to the deepening crisis of human consciousness rather than to an internal crisis of surrealism. For the vitality of such an orientation the rating achieved by surrealist works, be they "orthodox" or "unorthodox", on the global art markets is also not evidential. And it is also insignificant if some of the surrealist formulations are in this sense utopian (Breton's female system) or not.

It should be emphasized that experimentation in art, as it is usually viewed, is fundamentally incompatible with the authenticity of artistic expression outlined by surrealism on the basis of the psychoanalytical approach toward the sources of human psychic activity. Surrealist experimentation is though, something different from so-called artistic experimentation, because there is a fundamental discrepancy between the original intentions. The investigation of the unconscious is not identical to the investigation and search for new aesthetic forms, even if such an exploration can influence the structure of creative expression. The focus of such an intentionality does not lie in the question of in what other manner would it be possible for human beings to gain aesthetic enjoyment, but in the necessity of gaining knowledge of new forms of their psychic life, depending on the social resonance of such new forms.

To what extent poetry stands, in the surrealist understanding, as an antithesis of aesthetic concepts and literary schematism is indicated by Breton's and Eluard's *Notes sur la poésie* (Paris, 1936), which, ironically and meticulously, negated Valéry's confessions on literature. Whereas Valéry notes that "naked thoughts and naked impulses are as powerless as naked human beings," Breton and Eluard wrote: "Thoughts, completely naked emotions, are powerful as naked women." A poem is not a feast of the intellect but rather its disaster:

Everything begins anew after the disaster. - - - Poetry is the antithesis of literature. It rules over all kinds of idols and realistic illusions. - - - Lyricism is the development of protest. - - - It is impossible to construct poetry that would contain only poems. If a work contains only poetry, it is constructed, it is a poem. It is not poetry. "Perfection is laziness." - - - We distance ourselves from form by trying to leave to the reader a maximum of participation and at the same time leave to ourselves a maximum of certainty and decision-making, whenever possible. - - - A new idea is identical with the search for the essence."

This is no longer a negation for the sake of negation, a provocative gesture, inspired by Lautréamont's plagiarizing of Vauvenargues or by the Dadaist past of both poets, Breton and Eluard. And neither is it only a definition of surrealist poetry in complete correspondence with Valéry's literary pathos. Here a new substantiality of creative work stabilizes in sharp antithesis to that which places it among the arts, a substantiality that transcends its period forms.

Although such a surrealist point of departure, in relation to poetry, has a sort of phylogenetic nature – not only as it is to be found in Rimbaud and Lautréamont, but also as one can encounter it in the present. In individual creative approaches the surrealist imagination is infiltrated by some period characteristics, which form the inventive value and unrepeatable nature of poetic thought and give its shape a certain historical form. These period characteristics are however, the easiest to conventionalize, and, as such an activity are completely contrary to the tendencies of surrealism.

The period characteristics of prewar surrealist poetry could be discerned from some of the poetic formulations in the *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* (Paris, 1938) that can be considered as a representative manifestation from the end of the 1930s:

"I am for a moment in the shadow of whales that leave for the Pole (Maeterlinck)
My hair made of long, black whales, sealed with sparkling wax (Breton)
Baudelaire with open arms, open hands, just among the people, a man among the just, and Baudelaire unhappy, forgotten, ostracized, absurd, Baudelaire white and Baudelaire black, day and night, the same diamond extricated from the dust of death (Eluard)
She is beautiful and more than beautiful: she is surprising (Baudelaire)
A wooden crutch, derived from Cartesian philosophy. Usually employed for supporting the soft construction of tenderness (Dalí)
A glass of water in a storm (Breton)
The exquisite corpse will drink young wine (surrealist game)
With a single caress I shall make you shine (Eluard)
Under the lamp this evening hornbeamy is a first name (Eluard)
Disorder of logic to the point of the absurd, use of absurd to the point of reason (Eluard)
The air in the room is beautiful as drum sticks (Breton)
I love you as a former fern loves the stone that made it into an equation (Péret)
Animal are beautiful for inside they are also naked (Hugnet)
A felled tree – that will be for you – also two – and the same goes for the whole wood (Péret)
The hard labor prison with its flashing crevices as a book on the knees of a young girl (Breton)"

Such poetry is controlled by a certain kind of exaltation, not only in the nature of metaphors and metamorphoses, but also in the structure of poetic composition, in the construction of rhyme context. This kind of exaltation is perhaps deeply linked to the manifest intentionality of revolutionary Romanticism, so close to surrealism between the wars and also influencing its later hermetic stages. If we read the poems of Breton, Eluard, Péret or Tzara after thirty, forty years, we can certainly find all that allows an ever growing number of literary critics to rank these poets among the greatest artistic figures of the present century. At the same time, however, we feel that such recognition contradicts precisely the surrealist understanding, in the climate of which such poetry was created, in times when Breton was still labeled as head of a gang of café rowdies. Such a kind of re-classification represents perhaps a more complex problem, too complex to be simply associated with a mere conventionalization of poetic expression, because the suggestive capability of this poetry is exceptional even for the contemporary sensibility. But on the other hand, in a surrealist sense, it suggests that it is precisely the principle of invention that in the sphere of imagination modifies the expression, not only

by deepening and “recognition” of unconscious sources, but also by a relationship to the concrete conditions at the time and one can discern in such a relationship an evolutionary causality.

“A word, a cry or drawing is not only a substitution of that sudden glow that opens the skies; it is also a reality – a new nature. This new nature travels from man to outer reality and vice versa, it is a radiant arc of discharges, on which the contact between the world and man takes place, it is that super-reality which is capable of creating a unity of the world and man. Man constantly holds images, words, movements, sculptures, etc. as a mirror to nature, in which he sees himself and his background. An observation in such a mirror is an expression of a constant desire to overcome the conflict that must be overcome if the world is to be understood by man.” (Jindřich Honzl, *Sláva a bída divadel*, Prague 1937)

Such an understanding of the world in its integrity seems to be within the reach of surrealism between the wars, it is potentially contained in the revolutionary atmosphere in which it initially partakes and which it attempts to defend in gradually increasing isolation. Although historical development would not confirm such a tendency, still, the desire for an overcoming of the conflict between man and the world will not cease to act as the highest value of human creativity, even in times of the most desolate decadence of the human spirit. And in this desire, often denied, disguised or deformed into sarcastic convulsions, persists the suggestibility of surrealist creative work, despite the fact that its semantic structure changes, as it has done from Lautréamont to Breton, sometimes so extensively that it seems as if, on the contrary, it substantiates imaginative and mental fragmentation.

This emphasis on the integrative functions of surrealist thought is also reflected in the manner of their creative concretizations. It has created a *special literary form*, combining elements of the novel (a fictitious novelistic narrative was replaced by a documentary record, e.g. Breton’s *Nadja*), poetry, essay, causerie and philosophical treatise (Tristan Tzara, *Grains et issues*, André Breton, *Arcane 17*). Surrealist poetry is also marked by a advancing disintegration of poetic composition, foreshadowed by the work of Mallarmé and Apollinaire and deepened by Dadaism, and tends toward an elastic and variable imaginative system which is extended by visual (*Ode à Charles Fourier*) or sculptural elements (*object-poems*). These changes of “form”, the abstracted, mechanized and aesthetized consequences of which we often encounter in contemporary poetry, are not however, formalized incursions – they are not subordinated to the will to vary the means of expression. They are rather led by an effort to create the precise and most authentic expression and record of unconscious processes, their cognitive forms and their verbal or imaginative equivalents. The differentiation of these tendencies from abstract concepts is characterized by the nonexistence of any preconceived formal order, because surrealism leaves complete freedom to the poet as to what means of expression or external form will shape the literary product influenced by unconscious inspiration or in what way it will be contaminated by other, non-literary elements. The same arbitrariness with regard to the means of expression, on which autonomous determinism is otherwise based, can be also found in the *visual expressions of surrealism*. The differentiation between automatism of vision and automatism of creation that respects the figurative and non-figurative positions of visual expression (especially in Teige’s analyses) is only a very approximate explicative scheme that does not aim to be an indication of some sort of special compositional criteria.

“I see no advantage in surrealism separating these two tendencies, even in cases of an open antagonism. They are two mutually complementary forms of human efforts of expression, which, as it seems, have manifested themselves very clearly in both Eastern and Western nations. Moreover, in the last twenty years they have coexisted within surrealism side by side without any greater discrepancies. Were it to be found in the future that one excludes the other, the solution of the conflict should, in my opinion, be sought in a wider philosophical context, in which these two positions could very well be mere copies of those that in the Middle Ages opposed “nominalists” and “realists” in relation to the question of universalities.” (André Breton, *Enrico Donati*, 1944, *Le surréalisme et la peinture*, Gallimard, Paris 1965)

The formative media in this case remains an inspirational stream emanating from the unconscious, which should be allowed to concretize irrationality with its characteristic urgency, up to the effort of overcoming the two-dimensional nature of a painting and becoming a three-dimensional *surrealist object*. Despite the fact that the realization of an “inner model” reaches the most extreme limits,

these objects remain one of the most substantial, but at the same time neither unique nor exclusive domain of surrealist visual expressions, besides painting, drawing, collage and even various sculpting techniques.

It is clear that the extra-artistic constant of surrealism can be characterized not only by the aforementioned contamination of expressive means or visual expression, but also by their subordination to the authenticity of expression oriented by those ideological tendencies that stand at the basis of the surrealist meaning of creative work. Neither *object-poems* nor surrealist objects with symbolic functions can be the only or central form of surrealist expression, for each such a canonization would limit and cripple the authentic movement of poetic thought by external stylistic criteria. Even though, as has been already mentioned, there remains a conflict between surrealist creative work – as an authentic form of intersubjective communication, the ideological dimension of which has a rebellious, non-conformist or at least critical character – and the fact that this creative work is realized in an artistic space which is governed by economic laws incompatible with surrealism, this conflict has nevertheless a certain fermentative function. All moral principles applied in the attempts to solve this problem have proved to be fictitious and utopian. Although, on such a moral level, the continuity of surrealism as an extreme and strict definition of a revolutionary doctrine, it cannot be denied that precisely this asepsis, which can never be accomplished with absolute consistency, became the real value, ever important as it has been capable of increasing the intensity of surrealist imagination. Even in this conditioned extent this constant is still alive and remains decisive.

The effectiveness of certain ideas can be estimated from the type and intensity of resistance, with which they are met. But when certain ideas have the gift, not only of making a clear division between its supporters and its adversaries, but also quite antagonistic relations in the ranks of those who adhere to them, then this provides evidence, not only of their effectiveness, but also of their inner dynamics, in which the past is combined with the future. Vulgarizing forms of politicization of cultural life and publicity, which have manifested themselves especially strongly after the war, placed obstacles upon the development of surrealism perhaps bigger than the crisis in which it found itself; as a consequence of its internal conflicts, as a consequence of the effect of the corrective effect of reality on its ideological basis. Stalinism did not only cause the destruction of the Left's cultural front, but also indirectly incited the strengthening of those tendencies toward aesthetic autonomy, toward abstract anti-ideological speculative absolutism on the ruins of devalued humanist perspectives. This new situation had of course, an influence, not only on the ideology and theory of surrealism, but in a more immediate way, on the structure of creative processes of the surrealist sphere.

Concrete irrationality was in its original formulation by Dalí associated with *paranoiac-critical* activity; paranoia was understood as a spontaneous method of irrational cognition derived from the critical and systematic objectification of delirious associations and interpretations. This critical function was thus focused on such a concretization of irrationality that would be capable of discrediting social reality, its apparent stability, and its seemingly firm values as an aggressive fiction. This very focus suggests that already at that time social reality represented at least some tendencies toward its own cohesion that needed to be unmasked.

Concrete irrationality could, under these conditions, be a challenge of the unconscious forces directed at the world of social prudishness. However, during the last decades, the presumption of such cohesion ceased to exist in torrents of the most real social absurdity, irrationality in its most concrete forms penetrated everyday life without the assistance of poets, and fear, together with indifference became the basic sensation of life. As a result, significant changes in the nature of surrealist concrete irrationality occurred, because that which characterized it from the very beginning was not the concrete irrational phenomenon in itself, it was not the intrinsic curiosity of dream, image, poem or event, but rather its inventive value in a certain rational context, in other words, a kind of tension between irrational phenomena and the rational system, a tension that was discharged by a surrealist interpretation within the framework of surrealist ideology that had nothing in common with passive irrationalism. If Dalí's "critical and systematic objectification of delirious associations" was to be, above all, a mockery of prevailing contemporary rationality, then, at a time when reality alone fulfills and exceeds the "delirious associations", the relation of irrationality and rationality necessarily changes

both in general and in the individual creative process and with the changes in such a relation come changes in the critical functions that manifest themselves in it.

The development of the postwar creative work and the causality of the changes in its structure – stemming from the surrealist point of departure – also correspond to these shifts of meaning. In the concretization of irrationality predominates a rationalizing method, a tendency to identify, (with an awareness of the hidden paradox), the concrete irrationality with social and psychological rationalism that is, in fact, getting into an increasingly desolate state. If the creative work of prewar surrealism, in the poetic texts of Jindřich Heisler, Jindřich Štyrský and Karel Teige, predominantly creates a concrete irrational scene, in which the dream imagery, most often potentiated by convulsive “short circuit” tropes, focuses on the construction of an inner model, in the second cycle of development, which enters the new postwar situation strongly affected by the crisis of integrational perspectives, the imaginative foundations move from an irrational visual character toward an irrational contemplation. Although this tendency does not lower the original psycho-automatic intensity in imaginative associations, at the same time respects, or in other words, paraphrases a certain conceptual context, be it in an original, (imaginative theses of Zbyněk Havlíček), or a metaphorical sense, (the travesty of literary forms by Karel Hynek). The metamorphosis of the irrational, strongly erotically motivated lyricism into aggressive philosophical reflections that do not give a verse form, (in the work of Ivan Sviták), it is equally significant and symptomatic. Even if it were possible to narrow down the approach to such a transposition, which, incidentally, occurs gradually and fluently, to the question of projection, in which the disintegrational tendencies of irrational elements can be applied toward sometimes very different impulses; from a wider perspective, (from a number of different mentalities), it is evident that it is here where the inner necessity to approximate the imaginative principle to the ideological or philosophical aspect asserts itself independently from an individual formation or will. This evolution, forced by the most penetrating decadence of perception and common sense, which has occurred in our epoch, undoubtedly corresponds on the level of imagination to the shift *from depiction based on perception* and connected to a never helpless rationalism, and to the tendency *toward conceptual depiction*. Breton recognized, in its hermetic character and in the magical effect of its profound symbolism, a correspondence between surrealism and Bachelard’s concept of surrationalism. The predominance of contemplative moments in the sphere of concrete irrationality stands out even more clearly in the case of younger authors, whose work did not experience the 1950s and could not encounter their consequences. The melancholy imaginative reflections of Stanislav Dvorský, the failure of poetic composition and disintegration of text in Karel Šebek’s work, as well as the comparative logic of dream and the observation of reality by Prokop Voskovec Jr. or the poetically mystifying sarcasm with which Petr Král consistently treats the irrational biography of Tyrš – all these mutually diverse creative approaches are united by the principle of concretely irrational contemplation, which appears in the texts of the majority of the authors in various alternating literary forms, (free verse, treatise, drama, etc.). Such a predominance of imaginative contemplation reveals the necessity of balancing the two levels of concrete irrationality – the fictitious and the real – in other words, the coexistence of the concrete irrationality of a poem or dream and irrationality, concretized directly by existential and social reality. The manner in which reality becomes a poem and a poem becomes reality is, however, different from the manner in which the prewar surrealist creative work was oriented in its ideological perspectives. The manifest form of revolutionary Romanticism clearly recedes as far as imaginary aggression (irony, sarcasm, cynicism, travesty, etc.), but it is precisely this aggression that allows the supposition that the rebellious Romantic mentality has not disappeared, but rather been transposed into some kind of latent state in order to arm itself with the most authentic weapon of poetry - black humor - with which it is possible to face the danger of the mutual isolation of the inner and outer human world.

In the same way that as in poetic texts we find tendencies toward balancing the fictitious and real existence of concrete irrationality on the background of a wider contemplative focus, we also find, in the visual expressions of this sphere, an inclination toward the consolidation of the original imaginative manifestations of surrealism. In his postwar study, (*Jindřich Štyrský*, 1946, 1948, manuscript), Karel Teige observes in the work of Jindřich Štyrský a “transition from the concrete toward the real, from the realization of fantasy into fantastic reality, from a crowd of utopian objects into a fantastic grouping of real-life objects selected and gathered by desire in order to make them, perhaps through

contradiction, an expression and symbol of its own hidden tension..." The very same inclination toward fantastic reality is perceptible in the work of Toyen at that period, and in the visual expressions of Jindřich Heisler, where it evolves into "realized poetry" and surrealist objects. Such a deepening focus on the magical aspects of reality does not change in its substance even when, due to the influence of external conditions at the turn of the 1940s and 50s, the new cycle of creative work becomes imbued with a special emphasis on compositional hermeticism that was often ascribed to the influence of the abstractivist relapses of the period. A closer observation of the work of Istler, Medek and Tíkal, as well as the work of Emila Medková, reveals with sufficient clarity that such an apparent return to artistic tradition, (motifs of still-lives, heads, figures, autonomization of colors and deformations of shapes), are merely a transformational and transpositional concentration of the way toward a new medium for reality, toward new "magical aspects of reality", toward a new imaginative order. While in the visual works of surrealism from the end of the 1930s the evolution from realization of fantasy to fantastic reality increased the verism of irrationally gathered objects that would often transcend into three-dimensional surrealist objects, then, in the 1950s, the "return to the image" enables surrealist expression to relinquish, in such an ostentatious composedness, the newly growing *artism*, even if "surrealist", and to liberate, through a double negation, imaginative thought towards new and more profound semantic approaches, toward a new symbolism. Tíkal's work opens access to the Architecture of Nature, to natural structures that gradually increase their anthropocentric pithiness of content up to the Cages for Suffering, Mobile Illusions and Mechanical Phantoms, which are as urgently concrete as they are difficult to define. Istler's expression oscillates from the beginning, between figurative and non-figurative morphology, and only later it stabilizes in a dialectic synthesis of both components in the cycles *Heads* and in the block objects from the last years. This causality is even more perceptible in the evolution of Medek's work, because in it the period of visual composition creates a transition from original forms of magical realism to the special form of Preserved Paintings, in which the combination of conceptual and sensorial understanding deepens the element of sarcasm that was never too distant from magical imagery. A similar transformation, from arranged irrational scenes through "visual balance" toward structural photography, can be found in the work of Emila Medková, who later discovered hermetic symbols hidden within the reach of everyday glimpses. The works of new authors, created at the beginning of the 1960s, already develop various branches of this imaginative order and approaches that combine the miraculous and irony, (Alois Nožička), terrible humor with mysterious myths, (Jaroslav Hrstka,) and the pathos of conventional rigidity with gags to which they unavoidably head, (Ivana Španglová), in the space of current imaginative emptiness. Roman Erben adds to such an orientation, in projects of anti-rationalist objects and in their commentaries, the search for new forms of dialectical relationships between the analytic and synthetic processes on which the principle of analogy is based.

This overview of the evolutionary question of creative work, which had surrealism as its point of departure, and existed in an intellectual and imaginative atmosphere shaped by the 1940s and 1950s, cannot lead to the conclusion that the main intention of its authors was the development of surrealist views. The continuity that manifested itself completely spontaneously and sometimes almost against the will of those who participated in it, probably had deeper causes, going beyond a mere speculative program. Every ambivalent relationship is based on a complex game of opposing components and is thus symptomatic of a certain organic significance. It is more powerful than an unambiguous inclination. Such an ambivalence probably stems from a symptomatic conflict, on the one hand, between *subjective* will to abandon the humanist perspective models of surrealism, because historically they contained a failing human element without which these models became pathetic gestures, and, on the other hand, the *objective* necessity of creation to develop itself in an environment of concrete irrationality that was acquiring increasingly realistic features. The influence of such a conflict on the evolution of this creativity, on its intrinsic structure, was far more substantial and organic than any form of moral liability that could be understood here as a resistance to external pressure.

Even though subjective will infiltrated the border zones of some of the evolutionary stages of individual authors, with existential philosophy or certain elements of absolutization of compositional and visual arrangements, - black humor, the critical force of concrete irrationality, manifested itself here as an objective common platform. This capability of imagination, to deal with abrupt irrational discharges with inner tension within the order of rationality, is from the beginning a dynamic

component of the creative work of the *Circle of Five Objects*; a component that has managed to adapt all other formative factors, because it represented, under the given conditions, the most concrete and most real contact with reality. The authenticity of such a basic approach to reality and creativity, verified above all by the very inner conflicts within individual works which it managed to overcome, indicates not only the real effectiveness of the surrealist platform, but also the scope of its differentiation. Black humor is just as alien to the existentialist understanding as it is distant from the formalist Lettrism and “concrete poetry”; it is as alien to aesthetic autonomy as it is proper of an ideologically oriented creativity; it represents the forces of criticism against the element of beauty, it opposes organism to mechanism, dialectics to allegory, analogy to identity.

In this peculiar discharge of imagination, that cannot be even considered humor, because skepticism predominates in it over laughter and a cruel miraculous reality over happiness, we find the shortest possible connection between the inner causality of unconscious motivations and the outer causality of conscious impulses, and this affective moment shines with an original light that has the ability to intervene simultaneously in all positions of the spirit. Imaginative thought is suddenly indivisibly linked here with a conceptual one; they reach a mutual enhancement in which the semantic evolution of a work becomes actively merged with the critical reaction to the situation, character and concrete phenomena of the psycho-social context. In such a sphere of emotional expression, that quite naturally demands its critical function, because this provides it with the pleasure of a derisive observation, the hyperboles of condemnation, political insults, personal aversions, games and willfulness all become a convulsive coefficient of the semantic construction of a work of art, especially in a period that takes pride in vulgarizing and banalizing all positive values. In such a situation, the truth of a convulsiveness of expression has more reality behind it than opportunistically constitutive thought.

The pre-war, initial period of surrealism, of the surrealist movement, focused on the examination of the everyday miraculous, with its own space of poetry and through unconscious psychic mechanisms, in such a way that it would allow the application of an awareness of the fact that this enormous source of energy is, in connection with the moments of revolt within economic and political laws, able to transform the world and change life. While the subsequent political developments showed that such a revolutionary transformation of history is in its maximalist presuppositions a mere romantic ideal, this does not mean that the dynamic of these reconstructive tendencies was a mere fiction and that it did not represent a real energy corresponding to some basic functions in the human mind. The forms of these functions might change, but, on the contrary, nothing seems to suggest that their substantiality should have ended exactly in 1938, 1948 or 1966. The substantiality of these tendencies does not end with Thermidor, nor with the Moscow trials, and neither ends the critical function, (in an ideological sense), of those “artistic” expressions directly stemming from unconscious sources – in order to give preference to a mechanized methodology abstracted into a curious simpleminded playfulness, that hides behind its undemanding character, out of naivety or calculation, an abyss of emptiness, the more hopeless the more we try to shut our eyes to it.

The inspirational character of the relationship between the unconscious psychic mechanisms and the “everyday miraculous” of imaginative processes that were substantially defined and determined in terms of their basic position by surrealism, enters now from an originally objectificational state into a new one, in which the most effective development can be observed in those of its functions that are, or will be able to, influence the new structure of ideological integrations. Concrete irrationality ceases to be understood as a ferment of social revolution; it rather becomes a special kind of ontological deliberation, in which the forces of restlessness are latently present. These forces are not directly dependent on specific revolutionary programs or philosophical concepts, despite the fact that they can be associated above all with ideological perception, in which they can be concretized. And if such a restless, magical force that is from times immemorial the authentic dynamism of poetry in a poem, image or life, it does not overturn history, and more often acts through skepticism rather than enchantment, for it does not declare love, freedom and its poetic urgency, but rather discredits their antitheses. It nevertheless remains the only ability of human mentality to transgress the limits of its own shadows.

* The term *dépayser de la sensation* serves as an expression of such a displacement of sensations that we encounter most often in surrealist collages or objects, but also anywhere else, where a certain rational context is violated in a surrealist sense. It can be thus associated not only with the Rimbaudian “erosion of senses, but also with a tyrannizing and confusing image, which ignites in that which appears as the least certain and most paradoxical” (George Hugnet). Louis Aragon (*La peinture au défi*) associates this displacement of sensations with the surrealist notion of the miraculous: it means a negation of the real in the sense of reconciling the real and the miraculous. It is thus to a large extent identical to the notion of *concrete irrationality*.

** To these historical conditions should also be added the specificity of the intrinsic evolution of artistic avantgardes, which especially in the case of futurism anticipated some of the fundamental elements of surrealism, despite the fact that this anticipation occurred from a different perspective (e.g. psychic automatism, “short circuit” associations of images, hints of instinctive and intuitive interventions, etc. in Marinetti’s *Liberated Words of Futurism*, 1919). In all these cases futurism remains in the sphere of semantic and syntactical reconstructions of the poetic expression, and in those instances where it acquires the character of ideological content, it leads only to confused exaltations.

Transl. by Roman Dergam