

**FIRST
NADAIST
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GONZALO
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**FUMO LUEGO
EXISTO**

first DEFINITION OF NADAISM

Nadaism¹, in a very limited concept, is a revolution in the form and content of the prevailing spiritual order in Colombia. For the youth it is a schizophrenic, conscious state against the passive states of the spirit and culture.

You may ask for a more exact definition. I would not know how to say what it is, because every definition implies a limit. Its content is very vast, it is a state of the revolutionary spirit, and it exceeds all kinds of forecasts and possibilities.

Could you tell me what Catholicism is; or what Marxism is? That Catholicism is the soul's choice over its higher ends. And that Marxism is the policy of founding a universal society on the basis of human happiness and identical economic and spiritual opportunities for all.

These answers are partial, incomplete, because Catholicism and Marxism are that, and all the rest: a historical endeavour of the human being who pours its existence on afterlife or terrestrial ends, according to whether its choice falls on earth or in heaven; a struggle of values to conquer a preeminence in the Great Near or the Great Beyond.

We do not want to work on the definitive. Nadaism is born without fixed systems and without dogmas. It is a freedom open to the possibilities of the Colombian culture, with a minimum of presuppositions of struggle that will evolve with time towards a value estimation of human beings, a new form of beauty, and an aspiration without romantic or metaphysical idealism towards an evolved society in the cultural and artistic order.

¹ "Nada" is "nothing" in Spanish, nadaism will directly translate to "nothing-ism" in English. t/n.

second CONCEPT OF THE ARTIST

The artist has been considered as a being closer to the gods than to humankind. Sometimes as a symbol that fluctuates between sanctity or madness. We want to vindicate the artist by saying that he or she is a human being, a simple being not distant from the human condition common to the other human beings. And that he or she is only distinguished from others by virtue of his or her craft and the specific elements with which he or she makes his or her destiny. We affirm our disbelief in Genius. The artist is no Genius.

He is a privileged being with certain exceptional and mysterious qualities with which nature endowed him. In the artist there is Satanism, strange forces of biology, and conscious efforts of creation through emotional intuitions or experiences of the History of thought.

Let us place the artist in its place by giving it back its human and earthly condition, without abstract superiorities over other human beings. His destiny is a simple choice or vocation, either irrational or conditioned by a conscious bio-psychic determinism, which falls on the world if it is political; on madness if he is a poet, or on transcendence if he is a mystic.

third NADAISM AND POETRY

I will try to define poetry as any action of the spirit completely free and disinterested in ethical, social, political or rational presuppositions that mankind formulates for itself as outlines of happiness and justice. This exercise of the creative spirit originating in the sensitive strength, I limit it to the field of a pure, useless subjectivity, to the solitary act of Being. The poetic exercise lacks a social or moralizing function. It is an act that is exhausted in itself. When it is produced, it loses its meaning, its transcendence. Poetry is the most useless

act of the creative spirit. Jean Paul Sartre defined it as the choice of failure. Poetry is, in essence, an aspiration for solitary beauty. The most corrupting onanistic vice of the modern spirit. Undoubtedly there remains a possibility of virile beauty in Colombian poetry, of useless and pure beauty, and this can only be the product of Nadaist aesthetics. And the Nadaist poetry is the freedom that disarranges what reason has organized, that is, the inverse creation of the universal order and of Nature.

Poetry is for the first time in Colombia a rebellion against the laws and traditional forms, against the aesthetic and scholastic precepts that have been unsuccessfully disputing the truth and the definition of beauty. André Gide dreamed in "Les nouvelles nourritures" of an art of words that would not try to prove or define anything. Such divination about the essence of poetry, materialises the creative faith of the irrational and conscious world in Nadaist poetry, from which pole-mic, dialectics, logic, rhetoric, rhythm, rhyme, classical beauty, feeling, reason are excluded, to be reduced to the simple intuition of purified beauty, freed from the satrapy of entelechies and forms, and purified in the simple scheme, the deep viscera of the irresponsible creative spirit that simultaneously produces Conscious Unconscious beauty, Irrational-Conceptual, Oneiric-Awakened, that is to say, pure-naive beauty as an original sin.

Beauty that is protest and disobedience to all Ethical, Political, Social, Aesthetic, Religious laws, and is vertigo before the danger of the forbidden. Because to be a poet means to accept that guilty and, at the same time, redeeming passion derived from the joy produced by the destruction of the Universal Order, in whose destruction the spirit is purified of all its resignations, divine and revealed conformisms that bring the message of the downfall and slavery of the spirit. For the great free cause of poetry it is neither possible, nor licit, nor permitted, to mortgage it in idealistic enterprises of social or political order. That would be to assign a legitimate bas-

tard character to its genre. Poetry cannot be compromised by assigning it spiritual or moral responsibilities in the course of mankind and History. That would be taken care of by politics, which is art and science at the same time, implies aspirations of justice and happiness, and is a synthesis of rational values. With the emergence of this new form of Nadaist beauty, classical beauty, measured and calculated beauty, pulsed and inspired beauty, the pastime of beauty, the one taught by professors of rhetoric, the beauty of celestial ecstasy, lyrical beauty, elegiac beauty, epic and pastoral beauty, the abominable trick of Parnassian beauty, the beauty fabricated by massive and messianic poets, all come to their decline, but above all, the beauty that is made with the smell of women, that detestable betrayal of beauty that is romanticism. Secularly, Colombian poetry has extracted its numen from the pestilences or perfumes of the feminine sex, which means an impurity and an impudence against the chastity of art. No more lyrical concubinage with the muses. That is to pay with debased coins the high price of beauty.

As Nadaist poetry is a revolution against traditional aesthetics, it implies the discovery of a new aesthetic that will free all the restraints under which a mysterious poetic world has remained hidden: the subconscious world that is like the general deposit of a storehouse of the spirit that provides the demands of reflective consciousness. These irrational materials are the litter of the moral spirit, the redoubts discarded by bourgeois puritanism. We Nadaists are going to collect them and consecrate them as art material, as deposits of unexploited wealth, with which we are going to elaborate a pure beauty, without subjection to the dictatorship of reason and the prohibitions of a frigid rhetoric.

André Breton's Surrealist revolution attempted this adventure by saving french poetry from the tiresome academicism in which it was stuck, creating bases for the expression of an aesthetic free of subjections and precepts. Breton defined this lofty reforming mis-

sion of Surrealism with the belief in a "superior reality of certain forms of associations despised until then, in the power of the dream, in the disinterested play of thought". To identify Nadaist poetry it will be necessary that the frigid reason of intuitive sensibility alternates in the poem, simultaneously with the ardent sensibility of deductive Pure Reason. What is not this, will be Byzantine hogwash, shameful ballast of academicism; sterile artifice of decadent rhetoric; lustrous residues of unburied but already rotten aesthetics; corpses of beauty dissected and preserved by bad taste, atrophied senses, and a propensity of the neutral and eunuch spirit of Colombian people to react positively, virilely, before the pressing stimuli of the new Nadaist beauty.

fourth NADAISM AND PROSE

We have understood the mission of prose as an expressive instrument at the service of concepts. Its function is analytical and dialectical, it serves as a channel for the synthesis of thought. Science, politics, philosophy, history, literature, economics, law, and in general the experimental and spiritual sciences make use of it. Our troubling question is: What shall we Nadaists do with prose and its unsuspected resources of expression?

Impossible to answer, but also to avoid an answer. As far as possible, the Nadaist use of prose will consist in the use of Non-Rational, Non-Conceptual elements, those indeterminate, diffuse elements, lost in the sensible world, not necessarily poetic, not necessarily intellectual, which are not because they are not perceived, but which can be intuited, which pass psychologically through an invisible but felt equinoctial line of the spirit. These elements will be assigned specific functions, different from those accustomed by empirical realism, rationalism, and academic logicism. In Nadaist prose we must seek contrasts of tones, of colours, of meanings of expression;

the same effects that the visual arts and music seek to produce sensations not contained in the reality of the visible world and of forms.

Prose can no longer be a body of words organised into a rational and comprehensible whole. It must be given an irrational dismantling. The rigorous demands of intellectualism and naturalism have made us forget of the symbols where true art lies. Reality already exists unmodifiable as creation. That divine reality does not interest us because of its irrevocable and absolute character. Human reality, which is the temptation of freedom in the face of the world of the possible, constitutes the endearing concern of true art, that art confronted with the Real-Reality which is what the creative spirit discovers. Because art is, in the last instance, the Non-Divine, the Non-Real, that is, that which extracts the spirit from the chaotic world of the elements dispersed in Nature. It is not a question of embarking on a useless polemic about literary schools to confront symbolism with naturalistic realism. The dispute over their rights and wrongs does not interest us, as it is a precept of schools. What worries us is to look for an approximate definition of the meaning of a new art or the possibilities of creating it.

We do not want to look for reasons for reality, but for nonsense. In this sense, Nadaist prose will be the expression of the absurd, of the implausible. We aspire to distort reality to make it participate in its crazy and absurd possibilities, to recreate reality through the absurd freedom of the artist. We will not abandon that world that seems apparently so unreal, but whose essence is reality.

We will not abandon that world governed and dominated by a superb rationalism that wants to explain everything, and naively explains it with miserable concepts that limit that world to words, without suspecting that in the mysterious depths of that apparent world, and beyond words, there are trembling possibilities of Being. That ontological suspicion denounced by Mallarmé when he said that "be-

tween foam and infinity there are birds drunk with existence". Our mission with prose is that confrontation between existing realities coined with the stamps of reason and feeling, and its absurd possibilities. That is why we believe in the truth of the implausible and the reality of the unreal. We will exploit these elements with a new and revolutionary criterion: the Nadaist criterion. Which consists in discrediting what has been created. Opposing the creative freedom of the artist to that of God. And in that confrontation between human beauty and the Divine, to shape a non-Divine world that could also be possible.

fifth NADAISM: PRINCIPLE OF DOUBT AND OF A NEW TRUTH

We start from the basis that Colombian society is in urgent need of a transformation that cannot be put off in all its spiritual orders. This concept is neither a premise nor a premature affirmation, but a corollary derived from the concrete experience we live. In these times where human relations are simulated and accommodating to hierarchical and subaltern interests; in which the life of the Colombian being is a lie that repeats itself for itself and in relation to others; in which the citizen's compass is a pact of conformisms and shameful resignations, Descartes is still alive in us, contributing his magnificent light on our times. His great principle of Doubt constitutes the best conquest of the modern spirit against the spoils of faith and the consolations proposed by the old philosophical idealisms and religions.

Formidable is his image of the world that accepts only as true that which is previously verified by experience. We appeal to this principle of Cartesian Doubt, since all knowledge, all truth or all direction of the individual about its ends begins with doubt. In our Colombian case, an image, a true representation of our spiritual situation, is only possible if we put in doubt and in brackets

that inherited image bequeathed to us by previous generations, and that we, the new generation, have not bothered to ask ourselves if it is legitimate or bastard, indestructible or vulnerable. Nadaism, a revolutionary movement of a youth that has nothing to lose intellectually and materially, will ask this important question on behalf of this generation. And as far as possible, it will answer about the authenticity or simulation of the truths that were bequeathed to us as certain, and of which, in this crisis of Colombian culture, we begin to doubt and to consider disastrous for the scientific and liberal evolution of culture.

It is not possible to have faith in the abyss, without running the risk of that faith turning into bad faith. And if it is true that we have nothing to lose, since this society has not offered us any possibility of realising ourselves independently without the previous subjection to its prejudices and dogmas, we do have much to gain: the right to be free from the lie that is proposed to us, and for which, in the case of accepting it, society would pay us a flattering remuneration in titles, positions and money.

Within the current Colombian cultural order, any truth traditionally recognised as truth must be denied as false, at least in principle. For now, the only sense of intellectual freedom consists in denial. Submissive acceptance or passive indifference would mean claudication, resignation or cowardice. To engage in rebellion and protest against the established order and the dominant hierarchies, there is sense in putting the intellectual exercise at the service of justice, freedom and human dignity. This enterprise of the revolutionary spirit of young Colombian intellectuals marginalized by the exclusionary power of the reactionary and bourgeois classes is certainly very ambitious, but it is far from having the character of a romantic idealism. The initial perspectives present us with a difficult panorama, almost impenetrable in the Colombian conscience, since every revolution is born with the aim of destroying the prevailing myths and dog-

mas that prevent the objectification of that revolutionary spirit. The struggle will be unequal, considering the concentrated power at the disposal of our enemies: the country's economy, the universities, religion, the press and other vehicles of expression of thought. And also, the depressing ignorance of the Colombian people and their reverent credulity to myths that submerge them in a pitiful obscurantism regressive to medieval times.

Faced with an undertaking of such great proportions, we renounce to destroy the established order. We are impotent. The fundamental aspiration of Nadaism is to discredit that order. This movement has just been born in the midst of a frustrated, indifferent and lonely generation, and in a country of secular spiritual conformism. It is impossible to demand, and we do not expect, that Nadaism will be accepted immediately.

We do not delude ourselves with the hypothetical solidarity of intellectuals already consecrated by a long professional task admitted as "Sublime" by the naivety of the country, and by the bad taste of its people. We reject in advance this suspicious solidarity that will not come anyway. They know that if they retract their old positions in culture, the society that feeds them would withdraw its trust and support, and condemn them to anonymity and contempt. That is why they prefer to continue manufacturing their abject work observing the precepts of correctness, style, ideas and emotions of the bourgeoisie conforming a culture of Order and superior elites. With each verse, song, novel, story or literary criticism, these intellectuals are paying in instalments the mortgage of the thought they committed to defend the interests and principles of the traditional Order. To separate themselves from this conduct of debtors of the past would imply for them the danger of being judged as traitors to society, the mother country, religion, truth and beauty. In the face of such solitude: rejected by the ruling classes, combated and persecuted, and before the complacent and contemptuous indifference of our con-

secrated intellectuals incapable of a manly rectification in the name of freedom of the spirit; and while deserving the support of a revolutionary youth that has lived marginalised by lack of opportunities and close to the frustration of its great creative powers, Nadaism will be open to all nonconformities and all irreverence of cultural, aesthetic, social and religious type.

These nonconformities will have a wide welcome in the Nada magazine, bulletin of the Nadaist Movement. Without being necessarily Nadaist, these nonconformisms serve the aims of the Movement, since they fluctuate between Nadaism and other indispensable and active revolutionary forces against the stratified values of Order and tradition. By pretending to discredit dogmas of all kinds, we cannot fall back on a new dogmatism: on the dogma of the Nadaist revolution. The way of controversy is thus open. Nadaism is not, therefore, a closed system incapable of evolving towards a superior culture. By the fact of being born, it implies that it begins to evolve and to fulfil as far as possible its proposed ends. It will decline when these ends give birth to a new culture and then close its Positive Negative cycle. Nadaism ceases to be the other, to be what it is to come. This new spirit does not appear structured in our predictions with very visible forms, but it will be in any case contrary to the one attacked by the Nadaist revolution.

We will have failed if our principles are not within the immediate and concrete possibilities of these ends. However difficult the realisation of this discrediting enterprise may be, we will not desist, for our confidence does not lie in any faith that exceeds our vital and concrete possibilities. Because we are going to work on the modelable matter of the Colombian being and of the society in which he lives, or better, of the society in which he suffers, despairs, and in which he finally dies, without being able to say before that, what life was good for.

sixth NADAISM: LEGITIMATE COLOMBIAN REVOLUTION

The Nadaist movement is not a foreign imitation of previous literary schools or aesthetic revolutions. It does not follow European models. It sinks its roots in the human being, in society and in Colombian culture. Our enemies are going to condemn it a priori, looking for illegitimate kinships with similar revolutionary movements, for example in surrealism, futurism, nihilism, existentialism, etc. Surely one revolution resembles another in its principles, its methods and its ends, and is inspired by its similar causes that condition the insurgence of a new spirit, on the decadent spoils of old forms of Being and Culture. They will condemn us as traitors to the “Historical Reality”, to the “Autochthonous”, to an incorruptible traditional aesthetics, in the name of moravalues, to conclude that there is no right to write and think in a Nadaist way, because it does not correspond to the medium nor to the epoch.

In opposition to that, the representatives of the Order will exhibit a Virgin America, culturally unconquered, full of natural beauty, of ancestral myths, of wild prairies where the indigenous chiefs ride on the back of leopards, of silver rivers under the rising sun, of pre-columbian cultures, of the original American human being, of the American slime. And that this specific problematic of the New World, this historical and sociological realism must shape and structure our ideology and our aesthetics. They will demand that we “write and think American”, and they will qualify Nadaism as a posture, or better, as an imposture. The excesses of American nature, its splendour, its magical original beauty, the lyrical alienation of the landscape, its external attributes do not interest us as art material. We care above all about the problems of the Colombian individuals, their spiritual situation. Not the scenery or the scenarios where their drama is played out. We agree that America is a new continent. Five centuries have not yet passed since its discovery. Compared to the youth of America, a millenary culture gravitates

over Europe, which Oswald Spengler calls “Decadence of the West”. We have not yet reached the age of reason given by evolved cultures. We are in the age of ecstasy and contemplation before the Eternal beauty of Nature, the divine beauty.

Our birth as a culture is an abortion spawned by “Mother Spain”, mother of all the bastard idealisms of Europe: Catholicism, feudalism, monarchy. That spiritual legacy was brought to us by the caravels of the conquistadors: a religion that shapes a dogmatic, obscurantist mentality, refractory to the freedoms of the spirit, and that chains the human being to ignorance and to the superstitious fears of transcendent idealisms. And a language without universal culture, since the Spanish Golden Age, the greatest enterprise of the Iberian spirit, produced a literature at the service of religion and the nobility. On the other hand, feudalism and the modern byproducts of the nobility are still in force among us, in the form of economic systems of exploitation and abysmal class differences, with the only difference that in the new democracy the systems of oppression have been changed: the whip for the salary, the Count for the driver, the Servant is today called worker, the Archbishop is still called Archbishop, and the Landowner keeps his name and his estates. All that which we recognise as the heritage of Hispanicity weighs like a burden on our society, preventing an evolution of culture in direct relation to the scientific evolution of the modern world.

We are still spiritually anchored in the Middle Ages. And the Colombian humankind lives, because of education, accommodating himself to retrospective systems, drowning in the myth of Hispanicity, in educational systems of medieval, confessional type, with limited and sporadic liberal and rationalist variations. By rejecting the Hispanic heritage, we rectify the old Americanist criterion that a nation is young by virtue of its landscapes. It is so by virtue of its ideas and its spiritual evolution. Decrepitude is not a concept of the old age of the physical world, but the expira-

tion of the resigned spirit, incapable of evolving towards new forms of life and culture. America has been old since its birth. Because of its discoverers and their heritage, its birth meant for History a kind of death. Or more precisely, an imperfect abortion for life. In such a way that it has not been born culturally on its own, nourished as it is by a tired and sterilising old age transmitted by the umbilical cord of its language and beliefs. Faced with the dilemma of being or not being, of choosing a separate culture with a universal meaning, what does it mean for the culture of America to carve toads, revive myths, increase superstitions, retain forgotten time, prehistory, if its culture still does not count or determine anything in the evolution of contemporary ideas?

To stop in the past with a contemplative amazement, evidences the complex of America before an evolved world that decides its destiny and its historical and biological survival, by means of the current social revolutions and scientific conquests of the space that dispute the political predominance of the Earth. America cannot anchor itself in the regional, in the folkloric, in the mythical tradition. That would be an aspect of its intellectual and artistic development, but it cannot decide its destiny and its history on these inferior forms of its progress. America must overcome the complex of its spiritual infantilism. Otherwise we would remain in the Age of the Frog and the Lagoon, while the scientific technique has fixed stars in the cosmic space. No nation, no continent old or new, can choose its destiny separately. The slightest ripple of the sea of contemporary History shakes with its movement the future of nations, and decides their fate or their misfortune. A solitary culture, detached from universal interests, is impossible to conceive. No one can evade or avoid the role it plays in the modern world. Everything is related in a profound way in this epoch in which the simple human being embodies a mission in History: its action or its indifference implies a conduct of immense ethical responsibilities, and by accepting or denying it, he saves or condemns himself.

We can no longer accept as a moral sense of existence, that agonistic thought of Kierkegaard: “Whatever the world may be, I am left with an original spontaneity that I do not intend to change for the sake of the welfare of the world”.

seventh THE IMPOSTURE OF COLOMBIAN EDUCATION

We can hold responsible for our cultural backwardness and the spiritual mediocrity of the country to the educational systems in force in Colombia: dogmatic education governed by confessional and scholastic principles. Both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox State have forbidden free examination and free research, decreeing a rigid inquisitorial censorship of modern ideas. In this they show the insecurity before a rationalist liberal education, open to all research. But this would bring, naturally, dire consequences for the stability of the social order.

Colombian education cyclically suffers the cuts of certain political, economic, social and artistic theories that are debated in modern culture. Certain authors and certain doctrines are not studied or analysed merely for discussion purposes, even to demonstrate the falsity of these ideas. It is enough not to teach them for students to ignore them. This is the bad faith of our educational system, which deceives the students and disappoints them in their investigative spirit: they close the way to them.

In exchange for this official education directed by the Church and the governing party, an elaborate, limited teaching is offered, with specific interests on culture. On the other hand, the dogmatic inquisitorial criterion that rules in public and university libraries is a reflection of the medieval education we received. It is inconceivable that there are libraries with sections called “Hell”, where the most fundamental books for cultural and scientific research are isolated.

These books are denied and forbidden to students, for fear that their ideas will “lose their souls”. Also in public libraries, reading books must be selected with an orthodox and confessional criterion, with the prior censorship of the curia that ultimately says which are the books of “sound morals” that do not have “corrupting ideas that poison the youth”.

In other words, the Colombian youth is being educated with the same obscurantist and inquisitorial systems of the Middle Ages. This education is deprived of the possibilities of knowing the truth. It is a failure. A discipline of simulation. Of prefabricated interests to shape the Colombian humankind according to the prevailing concepts. Tragic individual and social consequences are brought about by an education that has been elaborated beforehand, selected. When the individual reacts to the educational pressure and ventures into free research to know as true what he verifies with its direct experience, then contradictions arise, confusion, despair of the spirit that does not find its way, nor its objective, nor its ethical purposes.

All idealisms collapse, and with them, those naive hopes that were placed on the world, on life, on culture and on transcendence. The Colombian individual, in the middle of its clumsy and dark path, is lost in the most desolate skepticism, because of the enslaving and tyrannical educational systems. From this bewilderment arises claudication or abandonment, two ways of committing moral or intellectual suicide. Claudication by refusing to accept a culture elaborated with sophisms of distraction; and abandonment of all hope, of the struggle, of the dynamism that is extinguished and withdraws in a solitary and infertile anguish. The individual has no choice but to give up its studies in a revolted decision against the culture of simulation offered to him, or to adapt itself to the narrow moulds of the spiritual conformism of that culture. This shows that whatever their choice, the Colombian youth always chose failure.

eighth NADAISM IS A STANCE, NOT A METAPHYSICS

We have renounced the hope of transcending under the promises of any religion or philosophical idealism. The concrete experience is enough for us, immediate in its infinite unlimited possibilities and values. For us Nadaists, this is the world and this is humankind. Other hermeneutics on these evident truths lack “human” sense: abstractions and entelechies on the Being of humans fall into the domain of pure speculation and metaphysical symbolism, natural product of human longing to transcend its concrete entity, and fix it in an ideal form, beyond all spatial and temporary limits. This yearning corresponds to its idealistic and poetic nature that wants to crystallise the essence of Being in the absolute, in the Eternal. To propose this illusion for after death is the mission of religions.

We believe that the destiny of humankind is terrestrial and temporal, it is realised on concrete planes, and only a creative dynamism on the matter of the world gives the measure of their spiritual mission, fixing their thought in the History of human culture. The human being is the Absolute between the accident of its beginning and its end. This criterion excludes any possibility of transcendence. The human being chooses over its immediate possibilities this ground: immanence. The Nadaist Movement is a temporary position before the evolution of the prevailing spiritual order in Colombia. Therefore it is neither a philosophy nor a metaphysics. Pure speculation would lead us to the formation of an image of the world, which instead of uniting the individual destiny to the historical destiny of humankind, establishes in front of it a distance, a fundamental separation. Metaphysics is an investigation of death and of the transcendent possibilities of existence. Or rather, it is an evasion of the Being towards the Being that is known. It is therefore the creation of a world for itself, completely alien to the historical becoming that is the exclusive terrain of politics, which means sharing the World with Others. Consequently, the only “utility” of metaphysics is thinking about death, because think-

ing about life is, precisely, politics. Because of its essential character on ideas that are irreducible to life, pure speculation does not interest us as an aspiration of transcendence. For never does the image of the world that results from the metaphysical exercise lead to social and terrestrial solutions of justice, perfection or human happiness. On the contrary, its consequence is despair and disorder, and in this is evidenced a failure that reveals two things to us: Our impotence to know the Absolute —satanic summoning of the Promethean spirit— and our helplessness in the face of death. From this dramatic crossroads emerges this truth: existence as a failure of humankind before God. On this plane of solitude, the individual acquires its tragic measure, the desperate fruit of knowledge. But this despair is gratuitous, a priori, for this reason: death is a pure question, an abstraction, for it is not real as an experience of the living, due to its character as an ideal element of knowledge.

That is why we believe that the path to transcendence begins with an attraction to life, or in any case with a renunciation. The concrete being moves with its metaphysical restlessness towards Non-Being. The sentimentalism of a human being, unsure of itself, makes it take refuge in the consolation of the myths that idealism or religion create for its fear, with hypothetical solutions to answer the mysterious question that death opens. They transmute the immediate, the immanence, in exchange for the possibility that underlies the human yearning to transcend, for the fear that everything ends here, in the Great Near.

For some, it is religion that signals this refuge. For others, it is a philosophy of despair that proposes a romantic idealism consisting of a transmutation of values of the spirit and culture so that they transcend in some form or indestructible force after death: a kind of reincarnation without body, immaterial but entitative, since they do not accept that existence, lived as a superior function of the spirit, collapses miserably with the accident of death, like an old and worn-out

vessel that was consumed in the accumulation of those forces. These are religious and spiritualistic attitudes. Nadaism shifts its metaphysical and anthropological concerns towards a conception of social being framed within immanence. Its ethics will therefore be an ethics for the earth, for history, for existence itself.

ninth FORBIDDEN TO COMMIT SUICIDE

In spite of everything, we are not going to kill ourselves. Nadaism is a vitalism that limits for this time and for this world all our possibilities of historical fixation. We live only once, and we die only once. Existence is a great event. We are not going to deny it. This is neither a philosophy of despair nor of death, but a conduct of life. Franz Kafka advised for an ethics of existence: "Do not despair, not even over the fact that you don't despair. Just when everything seems over with, new forces come marching up, and precisely that means that you are alive".

The idea of suicide is something that does not fit within our moral, not religious, sentiments, but rather within that morality inspired by nature to which we are faithful by philosophical conviction, by devotion to that minimum of possibilities and complacencies to which every human being is entitled by the fact that it is a human being.

Every day we renew this faith on the spoils of the old beliefs that made us esteem life by other concepts: the fear of hell, obedience to divine laws, the feeling of guilt congenital to humankind for the original sin. But when one consults one's resources to defend oneself from so much sophistic poison that alienates the conscience, there is the beautiful law of nature in which we have trusted. I think, then, that the window of my room is too high, and that clears the fears and doubts involving my will to live. Because the fear of my freedom is, ultimately, fear of emptiness.

Nadaism rejects suicide within its value system, considering it as an attack against the integrity of the Self, the negative act of existence. No despair, no matter how extreme it may be, no fear of ending here, no moral or material expiration justifies it. The fact of living is infinitely superior to any failure, because in that failure only one possibility ends, while life is the permanent acceptance of infinite possibilities.

tenth TOWARDS A NEW ETHIC

We aspire, as a possibility, for the Nadaist Writer to be a Writer-Delinquent. Or better, that aesthetics and ethics play in the world of its choice as correlative and complementary values. In such a way that in choosing beauty he can also choose crime, without contradiction in these two acts or the possibility that the artist can be judged or condemned with the prohibitive laws of an external and Universal morality. His passion for beauty can lead him to its passion for crime, without coercion or vestiges of remorse. It is not a question of postulating a system of values for vulgar criminals, nor for the old protégés of rhetoric and classical beauty. This is an ethic for the Nadaists who will always rise above remorse and above the ordinary sins that we are obliged to despise. For us there are no coercive walls of the penal code that oppose the freedom of the artist to a world of bourgeois respects and prohibitions. We claim for ourselves the privilege of extraordinary crimes, those that are not contemplated in the legal formalism. Someday we will be judged, if we are going to sin, by the codes of the new Nadaist ethics.

eleventh LONELINESS AND FREEDOM

It will be necessary to talk about the artist's solitude and its origins. We often complain that we artists are sad and lonely people. In this complaint the artist formulates a weakness on their sensitive na-

ture, and appeals to the compassion of the world. For they feel misunderstood, sacrificed, burned in the fire of their creative passion, reduced to creating beauty within impregnable walls of solitude. Therein lies the origin of their evil. Their guilty choice. They themselves choose solitude in the midst of humankind. They feel themselves symbols that surpass the human condition; they voluntarily determine themselves as an abstraction; they assume distances and perspectives on the concrete world that they identify with vulgarity, misery, cretinism, the popular, and they rise above the stupidity of that “subhuman” world, in a purifying impulse towards the heights in which they stop feeling the gravitation of the earth, to fabricate their incorruptible message in the sky of pure and liberated essences.

By achieving this liberation through a mirage of values, the artist becomes the archetype of perfection, a mortal among the gods, or if you prefer, a god among mortals. Artists deify their human nature, wishing to make it participate in holiness and heroism, abstract types of perfection and greatness. This choice of themselves, in which the artist prefers and chooses itself against the world and above the world, leads the artist inexorably to a destiny of perpetual solitude. Bourgeois and capitalist society has been lavish in the harvest of these platonic and solitary monsters. This solitude is equivalent in the piano of human relations to immanence. The artist has only one way to save itself, to elude this solitude, transcending through freedom, fixing its existential roots and commitments in the immediate world.

Because no one can feel alone if someone has before themselves the presence of another person who treads the same ground, with a more or less common destiny in the face of life and death. Loneliness is, in such a way, a mirage, a metaphysical impossibility. We can hardly conceive of a solitude of the human being before God, but this search for God builds a bridge that starts from the human longing to crystallise a transcendence in the Divine, and that must end on the extreme shore, where humanity surprisingly encounters its own image.

In the failure before God, humankind finds itself in the discovery of that tragic and exalting truth of its human condition of being human, a simple human being among mortals. From then on, the land it despised is exalted as its paradise, and bridges are built, no longer on the adventure of the void, like works of metaphysical engineering, but on the concrete planes of a morality that starts from humanity and ends in humanity.

In this way the false foundations of solitude are destroyed, and death itself appears as a shared act, when the life that precedes it has been a projection of spiritual values in History. The spiritual condition of the artists faces the dangers of this double solitary temptation rooted in the search for transcendent values and in the creation of beauty itself. The aspiration for a false inhuman beauty betrays them. The artist eludes humanity and its commitments to it, for fear of muddying in this contact the incorruptible product of “ideal” beauty. In their onanistic act, they deny humanity the voluptuous possibilities of participating in their creation. In this denial, their solitude sprouts like a fruit. And yet it is to humanity itself that they appeal to confess their solitude, and to claim from it a pity for their genius. In this drama the artist is the only actor, and plays at once the dramatic role of the victim and the derisory one of the executioner.

By separating the artist from the human being, the latter distances itself from the former. But the human being is not here a sacrificed person, but only a spectator touched by the tragedy of the artist. The human being is there, silent, open as a saving possibility, waiting for the call of the artist, who has only this transcendent possibility to save itself. Reaching the human being by the path of its freedom engaged in its destiny, the artist’s solitude would be broken, as if broken by a blow.

The artist could lose itself if it denies itself this possibility, if it does not take this step towards its own liberation. Since solitude as a sys-

tem of life and a basis for the evaluation of human acts, creates a dangerous drama for the artist: the drama of the Consciousness-Limit. Because in this Consciousness-Limit there is nothing and no one, there are no Others for one to know that one has chosen freely in front of them. It would be nothing more than a gratuitous act in nothingness, the deceptive mirage of an apparent freedom. And in this failure of freedom, the artist sinks into itself, and with it, the shifting world that sustains it. Authentic intellectual freedom is given, then, as the overcoming of a human resistance that opposes it as its possibility of denying or affirming it. In no way can it be given with reference to nothingness or to the absolute that determines its negation. Freedom is, in synthesis, an act that commits itself. It is not a feeling, nor an idea, nor a passion. It is an act poured into the world of History. It is, in essence, the negation of solitude.

The solitary artist should not ask for mercy from the world it betrays. Instead of that cowardice, it must choose itself as a human being and a committed artist, if the artist wants to take the leap over the solitude that destroys it. That leap can only be taken to land on its feet in the world of humankind, in the very heart of its essence. It cannot be taken over humankind because of the danger of eluding certain laws of gravity of the spirit, which could throw us with an inhuman and mysterious force into the seduction of the angelic.

twelfth NADAISM AND THE COCACOLOS²

I agree with the Cocacolos in this truth that I discover in their adorable instinctive behaviour. One should not accept the world as it

² A derogatory slang name used in the 50s and 60s in Colombia to refer to groups of upper- middle class young people, mainly conservative, who jokingly are said to drink only alcohol free beverages at their parties. t/n

is, but as one wants it to be. Which generation is so important that it is destined to be the generation of Nadaism? I will try to give an approximate definition of the personality that shapes and distinguishes a Cocacolo.

The Cocacolo is an Adonic type who has not reached the age of reason, in the sense that it has not accepted life as a serious event, with duties, responsibilities and commitments. They feel deeply the passion of living. It is an existence empty of ideals, closer to emotions than to reflection. They exchanged, in an excellent business, metaphysics and heaven for sports and dancing; churches for Olympic stadiums; the library for the tennis court; academic classrooms for the film projector. They care more for their external appearance than for the inner life. They do not care about the ascetic path that leads to the perfection of the Soul. Instead of the arduous path of virtue they chose the satisfaction of natural instincts.

For them the foolish phrase of Socrates: "Know thyself" means nothing. Death is not for them a door that opens transcendent possibilities, but a grim renunciation of dancing, kisses, drunkenness, the luminous McGregor jackets, the latest fashion, the trip to the Moon, the triumph of the Bolsheviks.

Perfumed, seductive, they suffer the ecstasy of the bolero, and feel the voluptuous fascination of rock and roll. They are capable of all the brutal excesses and generous renunciations. They naively identify good and evil, the vertigo of heroic death and stupid death. They are indistinctly cheerful when dreaming and when waking up. They lack concrete ideals. They have no path, no goals, no direction. They live lost in the present. They do not transcend under spiritual norms. For them, life is the immediate: a passing, a leaving, a being. They have no destination or projection. They do not go anywhere, they do not come from anywhere else. They stop in sensual ecstasy and idle life. They have no answer to any question. But they ask

themselves nothing. They are not troubled by the idea of Original Sin nor by the scientific hypotheses of Darwin or the Creationists about the origin of human beings. They care neither for the first causes nor for the ulterior ends of existence. They are more interested in sensations than in meanings. They faint at moments of tenderness. They do not resist the crudeness of erotic life. They are so dependent on their parents, both financially and spiritually, that they have ended up falling in love with them, contracting the Oedipus complex (young men) and the Electra complex (young women). But they have built their own hedonistic morality against their family puritanism.

Their intellectual ideal is to be freethinkers, but they have no free thoughts, neither of the others. They like to be communists and existentialists to disobey their parents, and so that their friends think they are nonconformists and revolutionaries. In the possibility of choosing their formula of love, they would choose free love. They are healthy and sensual, romantic in a passionate way. They are libertines in the social and worldly circles, but chaste in the depths of their hearts. They have no doubts. They are unaware of the abysses of suffering and misery. They are not disappointed because they expect nothing. They make heroic revolutions and at the time of victory they renounce their conquests and make a pact with the conformism and mediocrity of their enemies.

The Cocacolos are that. They belong to an unnamed generation that bursts like a clarity at the end of the long night of the colonial bourgeoisie. They are born while a decadent society is in agony, collapsing with its idols, its adorations, its aesthetic and political myths and the naïve faith of its elders. Faced with this social catastrophe, with this disintegration of the structure of the old bourgeois order, this generation remains undecided, afraid to enter history, to be a historical generation. This generation of young mental eunuchs has only one way to assume its own historical conscience: to be the Nadaist Generation! For today nobody believes in them, but what is

unjustified: they themselves do not believe in themselves. Their old tutors and Masters have been deceiving them with their intellectual despotism and their moral intransigence. Their spiritual conductors have hidden from them their power, their natural intelligence, their great immaculate heart. Relegated to oblivion and impotence, victims of contempt, underestimated in their great possibilities, they have taken refuge in a sterile conformism, unmoved by ideas, beauty and ethical values. Because they know, as if by an illuminated presentiment of saving intuition, that their path lies beyond those morals, those idealisms and the false beauty proposed to them by those who melancholically reach the twilight of life, with no other inheritance to bequeath than their own failure.

Hostile to the acceptance of that inheritance disguised with an order of apparently stable values, the generation of the Cocacolos has renounced to the good, to virtue, to order and to beauty, because it knows that those values represent bastard and anachronistic idealisms that demand the renunciation of freedom, of the world and of the passion of living. It could be said that this generation is mortgaged to silence, waiting for its first opportunity to break the bonds of tradition, and to launch itself explosively into the great adventure of its freedom.

Their last fifteen years were years of absences and conformism. But it is not entirely their fault. Society fears them and controls them with its catechisms, its coercive laws, its puritanical morals. Education, family, religion, politics have been fulfilling this inquisitorial and sedative function over the almost inert spirit of the youth, achieving so disastrously their ends of oppression, that this youth has prostrated itself naively before false idols and fetishisms, acclimatised in inaction and indifference, like loyal disciples of the philosophy of respect. The generation of the Cocacolos has been born and raised in difficult times in which no true faith, no saving revolution has been possible, because society has not allowed any faith or revolution in

its name, but against it. Such is the insurgent origin of Nadaism. For youth has witnessed the opprobrium of political, familial and educational tyrannies, constrained by a uniform morality that sacrifices its intellectual and revolutionary hierarchies.

One day the cocacolos shook themselves, on May 10,³ unable to resist any more abominations, and demonstrated their passion for certain ideals, to be aware of their dignity as free beings and of their great power of historical decision. That day they contributed their blood and the heroic sense of sacrifice to overthrow a military tyranny that in the end was a disgrace that defrauded the faith of Colombians and covered freedom and culture with ignominy. That shaking of the Cocacolos made the armoured gear of the military government tremble from the root to the height, which postponed the need for an economic and spiritual revolution that never came, and that still cannot be postponed. That day, the Cocacolo became respectable and admirable for the country. But it was, after all, a leap into the void, in which nothing was gained historically as a generation. At least it was left with the prestige of its value, the eminent danger it implies for the current order.

The Cocacolos therefore form a generation that I call from now on: The Generation of the Threat. Let's assume this title and answer for it. In the cyclical and evolutionary displacement of History, it represents nothing but a biological generation.

³ The government of the General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla ended on May 10, 1957, when he was forced to hand over the power to a military board while a National Front was established. This marked the end of the only official military dictatorship in Colombia and its ending was linked to the desire of the General to participate in democratic elections and be reelected. His decline occurred in the midst of social and economic failure and the common distrust in traditional parties and the church. t/n

Nadaism formulates a path for them. Can it be a historical generation? That depends on their choice. And their only chance to save themselves is by choosing Nadaism as their spiritual destiny and revolutionary mission, by accepting permanent rebellion and destructive passion as a system of action, of ideas and of life. Their alternative is this: Accept Nadaism to save themselves, or reject it to commit historical suicide. The Cocacolos must choose. But let each one assume the responsibility and the risks of their choice on their own, without the advice of their parents, their confessors and their Masters. They would alienate their freedom and their conscience with sophistry.

thirteenth WE WILL NOT LEAVE A FAITH INTACT, NOR AN IDOL IN ITS PLACE

Colombian society needs the Nadaist revolution. Destroying an order is at least as difficult as creating it. We aspire to discredit the existing one because of the impossibility of doing both, that is, the destruction of the established order and the creation of a new one.

We have neither the economic resources nor the human elements to carry out such a transforming enterprise. In attempting this Revolutionary Movement, we fulfil that mission of life that is cyclically renewed, and that is, in synthesis, to fight to free the spirit from resignation and to defend the permanence of certain adorations from the unstable.

In this society in which "lies have become order", there is no one to triumph over but oneself. And fighting against others means teaching them to triumph over themselves. In proposing this Movement to the Colombian youth to engage in a revolutionary struggle against the current spiritual and cultural order of the country, I sacrifice, as much as it does, what that society could offer us in exchange for our

silence. In the alternative of giving up to deserve the honours and rewards of the society whose lie we are going to fight or of renouncing it to remain in martyrdom, we choose martyrdom as a vocation, as the purest and most disinterested act of our intellectual freedom. Having accepted this decision, the mission is this: not to leave an untouched faith, nor an idol in its place. All that is consecrated as adorable by the prevailing order in Colombia will be examined and revised. Only that which is oriented towards the revolution and which founds, by its indestructible consistency, the foundations of the new society will be preserved.

The rest will be removed and destroyed.

How far will we go? The end does not matter, from the point of view of the struggle.

Because to not arrive is also the fulfilment of a destiny.

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POESÍA Y REVOLUCIÓN

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Y NUESTRO DESPRECIO
POR USTED ES INVITARLO
A PARTICIPAR EN NUESTRA
DESGRACIA Y OBLIGARLO
A RENUNCIAR A TODA
ESPERANZA DE SER SALVADIX

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