

The Possible Against the Real

In the year following the creation of the *Platform of Prague* it was clear that the thoughts and principles founding surrealism were, on one hand, concrete and concentrated enough to unify human individuality, despite growing difficulties, overcoming great distances and sometimes even great expanses of time, yet on the other hand, were so intense as to open deep cracks in those individualities, from time to time endangering the integrity or universality of those connections from within. If nowadays it is not possible for us to be reconciled with the internal questions of surrealism, (with cases, when the conditions of the time significantly increased the demanding character of surrealist principles for those who adhere to them, uncovering individual weaknesses), it does not mean that we have lost sight of them. It is obvious that all of us, passing through this period with greater or lesser determination, are stepping on uncertain ground, with the constant risk that, in one way or another, we may be losing something of equal importance as that which we want and do achieve elsewhere. There is scarcely anyone among us who, from time to time, would not pose a question -- directed at the period they happen to live in, of the true outcome of the best human efforts and, finally, of themselves -- as to the core of what creates the perspective of surrealism. A suitable answer to that basic question can be found, aside from all personal depressions, at the very same basic level, where the importance of human liberty is or is not doubted together with the desire to be free, which does or does not create the sense of history in a straight relation to the instinctive human life. All our mistakes, errors of judgment, personal aversions and apathies, all those 'failures in the decisive moment', all doubts creating space for instantaneous depressions, all the hysteric gestures by which human temper manages to throw itself deep into the morass of distorting approximations, all those exclamation marks in parenthesis - they only create individual outlines of personal profiles of a few people who have found themselves on the path where the question of the sense or nonsense of freedom had been answered quite clearly.

At the time surrealism was creating or specifying its own foundations, it was undoubtedly necessary to guard the cohesion of the movement, supporting it with a strictly enforced inner discipline, even at the price of drastic partings and no less dramatic comings, whereby both the leaving and the coming helped to create a consistent - and in that consistency a variable - form of the movement. These foundations have in the past decades been expressed and confirmed so clearly that there is no need for new manifestos; it is not necessary for the principles to be guarded by a well-trained sect of ascetic minds, owning the key to a collective treasure. Whether its founders intended it or not, surrealism created a wide base of opinion for new critical and imaginative thinking. It would be illusory to suppose that this base could be controlled from a single center. Because it does not need one anymore, surrealism does not have an authoritative organ controlling whether or not all the rules are being followed. They are sufficiently distinct and inductive not to demand tribal defense, always vulnerable to the threat of dogmatism, though they may well become a weapon for classification in the hands of those who are or will be capable of evolving them as perceptively as possible. We do not need to be afraid that they will turn out to be epigones, arrivistes or saboteurs, coming to hide their own weaknesses behind mere names.

Thus, we do not believe that surrealism can be identified with the life and work of André Breton, even though it was he who gifted the movement with the most valuable stimuli and cohesion in times when they were essential. It would be against the spirit of his own

thought and against those thoughts he constructed and defended, were we to confuse their myth-creating power with mere sentimentality, reserved for tearful cults. These thoughts were not exclusively Breton's work – the most imaginative minds of the century had their share in them, including those who, for whatever reason, left surrealism permanently. Precisely because Louis Aragon contributed the strong élan of explosive, sarcastic and deeply surrealist criticism to the movement's early years, he could be harshly judged for his later shift to the camp of socialist realism. Because Vítězslav Nezval gave the initial stage of local surrealism the most valuable poetic radiance and exciting grandiosity of emotional renaissance in the relation of imagination and reality, his later evolution may be viewed as a fall much more significant than is admitted by the relativism of the common history of literature. Finally, the sole fact that Breton's model of surrealism is distinctly different from Teige's even though they both developed in parallel from corresponding sources, proves that identifying surrealism with André Breton does not match the historic truth, nor the dialectical understanding of the creative processes of the spirit.

If we accept neither the supremacy of the legend nor the dogma, the authoritative personality nor the authoritative center for the current development of surrealism, and if we believe the surrealist foundation to be sufficiently concrete and open to thoughts and methods born outside of it, but capable of enriching it and working on its principles, it does not mean that we support the amorphousness of opinion or individualistic arbitrariness or are against collective communication. We believe that the surrealist foundation as it is today, not only allows, but often demands more differentiated opinion groups, where individual groups may, but do not have to, cooperate or coordinate their activity. The fact that these groups do not form on the basis of geographical co-ordinates but according to the connections of opinions proves the international nature of surrealism. The present cooperation of Jean-Louis Bédouin, Vincent Bounoure and Jorge Camacho with the Prague surrealist group is a good example. Only that classification of minds, constantly of a critically conflicting nature in the surrealist sphere, and only those connections of opinions, accompanied by necessary differentiations, can extract new creative powers from those encounters; powers influencing the movement's further stages.

Even though at the present the surrealist foundation is clearly perceptible in its essence and though it may contain methods and tendencies that are contradictory to one another, it is still vital for it to evolve in its own surrealist specificity, because that specificity has in both ideological and semiotic senses a primary significance in the growing differentiation of modern culture. It is impossible to separate the 'living ideas' defended by surrealism from the term "surrealism", because only the evolutionary vitality of the surrealist context gives these ideas a concrete sense. Every thought defended by surrealism in its present, living form contains the whole evolutionary history of surrealist cognition, of its twists, detours, mistakes, mystifications and discoveries; creating, not only its present character, but mainly its true meaning and its conflicting and evolutionary function. If it is possible to define the surrealist state of spirit or the surrealist function of poetry as opposed to the technocratic repression, it is so because that state of spirit, poetry and criticism were shaped during histories of polemic confrontations, which only a pragmatically narrow mind sees as closed, indifferent and detachable historic material. Such a history is permanently updated by the creation of an emotional reservoir of man, and by its variable existence. From here, it penetrates everything,

even the most spontaneous act, and here, it also contributes to the mythogenic power of the human mind, of which only a future moral rebirth can be expected.

Throughout the history of surrealism, there was a tendency to try to liquidate the movement, or, more precisely, to make the movement disappear behind thoughts it hitherto defended. Even André Breton, obviously under the influence of a rather too mechanical application of Lautréamont's example, was tempted by that fictional solution. If presently these tendencies come to life again, they happen to be concomitant signs of a merely temporary and, most commonly, personal crisis inside the groups, and they are very quickly forsaken. Only those incapable of permanently re-evaluating and building up an evolutionary continuum of surrealism must feel that the connection with the past is a burden. They must fear that their own input will be compared with it and so they have to look for a well-masked path to get them out of that difficult context.

In different circumstances, (anthology *Surrealist Point of Departure 1938-1968*), and from different perspectives, we expressed the continuity of creative and critical thinking, that brought us to the present positions, and we shall not return to it. We believe that we closed a period after the thirty-year holiday of the mind, which not only in our space, but universally, piled up a whole stack of ambiguities, half-truths and unintended mystifications concerning things that matter to us and that create the meaning of our lives. This way, against our will, we were pushed into the role of historiographers, historiologists, documenters and commentators, which in certain cases helped us clarify some important subjects, but in total was annoying, because it persistently prevented us from devoting ourselves to that which we consider to be the most urgent, and at present, the most decisive.

Here, we share some critical comments on our recent activity and on the principles expressed, along with our Parisian friends, in the *Platform of Prague*, and also on some of the present tendencies among the Parisian surrealists. It would be naïve to assume that the surrealist thoughts, so difficult for both individually and collectively understood human integrity, will not be cross-examined carefully. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the *Platform of Prague* still represents the main program points of present surrealism and that it outlines quite a concrete and extensive territory for the activity of those, who adhere to its principles. We see the following points as fundamental:

- 1) To liberate the grandiosity and lust, existing in the unconscious, potentially and virtually critical and inspiring in man's fight against the numbing effects of civilization's mechanisms.
- 2) To pursue the necessary theoretical refinements of these tendencies in relation to the evolution of the repressive systems produced by those mechanisms.
- 3) To develop a new theory of cognition based upon the principles of dialectic and analogy functioning both in the conscious and unconscious sphere of the spirit.
- 4) To uncover the transgressive elements in the basic law of sexuality, elements able to unmask the rationalist hypocrisy and commercialization of sexual cynicism, and to turn that cynicism against predatory rationalism.
- 5) To work on strengthening the ludic forms of life at the expense of the instrumental ones, where the human consciousness pushes the principle of identity out with the principle of analogy.

We believe that this allows us to approach the problem of occupying the Superego which, under the rule of the principle of identity, created the most cunning obstacles for the real progress of individual and collective freedom. It is necessary to prove that the penetrating changes in the construction of human mentality, showing so attractively, especially in the youngest generations, are only the external signs of a deep crisis of identificational occupation of the Superego, based on narcissistic transference and that they are perhaps the basic anticipation of incoming ludic life forms, multiplying the effect of the principle of analogy of the control function of the Ideal and thus limiting its repressive role.

As far as psychological and creative experimentation is concerned, some of the past experiments – far too embryonic to leave us unaware of their insufficiency - undertaken in the context of a special psychiatric research, but able to show certain importance in the surrealist sense ‘as a by product’, indicated that it would be too much an a-priorism and a voluntarism to value that action exceptionally, according to how much it contributes to nourishing and manifesting the collective friendly fluid. It may well be that it is a new chance for encountering various types of inner constraints, the residues and mechanisms of auto-stylization etc. A deeper recognition of the fact that censorship and those paths leading to its individual degradation tends to lead to form certain psycho sociological conclusions, in which we should attempt a dialectical distinction of the positive elements of trends historically occurring predominantly as youth cultures (psychedelia, the underground) and more or less devaluating Rimbaud’s call to the ‘derangement of all the senses’.

As a conclusion, we may draw upon our previously stated position, we are neither interested, on the one hand, in the generalizing judgments of those who since 1924 repeatedly and regularly bury surrealism, assuring themselves of their own petty pragmatic privileges, nor on the other hand, in the mad gestures arising from time to time from surrealism’s own sphere to infringe upon the subtle game of existential surrealist forms. So, is surrealism a super-historic and super-individual *state of mind* or a historic and collective *movement*? In both cases we are forced to leave the concrete solution to the given historical conditions. We see surrealism as an *open system*, but with its own specificity, and we believe it is able to define the function of present man’s imagination in the deepest motivation of his psycho-social being. If surrealism opens in quite a concrete form a more or less systematic approach to that problem for us, and if we believe that maintaining it is the core of our activities, then we do not know why we should deal seriously with questions of a diaspora, or, on the contrary, of the external formations of surrealist activity, interesting only to manipulative intellects. Along with Jean-Louis Bédouin, Vincent Bounoure and Jorge Camacho, with whom we are united by a great harmony of opinion and cooperation, we are convinced that surrealism, placing the possible in opposition to the real, is an inspiring medium, renewing, in the most concrete way, human consciousness.

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