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The Banality as a Mood of Contemporary Society in Contrast to the Artist's Mood

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Abstract: Contemporary times witness significant transformations in economic organisation, deeply influencing social dynamics and emotional frameworks. This study aimed to elucidate banality as the prevailing mood of contemporary society, delineating two perspectives through art: one defined by a banal emotional framework and the other advocating innocence. Inspired by Heidegger and Nietzsche, an inquiry unfolded to reveal the emotional and affective aspects of the examined phenomenon, enriched by perspectives from acclaimed artists. Consequently, the findings established banality affective disposition characteristics as a hallmark of contemporary comprehensiveness, encompassing instrumental engagement with the world, acceptance, and incapacity to perceive its banal condition. In contrast, the banality of the broader world was juxtaposed with that of the artist, who focused on innocence as a manifestation of their being in the world. The outlined approach derived, in methodological terms, from a phenomenological-hermeneutic procedure anchored in the

Heideggerian framework, which analysed the "mood" (Stimmung) as a determinant in the interpretation and unfolding of the world. The findings proposed alternative understandings of contemporary life as the result of the conquest of the banality of average mood and contrast it with the character of the artist who resists falling into the overarching banality of our time. The results reflected the difficulty of the current era, from which hopeful aspects of transformation are not evident. Conversely, resistance is concentrated in isolated occurrences that reclaim life and its evolution. This work sought to establish new avenues of research that enable the exploration of multiple contemporary phenomena, in addition to indicating paths of inquiry that link the thoughts of artists and their expressions.

Keywords: banality, art, mood temperament, innocence.

Introduction

The world is undergoing a time, perhaps unlike any other in human history, characterised by a capitalist system that has assumed significantly complex configurations, permeating various human relations with nature, with other humans, their culture, and existential projects (Saldanha, 2020). The peculiarity lies in its influence being such that even the deepest affective structure of humanity has transformed to adopt a particular form coherent with the model. This understanding horizon has contaminated both the ephemeral and the profound, traversing the entirety of life experience, to the extent that escape from this relationship, or what was once considered sacred, seems impossible (Gog, 2020).

To analyse this phenomenon, Martin Heidegger's concept of mood or Stimmung was employed to characterise the average person's mood in contemporary society as banal, contrasting it not as its opposite but as a distinct perspective on life, with innocence as the artist's mood. By employing Heideggerian categories, authentic artists and artworks will be distinguished from "artistic" expressions resting within the same banality horizon. It is essential, therefore, to delve into the characterisation of Stimmung and, simultaneously, to explore the manifestations of artists like Rotzko, Van Gogh, and Munch to recognise the characteristics of the innocence mood. Lastly, drawing from Nietzsche, particularly his concepts of lightness and heaviness, acceptance will be showcased as a radically differentiating factor between the two moods presented.

These analyses posit a form of understanding of the contemporary world and art as expressions of two radically different moods. The primary interest of this research focuses on understanding the importance of making evident the growing phenomenon of banality and how it has advanced in its unfolding, conquering the deepest realms of human affectivity. The questions guiding the phenomenological procedure are: What characteristics does the mood of contemporary times possess? What are the differences between the average mood and the mood of the artist? Has the contemporary artist succumbed to banality? These questions highlight areas of inquiry not addressed in current literature, nor do they link perspectives of artists to interpret the phenomenon of art as mood. The most significant references have been formulated by philosophers, leaving artists as figures to be interpreted through their works rather than through their explicit thoughts on art. This underscores a difference between the eventuality of the work and the interpretation of their thoughts. Phenomenology within the

framework of Heidegger, as well as Nietzsche's philosophy, represent a departure from metaphysics and positivism, implying that what guides their questioning is the appearance of phenomena rather than the absence of debates. Therefore, following the framework of phenomenology, the work developed an analysis of the banality phenomenon within the interpretive horizon that enables mood.

Literature Review

The affective disposition, Befindlichkeit, the mood – Stimmung

In the characterisation of the existential constitution of being-there (*Dasein*) in "Being and Time," Heidegger initially expresses the difference between the affective disposition and psychological moods (Elpidorou & Freeman, 2015). The "affective disposition" is a clear expression of the structural openness in which *Dasein* finds itself thrown. Referring to this ontological openness, Heidegger asserts: "Open does not mean known as such. And precisely in the most indifferent and anonymous everydayness, the being of *Dasein* can erupt as the Factum 'what it is and must be'" (Heidegger, 1989, p. 159).

This manner in which *Dasein* appears in the world is the condition of openness. As *Dasein* is in the world, thus, it is inherently predisposed to possibility as the most lucid manifestation of its inherent capacity to exist (Filiz, 2023). *Dasein* is, above all, the possibility of being, a project thrown into-the-world. The particular manner in which each *Dasein* assumes its open project in the world is possible due to its inherent condition of being a project. What this perspective from fundamental ontology implies is a properly structural, a priori character, not a specific psychological condition of a particular *Dasein*. Thus, in paragraph 29, Heidegger specifies:

The affective disposition not only opens Dasein in its condition of being-thrown and in its being-referred-to the always-already-open world with its being, but it itself is the existential mode of being in which Dasein constantly surrenders itself to the "world" and allows itself to be so affected by it that it, in a certain way, eludes itself. The existential constitution of this eluding will be elucidated with the phenomenon of falling.

Heidegger (2003) points out affective disposition and understanding as "the two constitutive and co-original forms of being there" (p. 158). These forms are directly related to openness and facticity. Hence, the affective disposition plays a crucial role as a framework that opens humanity to the world, enabling individuals to be influenced by it, thereby facilitating their presence in the world amidst their thrownness. It becomes evident, therefore, that the human (*Dasein* - being-there) possesses existential structures that characterize him as a project thrown into a world in which he opens up to possibilities. One of the fundamental structures is *Befindlichkeit* (affective disposition), which enables *Dasein* to be "affected" by the world.

This notion (*Befindlichkeit*) holds great relevance for Heidegger in his early work; however, later, from the 1930s onwards, the concept of *Stimmung* will play a much more prominent role (Escudero, 2009). Initially, the mood can be understood as the specific affectation that *Dasein* undergoes at a particular moment; thus, the affective disposition is the

ontological platform that enables *Dasein* to be affected in one way or another (Zhong et al., 2024). However, the mood will take on a series of nuances that are important to mention.

Firstly, it is necessary to indicate that the mood becomes fundamental from the work of 1936–1938 *Contributions to Philosophy (GA Beiträge zur Philosophie Vom Ereignis)*, where the importance of the term *Stimmung* as a central element of phenomenological interpretation becomes evident (Przymuszała, 2022). In the *Contributions*, Heidegger manifests confidence in a new beginning, mainly characterized by a fundamental mood. The mood then refers to a structural and therefore comprehensive experience of openness to the world and "describes" the way in which *Dasein* understands and relates to the world. It is important to note that this mood is not limited to a momentary state in which one moves from one state to another, as a particular experience, but in its broader sense, it is transversal to the understanding of the world (Thonhauser, 2021).

The mood factually defines human activity in the world, the way in which it projects itself as possibility and as facticity. "Moods overwhelm us; how they reveal to us our affective disposition is something that is not in our power" (Held, 2015, p. 19). The preceding description suggests that moods are not interpreted in the same manner as psychological will, where there is a deliberate choice to be in one mood or another. Mood distinctly transcends a psychological state; it is precisely a structural phenomenon.

Thus understood, the mood is not a melody of feelings that arise by chance and only serve as accompaniment. When we characterize philosophy in terms of the willing corresponding [to the call], we are by no means pretending to abandon thought to the whims of chance and the oscillations of sentimental states (Heidegger, 2004, p. 57).

Thus, the mood will become a central concept for Heidegger in understanding the different epochs of the world and as the starting point for a new beginning. However, as presented in the paper, the contemporary world is still far from a new beginning.

Methodology

According to the teachings of philosophical hermeneutics – whose main representative was Hans Georg Gadamer in his work "Truth and Method" (1964) –, each act of understanding (*Verstehen*) is also a dialogue where a central question catalyses and propels the exploration of potential interpretations of the conceptual significance enshrined within texts, achieved through a dialectical merging of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*), which allows for the explication of meaning. Essential and inseparable to the hermeneutical situation of each problematisation and interpretation of such meaning is the so-called history of the impact (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) and reception of the works in question. This historical situation therefore determines both the methodological framework of the investigative project and delineates the structure of its *modus operandi*.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the importance of interpreting and understanding the human experience within its cultural and historical context is emphasized. It is recognized that our understanding of the world is mediated by our biases, prior knowledge, and language, and these mediations must be considered when endeavouring to grasp reality. One of the central

concepts in hermeneutic phenomenology is that of "pre-understanding" (*Vorverständnis*), which refers to the pre-existing conceptions individuals have about the world and which influence how they interpret new experiences. Therefore, the hermeneutic process involves a constant dialogue between the interpreter's horizon of understanding and the horizon of meaning of the text or phenomenon being interpreted.

In this study, the framework was situated within Martin Heidegger's phenomenology, utilising the hermeneutical horizon of interpretation, employing the notion of "mood" (*stimmung*) from Heidegger's work and the Nietzschean concept of "innocence" (*Unschuld*), along with perspectives on art from significant artists such as Rothko, Van Gogh, and Munch. These were employed to explore contemporary manifestations of the banality, with the aim to identify alternative occurrences that transcend this condition.

Results and Discussion

The Banality as a Mood Characteristic of the Contemporary World

As depicted, mood denotes a foundational state through which humans perceive their world, engage with it, and evolve within it. In this sense, the mood affects the entirety of the possibilities of relating to the world. Heidegger refers to different moods that configure various moments in history. In his 1956 lecture "What is Philosophy?", Heidegger gives considerable importance to the notion of *Stimmung*, identifying three moods that highlight the understanding of different world configurations (Kahlmeyer-Mertens & dos Santos, 2020). As he presents it, philosophising implies attending to the call of the being of the entity; this attendance also implies directing oneself. In sum, philosophizing is understood as a correspondence to the call of being (Heidegger, 2004). Each of the "epochs" analysed by the German philosopher is characterised by a way of co-responding.

"Corresponding" then means: being determined [affectively] (être disposé), by the being of the entity. "Disposé" means literally: exposed, illuminated, and therefore placed in multiple relationships with what is. The entity as such determines speaking in such a way that it makes saying correspond (accorder) to the being of the entity. Correspondence is always and necessarily, and not just occasionally and casually, correspondence (Heidegger, 2004, p. 57)

As can be understood from the quote, corresponding then implies a disposition towards the being of the entity, a way of understanding and projecting oneself, the mood that characterises human relations with the world. Heidegger identifies wonder as the quintessential mood of the origin of thought, of the original thinking of the Greek world. Now it is worth asking: How can this mood be characterised? Initially, the key term for understanding the phenomenon is *πάθος*: *pathos* allows identifying more clearly what the mood is about:

The noun "πάθος" is translated as incident, accident, affection, or experience; it comes from the verb "πάσχω", which indicates being affected or reaching a state, and which differs from an action because it does not have its motive in the one who experiences it (Ugalde, 2017 p. 170).

Thus, the wonder as a mood implies an experience that is involuntary action, which seizes *Dasein* and must "deal with it"; it involves a scenario from which there is no escape, as it pervades its entire being. Therefore, the human does not experience wonder, or has to some extent, moments of wonder, but rather is entirely wonder: "The wonder is *πάθος*. Usually, *πάθος* is translated as passion, excitement, feelings in effervescence. But *πάθος* has a close relationship with *πάσχειν*, which means to suffer, to endure, to tolerate, to bear, to be carried away, to be determined by" (Heidegger, 2004, p. 59).

In this sense, the wonder implies a pause and a recollection in being, it implies being open to the activity of thinking, as he would say in the lectures of the winter semester of 1951, "What does it mean to think?": "We learn to think to the extent that we pay attention to what gives us pause" (Heidegger, 2005, p. 17). To pay attention, in turn, implies having inter-est that refers, then, "to find oneself in the middle of something and to remain next to it" (Heidegger, 2005, p. 18). Thus, the wonder refers to a state in which *Dasein* retreats before the being of the entity, reminiscing about it and its appearance.

On the other hand, the next mood that Heidegger will characterise in the course of philosophy is doubt: "doubt becomes that the mood in which the affective disposition vibrates in consonance with the *ens certum*, with the entity in its full certainty [...]. The mood of doubt is the positive assent to certainty" (Heidegger, 2004, p. 61). The German thinker indicates certainty as the quintessential element that will characterise the modern era, to the extent that it will be the way truth is estimated.

Regarding the contemporary era, Heidegger indicates: "Presumably, a fundamental mood prevails. But this still remains hidden from us. This could be an indicator that our current thinking has not yet found its own way" (Heidegger, 2004, p. 63) for this reason, he enumerates various moods present in contemporary proceedings; however, he emphasises one that corresponds to what is postulated recurrently in his writings of this period, namely, the unfolding of technical machination as *Gestell*: "to arrange everything available for disposition as a reserve" (Rocha de la Torre, 2012, p. 142).

Heidegger's indications convey the direct question: what is the mood that characterises not only Philosophy but the contemporary world? This question reflects on the affective horizon that manifests as a project of contemporary human life. This prompts a phenomenological inquiry into the structural condition that defines the existence of modern humans. Just as in the Greeks it was wonder, and in the modern era doubt, now we also face the question: What is the predominant mood in the contemporary world? To answer it, it is necessary to turn to the configurations assumed by different relationships, which are also the most important for the contemporary subject and are proposed as structural expressions of banality: Inability to identify its banal condition, instrumental valuation of personal relationships, and the emptiness of concepts.

Banal refers to what possesses the quality of banal, which etymologically comes from the French "ban," referring to something common, public. Along this line, according to the Royal Spanish Academy, the word refers to the trivial, common, or insubstantial. Nevertheless, since the phenomenological method encourages us to focus on the phenomenon itself, it is crucial to

explore how banality manifests in our era. An unquestionable reference is Hannah Arendt (1991), not only for her philosophical realm but also for her stance in "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil," where she offers considerable insights into the phenomenon of banality. In that work, the author refers to banality based on the behavior of the Nazis and specifically on the trial of Eichmann, highlighting how evil is completely trivialised and characterised mainly by an absence of thought, reflection. For Arendt (1991), the behavior of the Nazi bureaucrat represents the absolute loss of autonomy and self-reflection, represented in blind and proud obedience, manifested by Eichmann during the trial, which made him appear as a mere instrument acting according to what he was ordered, and therefore resembling more a behaviour devoid of meaning, to the extent that this lack did not represent a criterion for action regarding the atrocities committed.

Despite this interesting position of Hannah Arendt, the focus on which the analysis pursued in this text rests is not primarily oriented towards an ethical reflection but ontological, and in that sense, only the general notion of banality resting on the Arendtian stance will be a point of reference. Thus, banality refers to the trivial, devoid of meaning, absent of reflection and thought, which, according to what is postulated with this work, has become a structural character of humans in the current configuration. This notion is evident at different levels of organisation and action, so with the purpose of showing the different levels of manifestation, it is important to allude to its most visible characteristics.

The first element that characterises being tempered in banality is the instrumental valuation of relationships as a whole: Instrumental valuation, initially, can generate an apparent aporia insofar as instrumentalisation implies reflection to estimate a suitable means to an end, which is characteristic of instrumental reason (Lawtoo, 2021). It is necessary, then, to turn to Horkheimer to identify more clearly what pertains to the instrumental. It is fundamental in recognising instrumental proceedings to identify the type of relationship as the axis of understanding of this phenomenon, as it is precisely the configuration that the relationship acquires that determines its instrumental character. Thus, it is evident that within reason, there exists a process that encompasses both means and ends, inherently suggesting the resources available for achieving desired outcomes. In the evolution of contemporary society, essentially an amplification of modernity, the utilisation of nature as a resource, delineating its domain through knowledge, has entrenched utility as the guiding principle, based on its contribution to goal attainment.

Ultimately, subjective reason turns out to be the capacity to calculate probabilities and to adapt the correct means to a given end. This definition seems to coincide with the ideas of many eminent philosophers, especially English thinkers from the days of John Locke. (Horkheimer, 1973, p. 9).

With some clarity, this notion is expressed with great power today and in accordance with the prevailing global economic model: neoliberal capitalism and democracy (Westra, 2020). These structures lay their deepest foundations in a calculative reasoning that protects the search for means to achieve ends. In this scenario, men sink into an apparent detailed and subjective rationality, but in reality what they face is the most complete alienation of their judgment. This is to that extent as both the ends they propose and the means arranged for these

do not correspond to a deep operational process as science did in its beginnings, but rather they blur amidst massive end: the idea of progress. In this logic, contemporary man falls into a limbo where he acts by "reflex"; thus, this procedure, its ends, and its means, which only must operate according to the context, without questioning, without reflecting. "The more automatic and instrumental ideas become, the less one discovers in them the subsistence of thoughts with their own meaning" (Horkheimer, 1973, p. 33).

Man recognises everything around him as means: natural resources, animals, other men, and even instrumentalises interpersonal relationships of great spiritual value such as love or friendship to adapt them to the purpose of progress (Kämper, 2024). This type of relationship that sees everything in the environment merely as means is the main characteristic of instrumentality, this procedure that certainly has very ontic characteristics, has taken root so deeply in contemporary man that it is already expressed structurally as the background for the operation of life (Dahbour, 2023). This calculation, once deemed a characteristic of rational and conscious behavior, has permeated so profoundly into the fabric of the world that it has evolved into an ontological realm, shaping the unfolding of life possibilities in the modern era.

(...) when reason itself becomes instrumentalised, it takes on a kind of materiality and blindness, it becomes fetish, magical entity, more accepted than experienced spiritually. What are the consequences of the formalisation of reason? Notions such as justice, equality, happiness, tolerance, which, as we said, in previous centuries were considered inherent to reason or dependent on it, have lost their spiritual roots (Horkheimer, 1973, p. 33).

This fetish, this magical entity that Horkheimer describes has become the horizon of understanding, it has become a mood. Instrumentalisation has reached a much more complex level in contemporary life; it has crossed the line from "ontic" action and has assumed a structural position of affective disposition that determines the possibility of life for contemporary man (Angulo, 2023). This specific characteristic of what has been called banality essentially responds to the "mutation" of a capitalist economic operation into a structural form of being tempered today, having as its main hallmark the valuation of all possible relationships in affective life, redundant as it may be, through its instrumentalisation.

In this same vein, another particular characteristic of being tempered in banality is identified as the emptiness of concepts. To understand this notion, it is necessary to turn to Marcuse in order to identify the basis on which it is possible to understand this trait in the mood. Hence, individuals tempered in banality lack profound meaning in their concepts, allowing any term to be employed in the shallowest and most utilitarian manner, mirroring an affectivity stripped of substance and significance, thus rendering it banal.

Thus, in today's society, concepts that were once a valuable spiritual reference have become jacks-of-all-trades for any endeavour, insisting on notions as important as love, friendship, family, honesty, valour, spirit, faith. These terms have been stripped of their content and have been deprived of all existential value; they evaporate amidst the requirement for accommodation and utility; thus, friend, brother, is anyone who can represent a certain usefulness or simply a momentary sympathy (Dube, 2022). The determination with which

societies use terms like sacred, for example, when referring to public resources, to children, in short, are clear examples of the emptiness of concepts.

In this world, words and concepts tend to coincide, or, better said, the concept tends to be absorbed by the word. It has no other content than that designated by the word according to common and widespread use, and, in turn, it is expected that the word will have no other implication than common and widespread behaviour (reaction). Thus, the word becomes a cliché and as a cliché governs the spoken or written language: communication prevents the genuine development of meaning (Marcuse, 1993 p. 117).

Once more, it proves difficult to elevate this depiction beyond mere functionality, as this rationale, pervasive in media culture, has ascended to such heights that the comprehension of the world as affectivity no longer rests on foundational principles but rather dissipates amid the relativity of synonyms (Chaves & Ribeiro, 2014). The horizon of understanding banality is expressed in a generalized relativisation of all terms. The concepts that are determinants within the configuration of the unfolding of openness to the world fade away in the spectrum of generalised understanding exposed primarily by the media, social networks, and various channels to which societies have been permanently exposed lately. This phenomenon that seemed to be only in a cultural sense as originally exposed by Marcuse, has embedded itself decisively in the way contemporary man is affectively disposed. Thus, being tempered in banality is characterised by being devoid of content.

As a final characteristic of being tempered in banality, it is necessary to identify that as an element of this mood, it is impossible for a tempered man to recognise or become aware of his situation; in fact, the vast majority of men tempered in banality reach the end of their lives without recognising that they are under an understanding enclave such as banality (Sabouri et al., 2023).

The Mood Temperament of the Artist

In order to recognise the different perspectives of life that are still possible in the contemporary world, it is necessary to inquire about an alternative to banality. In this sense, as expected, this type of temperament (that of the artist) is not as common and recurrent as the banality that encompasses the majority of current societies (Karamercan, 2021). Unfortunately, art, as it has been presented throughout history, is not a matter of the collective, but sooner a rather rare process and disposition (Brenkman, 2020). To approach naming the mood temperament of the artist, it is essential to resort not only to philosophical thought but to what the artists themselves have expressed in their words. It is from this perspective that the proposed term encapsulates with greater depth and spiritual clarity: innocence. To contextualise this temperament of the artist, it is necessary to turn to the words of Eduardo Chillida, Mark Rothko, Vincent Van Gogh, Nietzsche, and Heidegger.

To address this perspective, it should be started with the reference made by Heidegger in Holderlin and the essence of poetry, referring to the words expressed by the poet in a letter to his mother: "Poeticising: the most innocent of all occupations." Heidegger's reflection continues by affirming: "Poetry shows itself in the modest form of play. Without hindrance, it invents its world of images and becomes absorbed in the realm of the imaginary" (Heidegger, 1989, p. 21).

At this point, it could be said that not only poetry but also art and therefore the artist are referred to as innocence. When asking what this innocence consists of, Heidegger outlines some signs to follow the path. When he refers to play, he distinguishes artistic work from an intentionally pre-planned activity with a specific purpose. Poetry exists without hindrance, while art becomes a necessity rather than a mere objective. In this regard, it embodies invention because what is created is not predetermined by anyone's demand; it does not arise in response to an economic incentive. Art is then absorbed in the imaginary, which does not represent a commission or an action regulated by some parameter of production, as it is harmless and innocent.

Nietzsche, for his part, has referred to the term innocence (*Unschuld*) at various moments in his work. In the well-known passage about the three transformations in Zarathustra, he states: "Innocence is the child, and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a wheel that moves by itself, a first movement, a holy saying yes. Yes, my brothers, for the game of creating, a holy saying yes is needed: the spirit now wants its will, the world-renouncer now conquers his world" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 55). The echo of play and creation, which are properly the field of the artist, is evident, with Nietzsche expressing the orientation of creation as a genuine yes, a necessity of the will to create and affirm its world (de Jong, 2024). Innocence is indicated in such a way that it expresses an affirmation that does not ask for permission or demand acceptance; it is affirmation and therefore innocent. Innocence is evidently devoid of the instrumentalisation of life, as its means are its own end: life.

When approaching the testimonies offered by some artists, it is noticeable to find additional elements to complement the description of what innocence implies as a mood temperament. Munch (2015), referring to art, stated:

*I do not believe in art
that has not been
imposed by
the need of a person
to open their heart
All art – literature as well as
music – must be engendered
with the deepest feelings –
Art is the deepest feelings (p. 20).*

The artist's expression is inherently linked with the profoundness inherent in art; emphasizing the necessity of art within that emotional framework. Art is portrayed as the inevitable summons to open the heart. Thus, the artist is presented again under the shelter of innocence, that mood structure that responds to the deepest only to those free of guilt, free from glances, free from acceptance. The artist tempered in innocence expresses what his heart evokes, what his spirit animates, again, without awaiting permission or acceptance. Creativity put into art is free from commitments or favours; it is only faithful to the heart, and in what it requires expressing, the work will find its place. Just as children are free from judgments, in their actions, the impossibility of any intentionality other than the call of their heart is evident. In the same vein, Rothko (2007) states:

"Painting is a language as natural as singing or speaking. It is a method of visibly recording our experience, visual or imaginative, colored with our feelings and personal reactions, with the same simplicity and frankness as we do with singing or speaking" (p. 16).

Again, simplicity is present, in this case accompanied by frankness, which is characteristic of innocence. In fact, Rothko makes this reflection based on his experience with children and how their way of expressing themselves is equivalent to the qualities that an artist must have for his work to be worthy of admiration (Drake & Jose, 2023). It is pertinent to understand the value that the abstract expressionist painter gives to children's work, describing it as fresh, lively, and varied. Qualities that only an artist tempered in innocence achieves to the extent that freshness is granted by the ease with which he opens himself to the world in terms of his expression - lively because it represents an activity inherent to the artist's interior and therefore is not confined to conceptualisations or criteria other than life itself:

"It is that simplicity, precisely, with which we let children paint in our classes, and that is perhaps the reason why their drawings are so fresh, so lively and varied. No matter how qualified an artist is, these are the qualities he must achieve if he wants his work to be attractive and worthy of attention" (Rothko, 2007, p. 17).

The characterisation of this phenomenon allows for a clearer identification of the differences that are becoming apparent between an artist tempered in innocence and another apparent one, tempered in banality. To continue on this path, it is necessary to consider a final perspective from art, Van Gogh, who offers a perspective that provides continuity:

"I have found the two works marvelous. They can now go singing about technique, with pharisaic, hollow, and hypocritical words, true painters are guided by this conscience called feeling. Their soul, their spirit, are not at the service of their brush, but their brush at the service of their spirit. Besides, the canvas is afraid of the good painter, and not the painter of the canvas" (1998, p. 147).

By heeding the painter's words, it becomes evident that only an artist can be led by their "conscience" to such an extent, as they are infused with the innocence that protects them from utilitarian deviations and ensures their fidelity to their spirit. Artists often find themselves between what is said about them, their work, and what their spirit dictates. An unequivocal indication that only resonates to the extent that it is distant from the noisy paths of instrumental utility. The innocence paves the way to make the brush an instrument of the spirit and prevents the artist from becoming an instrument of the market. The mood temperament of innocence leads the artist to unfold his spirit freely; in this sense, it is possible to identify another determining element to differentiate the authentic artist: acceptance.

Acceptance as a Contrasting Element Between the Mood Temperaments of Banality and Innocence

While it is true that there are clearly marked differences between the mood temperaments previously mentioned, acceptance implies a truly important characteristic in the contemporary world in its different manifestations, that is why it is necessary to pause in this scenario. The acceptance is, in fact, a distinctive trait and driving force behind much of the economic and vital

activity of the population, leading to a sharpening of instrumentalisation (Yin, 2021). The man tempered in banality is eager for acceptance because his structure, framed in market competition, demands a greater number of followers. On the other hand, innocence neither expects nor prepares its actions; it is in accordance with its spirit, taking an expression from Nietzsche as "jovial." That characteristic "irreverence," for example, in the activities typical of children who, in the midst of their innocence, express themselves according to their own needs, results in the most authentic gesture of existence.

The way Nietzsche refers to the strength and weakness of the spirit serves as a horizon for understanding how the mood temperaments of banality and innocence are expressed. "It is independent of others, therefore free (insofar as it depends on itself). The unfree, weak, is not dependent enough on itself, very dependent on others" (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 36).

The acceptance represents a category fundamentally associated with consumption and determined by it. A mood temperament like banality is expressed through the way of being that is an expression of supply, so a banal man expects to be demanded, thus ensuring acceptance. Banality nests in others, as those who endorse their being, their vital structure is based on something outside of themselves. As acceptance grows, so does the level of contentment. The man tempered in banality consistently resorts to scenarios where his protagonism is abundant, as the affirmation of his life is proportional to the judgment of others, just as a market product is successful insofar as it has more consumers. In the "artistic" sphere, both mood temperaments are found, both the banal, which is often expressed in gallery artists, specialized circles of art critics, and art dealers, who constantly revolve around acceptance and recognition. The mode of being of innocence is different.

As already mentioned, innocence, driven by an affirmative force of life, involves only the necessary elements for its vital deployment. This implies that the creator does not require authorisation, nor does he seek acceptance of his work. Innocence can be interpreted in the light of the spirit of lightness present in some Nietzschean sentences. This light spirit is characterised by leaving the comfort that crowds provide. Following Nietzsche in the Turin correspondence of 1888 titled "The Wagner Case," he states: "the good is light, everything divine runs with delicate feet." This same indication is visible in Zarathustra in the third part when he refers to the "spirit of heaviness," indicating: "one must learn to love oneself, thus I teach, with a healthy and sound love: to endure being with oneself and not to wander from place to place" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 273). It is then understandable that the artist tempered in innocence often resorts to self-love, putting his creative force before the judgments or criteria of the general public. His self-love must rise with light feet, as also alluded to in Zarathustra: "And though on earth there is also mud and dense tribulation: whoever has light feet even runs over the mud and dances on it as on polished ice. Lift up your hearts, my brothers, upward!, higher still! And do not forget your legs either! Lift up your legs too, you good dancers and even better: stand on your heads!" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 399). It is precisely the artist who, even in completely adverse environments, rises from his innocent labor, not expecting authorisation for his creations. His sensitivity regarding the spiritual world makes him trust in the sublime, in the mystical. The artist feels fulfillment in his creation; this state comes from and for himself.

In contrast, the individual tempered in banality is characterised by remaining in constant heaviness, as he carries the need to please many and requires their approval to proceed; his determination is almost nonexistent. In this regard, it is worth returning to the thinker from Röcken, "I could sing a song about it - - and I want to sing it: even if I am alone in the empty house and have to sing for my own ears. There are certainly other singers, for whom only the full house makes their throat soft, their hand eloquent, their eyes expressive, their heart awake: - I do not resemble them" (Nietzsche, 1996, p. 275). Without a doubt, Nietzsche is contrasting the two types of spirits, which in the case presented here equate to a temperament that sings because it needs to sing, and there his artistic expression is his only necessity. The man tempered in banality only sings with the house full because only his spirit responds to the multitude. At this point, the distinction between light and heavy artists also becomes somewhat clear. Nietzsche again indicates in this regard, "Above all, the strong man, laden, in whom reverence dwells: too many heavy foreign words and too many heavy foreign values he carries upon himself - then life seems to him a desert!" (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 274) That is the burden evidenced in artists tempered in banality, too much weight, too many demands to lean on.

Conclusions

A presentation of two modes of emotional temperament in the modern world has been analysed: banality and innocence. Banality corresponds to the mood temperament prevalent in contemporary humanity, including some so-called artists. This emotional temperament is mainly characterised by innocence. On the other hand, innocence, as the temperament of artists in its most spiritual and affirmative sense, is characterised by not focusing on trends or the search or need for acceptance. Therefore, it clearly distances itself from aesthetics as analysis, as well as from art dealers and the environment associated with art commerce. The presence of banality in the mood temperament of being-there is shown as an alternative way to understand how capitalism has advanced over humanity, passing through its customs, bodies, and even settling in its affective structures that open it to the world. Understanding the extent of capitalism's influence on the mood temperament of humanity is, above all, a concern that is directly transmitted in its manifestation in fields that have historically represented the last trenches of spiritual resistance, such as art, where only remnants endure, harboring the final hope of reclaiming a path.

Suggestions for Future Research

The concept of "mood" (Stimmung) remains a highly significant source for understanding contemporary phenomena, serving as a key for reflecting how knowledge permeates even the most intricate of relationships. In the same vein, banality emerges as a phenomenon warranting in-depth study to access various characteristics and expressions that have not been fully addressed or analysed in previous work. Given the evident challenges confronting contemporary life, it is imperative to equip ourselves with elements for understanding and potential pathways to resolution.

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