

Under the Sign of Faust: how selling your soul to the devil is not enough

Argument

Is the literary genius pagan? Must what we call genius sell its soul to the Devil to realize how gifted it is, that is, able to solve the most intricate enigmas and secrets of human existence? Isn't Holiness a form of genius? A form, more of heroism, in the face of the event, in the absence of the world's opinion?

Development

1.

Let us rather quote a notion advanced by Marc Augé, *Le Génie du Paganisme*, **that is**, the genius of paganism, not so much in terms of putting into action the figure of the literary genius, that individual, that is, all of this is linked to the notion of the invisible hand in the economy and of God, in religion, that is, the idea that whatever he does, man always has the help of "Someone" who, let's say, works, contributes, to a certain order of the world.

2.

The genius detaches himself from the world's opinion, from the discursive vortex of everyday life, and isolates himself because he knows that anything, any comment, can be fatal to him, cutting off the respiratory path of inspiration from one moment to the next. On the

other hand, there is the restless genius,

intriguing, who appropriates the voice of the world to give it a personal stamp, manipulating it at will?

3.

Instinct takes you to a certain place, but when you are gifted with a reflexive capacity, you can go somewhere else, more, you can be in one place while really being in another. This is what distinguishes us from the animals, this is what distinguishes the normal everyday vain man, who only tries to save in order to eat, from the artist, the great artist who wants to leave his mark here. The artist has a fine and refined way of existing in the world, while the common sense man shouts and vociferates not sure why, because, first of all, he has no conscience of his own, reflective about his actions, he acts instinctively, like the animal. And behold, the genius is a maladjusted person, and discovers further on, because of his work, that it's not worth being so much, to demand too much of himself, too many ideas, so he moderates himself, which costs him a lot, because he is used to frequenting the psychological limits of inspiration.

4.

The inner voice, made of many voices, replaces the outer voice to the point of suffocation when he turns off the TV or simply takes the sound off it, because he is intoxicated by the voices of the world, by the histrionic abundance of social facts, when he wants others, that project him beyond himself and that he, in the air, can grasp, as if it were a religious experience. But even that is tributary to immanence, contingency....

5.

Then you realize that there are very few people who have reached the 12th grade, third cycle, among the people you live with, in terms of physical proximity. This explains why you can't find philosophy or anthropology in your curricula, and hence the lack of attention with which they have you on a daily basis. It is logical and easy to understand this. Most of them entered a high school and dropped out a few months later, they didn't go through the eighth grade, where everything is harder...

6.

Thus, many are those who admire anthropology and philosophy, sociology, but on the other hand do not realize the social path that the social scientist and the philosopher have to take to reach certain conclusions, certain principles? Should one surrender to God? Sell your soul to the Devil?

7.

There is a divorce between philosophy and society, between reality and religion, both of which are for the most part a laughingstock, a "recurring weakness" that one despises but returns to when all else fails.

8.

To this pervades loneliness, and not much can be learned from it, the genius has as it were been extinguished, the lamp of inspiration no longer illuminates his inspiring days, his phraseology, his thinking. What once was brilliant and almost dazzling, his genius, ended up

for losing its luster, fading away. So he walks around, trying to rekindle the flame, and live off it, off that inspiration that makes life interesting.

9.

The TV viewer doesn't realize, lets go, nor does he realize how the most diverse channels end up making fun of him. Those who take life seriously are considered foolish, crazy, disintegrated. Just because he is not part of the general herd, just because he thinks for himself. But isn't that the one who will win one day? I'm not sure how or what, but he will win.

10.

So, what we call genius has in itself a certain dose of madness, that is, social maladjustment, transcendence, which, most of the time, is integrative. In a way, genius, whether in literature or in the exact sciences, ends up not being part of society, of the popular common sense of the populace. Only that neither one nor the other lasts for long, i.e., a lifetime, because the sense of ecstasy of the genius in production is, in a way, equivalent to the ecstasy of belonging to a certain social order, having a car, children, a good job, perspectives and quality of life.

11.

So, rehearsing an etiological characterization of the genius, we can say that he is always a disintegrate, most of the time an outcast, unless he is hired for a television show where science serves as a pretext for laughter, for "moquerie", he is, to use Eco's image, an "integrated apocalyptic". So the social eye is on him, all he does is try to live a normal life, when normality doesn't even exist anymore, society, even from the perspective

integrating, is a cacophony of the urban jungle, that is, while some silence their voices in the name of a certain conception of society, of soci- city, others do whatever they want, that is, disrespecting basic rules of group coexistence.

12.

Then there is the silence of social scientists, because one listens more to God than to an enlightened man, because certain people don't believe that the world can get better and, in a way, that is in the hands of social scientists, among others. That's why they don't appear on TV, at least in recent times, on national TV and rarely appear, even in times of conflict. To what is this erasure, this absence, due? Perhaps because the message of the social scientists, like that of the philosopher, is not pleasant, consonant, it requires effort to put it into practice, and first of all, as in the American 40s, the public wants distraction, entertainment, illusion...

13.

But, as strange as it may sound, creation requires a certain environment, an atmosphere, man while creating, be it in an artist's studio, be it in the *graffiti of VHILS* in Lisbon, or in the Ukrainian War, needs not so much an atmosphere, let's say a romantic one, but more a certain number of variables that materialize in the mind, and so creation is also, in this sense, a social fact.

14.

Therefore, to a certain extent, the creator, inventor, acts as God with respect to his creation and rests when he has to rest, but while some prefer to politicize his creation, that is, to insert it into the

terms of social change and exchange, another is concerned only with working, painting, writing, making movies, because what gives him the most pleasure is not the consequence of that social fact, but its process. The author is, therefore, a medium of natural and at the same time supernatural forces, his body, his mind, are instruments of a certain mission, pagan in the case of writing, sacral in the case of sacred art.

15.

So the initial question remains open: is artistic creation the domain of the profane, the pagan? Or is it as it were the result of the Breath of Yahweh? Let's say that, in our view, the author, depending on the content of the play, is like Voltaire's *Candide*, the *Mustang*, who gets beaten up on one side and on the other and who survives to the end having his work as the testimony of his path. Because social life is full of various moods, social recesses, it is neither only tragedy nor only euphoria. And, so, what is it like? Does the author need to prove something? Can't he just rebut the authors before him and be done? Is a scientific article somehow a work of art? What, in fact, characterizes art? What does it have that other registers of reality don't have? First of all, it tries to rise above the common sense, the popular, but many writings reflect just that, common sense knowledge taken to exhaustion. On the other hand, the artist or author seeks to give a synthetic view of a personal or social cosmology, that's for sure. Whether it finds echoes in the moment or only in the passing of time, that is another question...

16.

What voice is this of the author, to whom justice is not done in life, that is, the interchangeable paths of the sal mind and the relationship with the social, do not contemplate being admired while producing, because, first of all, the

creation comes from the lack of love, from suffering and anguish, it starts from a point that is not understood by the common mortal, and reaches a point of existence and exuberance that allows it to stand out from the great majority of objects in use, be it the book, the painting, the multimedia piece?

17.

When he reaches the dimension of his society, that is, the linguistic and semiotic spectrum of his language, he ends up giving up, putting an end to his work, and looks for new languages that do not saturate his mind. This, then, is the itinerant path of the artist as a type-ideal, that is, as a creator.

18.

Then, the quality of life. Not all artists produce in abundance, here is our thesis, they produce in need and it is not to play the victim, it is because they want, somehow, to get out of this situation, either psychic or material. Obviously, many would stop breeding when they have a stable family life, without arguments or bickering, filled with good food and friends, good wine for laughs and a little cannabis. The question is also posed in the terms that Bergson put it, regarding *Laughter*: creation, even humorous creation, is a displacement of reality, the everyday social reality, psychoanalytic, Jungian, for a little or more time and it is this displacement that pulls society, let's say, forward and upward, depending or not on the elevation of the thing...

19.

If you go into the street and preach the meaning of life, some might laugh, so the artist somehow wants to avenge his ancestors and descendants by making a work about which his genius will be remembered, and therefore himself as a shrewd, intelligent person, in capturing the outside world and discovering himself. This question of laughter has a lot to say about it, and we will explore it in another one of our essays. So, returning to the theme that brings us here, the author seeks immortality through Grieg's artwork, *What Price Immortality?*), while others prefer to be forgotten in the Convent while they are never truly forgotten by God... To be forgotten, to be remembered, this is the dilemma of today's society, post-modern, post-philosophical, between anthropocene and climate change. Yes, the author writes to be remembered, to be important to someone, by reference to something, some idea, concept, or a simple rotten apple...

20.

But does the creation of art, whether written or sculptural, obey any methodology? It is true that the artist has a routine, which most of the time, seems to want to influence or defluorinate the creative flow of the author. There really is no methodology, other than being connected to the world, not unplugging, not letting the plug drop, that is, being resistant enough to do what the commando or the marine won't do, a ***deviance from*** authority and a certain disrespect for the rules within a bready vision of life and existence.

21.

Therefore, the work of art itself seems to live from this primordial transgression against what is radical and sacred, as if the genius of the artist were something revolutionary and subversive, which explains his errant life, his contact with drink and drugs, as if the *homo officialis, that* is, the perfect, perfectly social man, was something difficult to achieve, even though everyone wants to be good-looking and well positioned on the social scale, with more or less tension, more or less nervousness.

22.

So, does the artist differ from the author or is he also an author? If so many writers analyze their work, why not analyze their excrement as creative matter, i.e., the famous case of Piero Manzoni's "Merda di artista" (artist's shit), that is, why not look at his human, visceral side, since he is so famous why wouldn't his shit be famous too? At the same time, this intervention of his is seen as conceptual art, in fact it reminds us that the stomach also thinks and how difficult it is to produce a work of art on an empty stomach... Therefore, what is hidden, is revealed in another way, in another instance of social life and media, under different guises that may satisfy the core of the artist's realization.

23.

For the rest, the work of art, the literary text, imitate love and increasingly sexual intercourse, coitus, whether reproductive or recreational. This is the escape into the body that man enacts, the escape into himself and the body of the other that constantly inflects and repeats, in an external, perpetual *ritornello* that intends to make this reiteration constantly reaffirm the life of the subject, as in tattoos...

24.

Like the philosopher, while some admire the author, more, the writer, in his social role, others hate him because he put his finger on the wound and risked his reputation, put his meat in the roaster, risked his social prestige that he could have as long as he took on another profession. So his life, like the anthropologist's, is part of the social life, the gossip, the inflections of the language of envy, because everyone wants, after all, to improve, only not everyone has the same knack for real criticism. And what kind of criticism is that? That of art? That of literature? The scientific one cannot be, because a scientific text is not art. But it has a certain art. Criticism is part of it, but not every artist likes it, either because they are aware of what they have done, of their representativeness in the field of art, or because they don't have it, so the idea of accepting criticism to improve their art is valid? Does it make sense in today's world? Because criticism never ceases to appear, when the subject also tries to appear as an art subject...

25.

On the other hand, where is the boundary between art, science and technique? Doesn't art require a technique, is it not a technique? Therefore, we live not in the age of robots, because they are no longer new, nor of memes, because other things will come, other ways to fill virtual contents with meaning, but we live in the age of technique, size matters but technique matters more, it matters that the less, the bigger, the more significant, the more impactful, the more technological?

26.

Technique, then, in soccer, in cooking, which comes from mechanics, from construction work, public or private, from the laying of the brick and the filling of the slab. Man is the present and many times

journalism doesn't perceive, doesn't know how to capture the essence
of

man, of the social actor, of the subject conditioned to various conditions, because man is moment, for many, while for others he is history, interesting history, and for others more he is essence, contemplation.

27.

Indeed, what does the artist do while creating? Yes, what is there in a man, a cobbler, who strikes the stone? Isn't there something poetic in all this? Isn't time the engine of all this poetry of the world that escapes us if we don't look for it? Sometimes it escapes us even if we look for it, and then we already have poetry in us, we are already poetry, through interpersonal conflicts that involve, in most cases, the fight for status, the fight for the admiration of women, when some try to control them just to say they are married, exogamous, enterprising men, when they don't even "artist shit"?

28.

Absorbed in his inspiration, tense, almost breaking down mentally and physically, the artist is finishing his last painting. He will no longer paint, he will dedicate himself to botany and ethology, but for now he has to concentrate, to finish this "Last Work", that will be his title, that will be the way to pay a final tribute to the world that saw him pass, as if he were the ghost of Giordano Bruno?

29.

Science would then, in a perfect world, be merely explanatory, demonstrative, prophylactic? And art a reverie, an exhalation of moments that deserve to be remembered, as in photography?

30.

Art, camera or eye, is work, like philosophical work, like public works, it is development, growth, wealth, even. But in our country it is a laughingstock, perhaps because it is too patent and less strategic... Perhaps because, in the end, there are no good artists and art, even literary art, has become so commonplace that it has entered the social, domestic, virtual sphere, where it is mocked and vilified as never before...

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