

Gherasim Luca and Trost – Bucharest, 1945

Dialectics of dialectics : Message addressed to the international surrealist movement.

We address ourselves to our surrealist friends, scattered throughout the entire world, and as in great shipwrecks, we indicate to them our exact position, at 44°5' north latitude, and 26° east longitude.

The inexhaustible diversity of the means of cretinisation at the disposal of the enemies of the dialectical development of thought and of action, and the oceans of blood which illustrate the present arrest of objective becoming, will never succeed in making us leave from our sight, were it only for a single instant, the red thread of Reality.

In spite of the traps which surround us, we refuse to slide into the errors as much theoretical as material which manage, each time, to clothe themselves with new aspects, and which, by their immediate, moral or quantitative sides, could distance us from our fundamental desire, of which the first known degree is the transformation of desire into reality of desire.

Separated from our friends, since the beginning of the world imperialist war, we no longer know anything of them. But we have always kept the secret hope that on this planet, where our existence seems to become from day to day more untenable, the real functioning of thought has not ceased to lead the group which holds between its hands the highest ideological freedom which has ever existed, the international surrealist movement.

We address ourselves particularly to André Breton, by sending to him our most ardent message and we communicate, at the same time, to the international surrealist movement, certain of the theoretical results at which we have arrived during these last years of solitude, in the indefatigable pursuit of new dialectical solutions which permit us to surpass the tearing conflict which exists between us and the world.

Surrealists, we have continued to see the possibility of these permanent confrontations between inner reality and outer reality in our adhesion to dialectical materialism, in the historical destiny of the international proletariat and in the sublime theoretical conquests of surrealism.

If the surrealist movement knew how to react quickly toward the right-wing deviations which surrounded it or else combated it, deviations of political or artistic opportunism, which moreover took place before 1939, year from which date our last informations, we think that it is time to direct our attention also toward certain errors which have slipped into surrealism itself. Although less visible, these errors appear to us just as dangerous for the dialectical development of thought; also, we believe we must signal certain existing tendencies in the surrealism of the last years, tendencies which risk compromising, little by little, the common effort.

These artistic deviations, ideologically attached to the surrealist movement, are grouped by us under the following general rubrics: slow transformation of objective discoveries into means of artistic production and attempt to propagate, in a cultural manner, a given state of the becoming of surrealist thought.

In what concerns the existence of what one could name “a surrealist landscape”, during these last years, we believe not to be the only ones who have been preoccupied by it.

We do not think of the abusive employment of surrealism, as this has happened for a long time, by those who have made use of this term for one reason or another, errors combated in time. It is a question of a mimetic employment of the techniques invented by the first surrealists, techniques returning in all sorts of productions inside the movement itself, but which lack revolutionary objectivity, if one analyses them closely.

Only a complete objective necessity can justify the employment of a surrealist technique after its discovery, such as a mania or a state of hysterical suggestion. But we believe that it is time to react toward the tendency to consider certain techniques, objectively surrealist, as mechanically transmissible and able to be used to infinity.

There exist surrealist discoveries, but there do not exist surrealist manners, applicable such as they are, and which would do nothing but replace the ancient and odious methods of the poets, of the painters or of the writers.

Although the procedures discovered by the surrealists, such as automatic writing, collage or delirium of interpretation, have an objective value which we could not exaggerate, so powerful is our agreement and our admiration toward them, it is evident that the idealist repetition of their employment takes away from them all primary theoretical value and is in no way justifiable from the surrealist point of view, that is to say in that which this revolutionary movement has of most dialectical in it. For, by this

artistic repetition, the surrealist techniques become, in the hands of those who allow themselves to be deceived by so doubtful an interpretation of objectivity, aesthetic and abstract techniques.

In the surroundings of surrealism, and in its interior itself, and that especially in painting and in poetry, one sees certain surrealist givens taken up again, varied, remade, and the existence of the “landscape” of which we spoke constitutes in our eyes an artistic deviation, dangerous from all points of view. This “surrealist” mannerism, very often involuntary, risks making of surrealism an artistic current, of making it accepted by our class enemies, of granting to it a harmless historical past, in a word of making it lose the biting force which has animated, through all the contradictions of the external world, those who have made of the revolution their reason for being.

We thus see in the non-objective and routinised employment of the great surrealist techniques, an error which leads to the depreciation of these discoveries, which permits the artistic tendencies to make ignoble use of these revolutionary values, which constitutes a mortal peril for the development of thought and of action.

The transformation of objective surrealist discoveries into artistic techniques is attachable to the second error which we believe we must signal, the error which we have named a tendency to propagate, in a persuasive manner, a given state of the surrealist movement.

This tendency does nothing but amplify the first, seeing that it introduces surrealism into a sort of cultural policy. The “surrealist” anthologies visibly express this second deviation and the attempt which they manifest to propagate mechanically the existing discoveries and to make radiate the obtained givens, can only be considered as a sad attempt to make surrealism accepted, by fixing it at some moment whatsoever of its perpetual movement.

We signal to our surrealist friends these two fundamental errors of the last years and believe not to have to insist further on the dangers which lie in wait for revolutionary thought, under the shelter of a fatal confidence in the possibility of fixing culturally that which has been torn violently from the external world and from ourselves.

The transformation of surrealism into a current of artistic revolt would put an end to its theoretical development, and after its passage through the inevitable phases of refusal and of scandal, it would risk sharing the fate of all movements of revolt, which the class enemy always succeeds, in one way or another, in employing afterwards.

We intend to communicate in the pages which follow, the theoretical conclusions at which we have arrived, but of which we cannot express the tenor except very partially.

At the same time, we believe we must specify certain fundamental points of view, and which we believe we can attribute to the surrealist movement in general, these positions having the role of heightening the concrete discoveries which we desire to present and which are taken up more amply in the special works which we have destined to them.

It is very difficult to find the graphic equivalents of our most inexpressible desires, but we will attempt to indicate some essential points of them. The first point upon which we would like to insist concerns the necessity of maintaining surrealism in a continually revolutionary state, state which could offer to us the synthetic solutions (Hegelian, materialist, unheard-of), vainly awaited until today moreover.

This continually revolutionary state can be maintained and developed only by a dialectical position of permanent negation and of negation of negation, position which can always take the greatest conceivable extension, toward everything and toward everyone.

We repel every tendency, however seductive it may be, to make of surrealism either the heir of revolutionary thought, or the most advanced movement of our days, or any other synthetic state which could return to it naturally. It is beyond doubt that the present position of surrealism implies these synthetic states, but we believe we must repel every attempt to limit it statistically, to let it be devoured by the problems of every legacy.

The mad hopes which we have placed in the appearance of surrealism and in our own appearance demand the expression of all our desires, at once, and this desire to desire would collide with every attempt to transform surrealism into a solely current movement.

The dialectical and materialist power of surrealism in regard to all the other existing movements could exercise precisely such an attraction over its adherents, and we would see ourselves, sooner or later, plunged into the stupefying melancholy of every spiritual inheritance.

Surrealism cannot be, in our eyes, only the most advanced historical movement. Without sinking in any way into the philosophical idealism of every romanticism, we think that surrealism can exist only in a continual opposition toward the entire world and

toward itself, in this negation of negation directed by the most inexpressible delirium, and this without losing, of course, one aspect or another of its immediate revolutionary power.

Discovering the most revolutionary positions, surrealism is at the same time its own adherent and it cannot confuse itself for long with itself. It is here that hides the key of all revolutionary power, and it must not escape us, even were it for the most tempting quantitative results.

In this dialectical attitude, we recognise the most concrete possibility of maintaining intact in us the revolutionary mechanism and the means of trampling underfoot every discovery which would not oblige us immediately to find another. These states of negation which chain themselves concretely, absurdly and dialectically one to the other, make us reject the past in its entirety, seeing that no historical moment has been able to satisfy the relative-absolute of all our desires. We reject the past of humanity in its entirety, and its mnemonic support, memory, understanding by our desires not only the projection of some fundamental needs, such as certain desires concealed by the unconscious, but also those which we must scarcely invent. Every limitation of the possibility of inventing new desires, from wherever it may come, upon whatever reason it may be founded, will always awaken in us a demoniac taste of negation and of negation of negation.

In this effort to put into accord inner reality and outer reality, we take up again, indefatigably, certain sublime discoveries which exalt our positions. We think first of all of the materialist (Leninist) position of the relative-absolute and of objective chance, in its acceptance of encounter of human finality with universal causality.

Objective chance constitutes for us the most terrible means for finding the relative-absolute aspects of reality, in its favourable sides, and alone it offers to us incessantly the possibilities of discovering the contradictions of society divided into classes.

Objective chance leads us to see in love, the general revolutionary method proper to surrealism.

After so many fruitless attempts to find a concrete revolutionary method, which would not be stained by any idealist residue, we have arrived at considering erotic magnetism as our most valid insurrectional support.

It is evident that to arrive at this conclusion of general order, our position toward love has developed in an unheard-of manner. This position implies all the states of love

known until today, but it demands, at the same time, the dialectical negation of these states.

We accept, but we surpass, at least theoretically, all the known states of love: libertinage, unique love, complexual love, the psychopathology of love. In attempting to capture love under its most violent and decisive aspects, the most attractive and the most impossible, we no longer content ourselves with seeing in it the great perturber, which sometimes succeeds in breaking, here and there, the division of society into classes. The destructive power of love toward every established order contains and surpasses the revolutionary needs of our epoch.

We proclaim love, delivered from its social and individual constraints, psychological and theoretical, religious or sentimental, as our principal method of knowledge and of action. Its methodical exasperation, its development without limits, its shattering fascination, of which we have already crossed the first stages with Sade, Engels, Freud and Breton, offer the monstrous flashes and the scandalous efforts which place within our reach, and within that of every revolutionary, the most effective means of action.

This dialecticised and materialised love constitutes the relative-absolute revolutionary method which surrealism has unveiled, and in the discovery of new erotic possibilities, which surpass social, medical or psychological love, we manage to grasp the first aspects of objective love. Even under its most immediate aspects, we believe that the limitless erotisation of the proletariat constitutes the most precious pledge which one can find to assure to it, through the miserable epoch which we traverse, a real revolutionary development.

In this effort to discover and to invent the most shattering sides of love, we oppose ourselves as much to the limitations which nature opposes to us exteriorly, as to the interior limitations of the oedipian complexes.

We oppose ourselves to the passivity manifested until the present toward nature, to the hidden admiration which it has inspired in revolutionary movements, for the slowness of natural laws provokes our impatience.

We cannot accept either the human biology which reflects nature in its most advanced sides, the cellular axioms which surround us and which end fatally in death, thwarting our revolutionary desires and maintaining in us an ambivalent tension, between life and its contrary.

We think of putting into accord our class position with our position toward the regressive sides of nature, seeing that a blind and implicit confidence in the possibilities of this latter, as it has existed almost always, risks maintaining a terrible oppression.

A total revolution, such as it has been formulated for the first time by the surrealist movement, can no longer accept the Darwinian leaps of nature, the thwarting influences of human biology or the abstract indifference of cosmology.

We desire to dialecticise and to render concrete the utopian attempts of human resistance toward nature, and we desire to overthrow the terrifying barriers which it does not cease to oppose to us, barriers under the shelter of which society divided into classes can maintain itself.

We know for a long time that the attempt to graduate, for reasons of opportuneness, our opposition toward the external world, always ends by turning itself against us. It is the reason for which we want to chain our historical revolutionary position to our revolutionary position against nature, reestablishing thus in a favourable manner, the necessary relations between desire and the universe, considered from the cosmological point of view.

We realise, more than ever, that every class revolution must be doubled concretely by a revolution against nature.

The necessity of discovering love, which can shatter without interruption the social and natural obstacles, leads us to a non-oedipian position. The existence of the natal trauma and of the oedipian complexes, such as they have been discovered by Freudianism, constitute the natural and mnemonic limits, the unfavourable unconscious folds which direct, without our knowing it, our attitude toward the external world. We have posed the problem of the integral deliverance of man (Gherasim Luca: *The Inventor of Love*) by conditioning also this deliverance by the destruction of our initial oedipian position.

Thanks to the revolutionary movements, the position of the father has been strongly shaken, as much in its direct aspects, as in its symbolic aspects. But the castrating vestiges of the natal trauma persist nonetheless, supported moreover by the favourable position toward the brother which the political movements have supported, and which is itself only one of the forms which the initial complexes take.

The painful defeats in love, defeats all tinted with romantic idealism and with the human incapacity to objectivise itself, find their first image in the mnemonic fixity of the mother and in the persistence of the primitive double which we carry in us.

The qualitative transformation of love into a general method of revolution and the possibility of surpassing, by a formidable leap, the unconscious image of love, are prevented by this primordial theoretical defeat, which the oedipian position maintains in us. Delivered from the mortuary anguish due to birth, delivered from the complexual limitations due to our unconscious oedipian attitude, we finally attempt to find the exact ways of our liberation and to surpass the “eternal return” which our erotic attitudes imply, in their biological or psychic aspects.

Considered through a non-oedipian position, the existing states of love are only stages which we must cross and the concrete absurdity of objective love can be unleashed only starting from this imperious Hegelian negation, aphorised up to the paroxysm.

The necessities of the revolution demand the extension of the non-oedipian attitude onto a general plane (Gherasim Luca: First Non-Oedipian Manifesto) concerning the infra-psychic position of revolutionaries in their immediate struggle. As long as the proletariat will keep in it the fundamental initial complexes which we combat, its struggle and even its victory will be illusory, because the class enemy will remain hidden, without its knowing it, in its blood. The oedipian limitations fix the proletariat in a position of symmetrical negation of the bourgeoisie, which succeeds in this manner in inculcating to it, in a manner all the more dangerous as unknown, its odious fundamental attitudes.

The position of the brother-father, maintained in the unconscious of the proletariat, holds this latter in a slavery toward itself and makes it conserve the deformations coming from nature and from the capitalist economy. Marx had already drawn attention to the need to consider the proletariat not only as an antagonistic class, issued from the development of the means of production, but also to the necessity of negating this imposed state. To negate this state, the teeth of the revolution must bite deeply into the unconscious and natural passivity of man. It is a question of surpassing the abstract and artificial admiration for the proletariat and of finding for it the lines of force which imply its own negation. This negation must moreover part itself from a humanitarian and outdated internationalism, which continues to permit national particularities to affirm themselves under the shelter of a reformist equality, in favour of a position anti-national to the extreme, concretely of class and outrageously cosmopolitan, going back in its most violent aspects up to man himself.

Our position toward the relations of the conscious with the unconscious, such as they have been brought to light by the dream and by psychoanalysis, undergoes a dialectical change, due to our general attitude toward reality.

The mechanical opposition which one shows us as existing between the conscious and the unconscious, in favour of this latter, no longer poses itself in the same manner, at the instant where we situate ourselves really on an antagonistic position. Seeing that the unconscious continues to keep, partially, regressive mnemonic traces, in an obsessional oneiromancy (Troost: Vision in the Crystal), we oppose ourselves to dreams, considered as the most revealing unconscious symptoms, when the manifest content of these dreams conserves reactionary diurnal remains.

It is clear that it is in no way a question of another secondary elaboration, with censorial role, but uniquely of an attempt to put into a real accord diurnal life and nocturnal life, which seems to us impossible, as long as we continue to accept every dream in its entirety, even in its regressive mnemonic aspects.

The acceptance of every dream, even with reactionary content, for the sole reason that it is a dream and a symptom of the unconscious, and consequently the acceptance of certain oneiric scenes, such as scenes of repetition or of social castration, which contradict clearly our conscious ideological positions, would lead us to a taboo, which only a mechanistic position can attempt to cultivate.

In recognising in an indescribably concrete manner the identity of the real functioning of thought across diurnal life, madness and dreams, and in seeing in these three modalities only artificial distinctions maintained by the unfolding of thought in dissimilar external conditions, we attempt to repel the degrading influence of oppressive social sides, not by mechanically bringing back diurnal life to dream and to madness, but also by a critical attitude toward the contrary diurnal remains, conserved mnemonically in these latter states. We cannot accept regressive dreams, just as we cannot accept religious madneses, because our confidence in these grandiose revolutionary instruments prevents us from harbouring reactionary contents, under the shelter of an opposition, which does nothing but distance by mechanical delays, the rapprochement of diurnal life and nocturnal life.

Researching at the same time the oneiric functioning in diurnal life, with all its explosive consequences, we approach the complete confusion of diurnal existence and nocturnal existence, by the negation of their artificial separation, of which only somnambulism, automatism and some other exceptional states have offered to us the first degrees.

We have taken up again the problem of knowledge by the image (Troost: The Navigable Profile), by establishing a clear distinction between the images produced by artistic means and the images due to scientific procedures, strictly applied, such as the

action of chance and of automatism. We oppose ourselves to the tendency to reproduce, symbolically, certain valid theoretical contents with the aid of pictorial techniques, and we think that the unknown which surrounds us finds, in indecipherable images, a shattering materialisation at the highest degree. Surrealist painting, accepting in general, until today, pictorial reproductive means, finds the way of its blossoming in the absurd employment of aplastic, objective and entirely non-artistic procedures.

Among the numerous procedures which we have found, certain ones have been presented partially, on the occasion of an exhibition, in January 1945, and they have been summarily described in a Presentation of Coloured Graphics, Cubomanias and Objects.

We have occupied ourselves more largely with these procedures in special works (Onirising Life, Power of the Gaze, Knowledge of Time, Voluptuous Initiation...) and we could not summarise their content in this succinct message, without avoiding the risk of neglecting one or the other of their multiple aspects.

Pushing automatism to its most concrete and absurd limits (surautomatism, the talisman-simulacrum), objectivising in an uninterrupted manner chance and obliging it to renounce its character of rarity coming from the discovery of the found object (the objectively offered object, entropic graphomania), we put aside the unbearable idea of not being able to capture it always. Putting into continual relation automatism and chance (entropic graphomania, vaporisation), aggravating the tearing antinomy of the subject and of the object, and accelerating, with the aid of the simulacrum, of artifice, of active clairvoyance and of theoretical despair, its dialectically revolutionary solution by the placing of the subject in a receptive position of oneiric qualities (hypnagogic movements, paintings painted with the eyes closed), or of mediumistic quality (objectanalysis, interpretation of some objects in a state of light somnambulism provoked by them), we have torn new regions from the objective world.

Utilising pathological procedures (echography, stereotypy), and placing within the reach of the real functioning of thought mechanical apparatuses, such as the pantograph and the paper-cutting machine (pantography, cubomania), we attempt to overcome the coldness of universal causality.

Without having yet the necessary means to be able to present it in all its theoretical amplitude, we affirm from now on our desire to rediscover the scientific (cosmological) correspondences of our attitude and we realise that the surrealist position is in accord with numerous discoveries which are, apparently, distant from it. We are, subjectively-objectively, in accord with the discoveries which exercise upon us a fascinating attraction, such as non-Euclidean geometry, the fourth dimension,

Brownian movements, quanta and space-time, just as we are partially in accord with non-Pasteurian biology, represented by the Heraclitean position of homeopathy.

We hope to see these scientific researches draw nearer, in a concretely active manner, researches assuredly too particular to be completely just, and we attempt to find the delirious means necessary to such a rapprochement, in the thunderous and maleficent materialism of black magic. In "the law of gravitation" we have attempted, in a desperate manner, to give an objective character to the desire to encounter the image of the universe, by forcing the unfavourable encirclement of nature.

Still separated from one another, we think of the secret accord which must exist between the dream and the fourth dimension, between luxury and Brownian movements, between the hypnotic gaze of love and space-time. In accord with science in its attractive and cryptaesthetic aspects, the surrealist movement at the same time shatters its mathematical rigidity, with the assurance which recalls the voyages of somnambulists toward the interior of their own mystery, identified for an instant with the secret destiny of humanity.

Traversed day and night by an infinite sequence of negations ever more irritating, ever more precious and devouring, the incomparable instrument of conquest which is dialectical materialism madly exalts our insatiable hunger for reality, and bites ferociously the black and captive flesh of man.

Covered with blood, its palpitating bones now appear as long suspended crystals.¹

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