Different Philosophical, Aesthetic and Sociological Approaches to the Relation Art-Labor-Economy

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ABSTRACT

The article is focused on depicting some of the most important theories about the interdependent relation between art, labor and economy as compartments of the social life, built on specific strategies, forms of communication and types of messages, codes and laws that have various kinds of utility and finality for man as an artist and social performer.

Keywords: Art, Economy, Interdependent Relation, Labor, Social Life, Social Performer

INTRODUCTION

Any action in the social area involves a reason and certain goals that have an interest available in the art world and intellectual activities, too. This mechanism made function by social agents is extended to the field of those actions apparently uninterested, with no practical utility and connection with the material world, that is the artistic universe. Procedures, steps, rules, results and the whole mechanism of work also apply in case of artistic and intellectual play which, in spite of their most often undermining the pragmatic and material universe, spotlight exactly the artistic products and productions as work of creation, moulding and refining ideas and feelings, in fact serving an aesthetic finality. That is why it is interesting to cover an itinerary of the philosophical, sociological, aesthetic views that have discussed the relation between art and labor, identified in the theories of some of the most remarkable thinkers and writers. Communication itself is a social play that sets relations between those who recognize the rules and goals, and art launches to public products and productions that communicate various types of messages which challenge the artistic sense to contemplation, decoding and comprehension. All these proceedings involve efforts and pleasure which, although apparently lacked of utility and finality, obey the rules of the play, establish chain reactions and connections.

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between objective and subjective world. Each field of the social world, either economy, politics or art develops communication relations, goals, rules of its own compartment. Art interacts with each segment in the structures of society and especially with economy more than ever in the present hyper consumption society due to the multitude of financial mechanisms and market strategies that both condition and promote the artistic products on the consumption market. The present seems to cancel the traditional theories about the pure art as having no connection with the praxis and profitable purposes but opposed to the economic law. Whereas in the past the authentic art refused commercial targets and the artist denied the production performed at request, the present blurs the border between art and craft, artistic and useful, success is established in terms of popularity or best-seller, an example that illustrates the interference of art with fields incompatible in the past, such as industry and economy.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO ART-LABOR-ECONOMY

The judgments upon labor have had various expressions in philosophy, literature, arts in general and social practices, according to the social context of the epoch but also related to the regional and geographical specific. In the following pages we will analyze the conception over labor and leisure time solidly supported by the European aesthetics and philosophy from the end of the XVIII-th century – the middle of the XIX-th century, concentrated around the Dandyism. Beyond the etymological and historical meanings of the term which entered in use in the fashionable saloons and London clubs in 1815-1817 along with the admission of the first authentic dandy, George Brummell, the Dandyism was a remarkable aesthetic value, having numerous acceptances among which those of art, mentality, convention, social practice, doctrine, life style, etc. Among the personalities who were influenced by the Dandyism and wrote studies about it we can mention Honoré de Balzac, Théophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, Stendhal, Oscar Wilde, Jean-Paul Sartre, etc., and in the following pages we will make an analysis of their judgments over this concept which still has influences in the contemporary aesthetics and philosophy.

As a historic phenomenon that proposed and showed a spiritual and behavioral pattern expressed in the European mentality from the end of the XVIII-th century, the Dandyism insisted on cultivating the idea of Beauty that can flourish at its best only within an aristocratic and elegant environment protected against the pressures and urges of labor, indifferent at the pragmatic and utilitarian concerns that are not compatible with art and elitist spirit. The Dandy is a personage on the social stage of gossip chronicles, with controversial appearances due to his eccentric gestures and elegance of clothes stylized to shocking, effeminization, the topics tackled in the art of conversation seen as a strategy of seduction. All these non-conventional displays meant to defy and undermine the moral laws turn themselves into conventions. The lifestyle of the Dandies is supposed to possess a solid financial base, meant to grant them the relaxation and luxury of the constant presence in select clubs and cafes, at the card-tables, in private saloons. This sense of property contradicts their anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois conception by which they despise upstart and labor as object and goal and justifies itself by means of affiliation to elegance as an inborn gene but not obtained, as a distinction and nobility title inherited or cultivated but not bought or transferred (Babeți, 2004, p. 73). It is the principle by virtue of which the Dandyism unites under his protection those artists who refuse bourgeois compromises among which labor seen as a restriction from creativity and freedom sold in exchange for a sum of money meant to guarantee their everyday living. In order to avoid the compromises necessary to survive, that is the good will and favors of a questionable aristocracy, or the extreme solutions having as a result the total break up with the world, the Dandyism concentrates around
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