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Unbridled Anarchy

Writings by Enzo Martucci

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Unbridled Freedom

Stirner and Nietzsche were undoubtedly right. It is not true that my freedom ends where that of others begins. By nature my freedom has its end where my strength stops. If it disgusts me to attack human beings or even if I consider it to be contrary to my interests to do so, I abstain from conflict. But if, pushed by an instinct, a feeling, or a need, I lash out against my likes and meet no resistance or a weak resistance, I naturally become the dominator, the superman. If instead the others resist vigorously and return blow for blow, then I am forced to stop and come to terms. Unless I judge it appropriate to pay for an immediate satisfaction with my life.

It is useless to speak to people of renunciation, of morality, of duty, of honesty. It is stupid to want to constrain them, in the name of Christ or of humanity, not to step on each other's toes. Instead one tells each of them: "You are strong. Harden your will. Compensate, by any means, for your deficiencies. Conserve your freedom. Defend it against anyone who wants to oppress you".

And if every human being would follow this advice, tyranny would become impossible. I will even resist the one who is stronger than me. If I can't do it by myself, I will seek the aid of my friends. If my might is lacking, I will replace it with cunning. And balance will arise spontaneously from the contrast.

In fact, the only cause of social imbalance is precisely the herd mentality that keeps slaves prone and resigned under the master's whip.

"Human life is sacred. I cannot suppress it either in the other or in myself. And so I must respect the life of the enemy who oppresses me and brings me an atrocious and continuous pain. I cannot take the life of my poor brother, who is afflicted with a terminal disease that causes him terrible suffering, in order to shorten his torment. I cannot even free myself, through suicide, from an existence that I feel as a burden."

Why?

"Because," the christians say, "Life is not our own. It is given to us by god and he alone can take it away from us."

Okay. But when god gives life to us, it becomes ours. As Thomas Aquinas points out, god's thought confers being in itself, objective reality, to the one who thinks. Thus, when god thinks of giving life to

So a great and original poet, who, putting his thoughts and feelings into action, attacked the mangy herd of sheep and shepherds, died at the age of thirty three. He showed that life can be lived in *intensity*, not in *duration* as the cowardly mass want and practice.

After his death it was discovered that, together with a few others, he was preparing to strike at society and tear from it that which it denies the individual. And in the Assizes Court where his accomplices were tried, a prosecuting counsel acknowledged his bravery and called him “a strange blend of light and darkness, love and anarchy, the sublime and the criminal.”

A few friends collected some of his writings and posthumously published them in two volumes: *Above Authority (Al Disopra dell'Arco)* and *Toward the Creative Nothing (Verso il Nullo Creatore)*. Other writings remained with his family or were lost.

So an exceptional man lived and died — the man I felt was closest to me in his ideals and aspirations. He described himself as “an atheist of solitude” He wanted to “ravish the impossible” and embraced life like an ardent lover. He was a lofty conquistador of immortality and power, who wanted to bring all to the maximum splendor of beauty.



the human being, and by thinking of it, gives it to him, such life effectively becomes human, that is, an exclusive property of ours. Thus, we can take it away from each other, or anyone can destroy it in herself.

Emile Armand frees the individual from the state but subordinates him more strictly to society. For him, in fact, I cannot revoke the social contract when I want, but must receive the consent of my co-associates in order to release myself from the links of the association. If others don't grant me such consent, I must remain with them even if this harms or offends me. Or yet, by unilaterally breaking the pact, I expose myself to the retaliation and vengeance of my former comrades. More societarian than this and one dies. But this is a societarianism of the Spartan barracks. What! Am I not my own master? Just because yesterday, under the influence of certain feelings and certain needs, I wanted to associate, today, when I have other feelings and needs and want to get out of the association, I can no longer do so. I must thus remain chained to my desire of yesterday. Because yesterday I desired one way, today I cannot desire another way. But then I am a slave, deprived of spontaneity, dependent on the consent of the associates.

According to Armand, I cannot break relationships because I should care about the sorrow and harm that I will cause the others if I deprive them of my person. But the others don't care about the sorrow and harm that they cause me by forcing me to remain in their company when I feel like going away. Thus, mutuality is lacking. And if I want to leave the association, I will go when I decide, so much the more if, in making the agreement to associate, I have communicated to the comrades that I will maintain my freedom to break with it at any time. In doing this, one does not deny that some societies might have long lives. But in this case, it is a feeling or an interest sensed by all that maintain the union. Not an ethical precept as Armand would like.

From christians to (social) anarchists, all moralists insist that we distinguish between freedom, based on responsibility, and license, based on caprice and instinct. Now it is good to explain. A freedom that, in all of its manifestations, is always controlled, reined in, led by reason, is not freedom. Because it lacks spontaneity. Thence, it lacks life.

What is my aim? To destroy authority, to abolish the state, to establish freedom for everyone to live according to her nature as he sees and

desires it. Does this aim frighten you, fine sirs? Well then, I have nothing to do. Like Renzo Novatore, I am beyond the arc.

When no one commands me, I do what I want. I abandon myself to spontaneity or I resist it. I follow instincts or I rein them in with reason, at various times, according to which is stronger within me.

In short, my life is varied and intense precisely because I don't depend upon any rule.

Moralists of all schools instead claim the opposite. They demand that life always be conformed to a single norm of conduct that makes it monotonous and colorless. They want human beings to always carry out certain actions and to always abstain from all the others.

"You must, in every instance, practice love, forgiveness, renunciation of worldly goods and humility. Otherwise you will be damned", say the Gospels.

"You must, in each moment, defeat egoism and be unselfish. Otherwise you will remain in absurdity and sorrow," Kant points out.

"You must always resist instinct and appetite, showing yourself to be balanced, thoughtful and wise on every occasion. If you don't, we will brand you with the mark of archist infamy and treat you as a tyrant," Armand passes judgment.

In short, they all want to impose the rule that mutilates life and turns human beings into equal puppets that perpetually think and act in the same way. And this occurs because we are surrounded by priests: priests of the church and priests who oppose it, believing and atheistic Tartuffes. And all claim to catechize us, to lead us, to control us, to bridle us, offering us a prospect of earthly or supernatural punishments and rewards. But it is time for the free human being to rise up: the one who knows how to go against all priests and priestliness, beyond laws and religions, rules and morality. And who knows how to go further beyond. Still further beyond.

Heroic Spring

To nomads, to vagabonds, to rebels.

Where is the man, brothers, where is the man that I seek?

Where is the valiant and reckless rebel, where the heroic warrior, filled with a dream of freedom or greatness like the Argonauts, who playfully faces the titanic battle against the universe, for the conquest

expressed sensibility, intelligence and force. He had an ironic smile that revealed the contempt of a superior spirit for men and the world. He was thirty-one years old, but already had the aura of genius.

After two months wandering around Italy with the police at my heels, I returned to Arcola to see Renzo again. But Emma, his wife, told me that he was also hunted and that I could only meet him at night in the forest.

Once again we had long discussions and I was able to appreciate his exceptional qualities as a poet, philosopher and man of action even more. I valued the power of his intellect and his fine sensitivity which was like that of a Greek god or a divine beast. We parted for the last time at dawn.

Both of us were existing under terrible conditions. We were in open struggle against Society, which would have liked to throw us in jail. Renzo had been attacked in his house at Fresonaro by a band of armed fascists who intended to kill him, but he had driven them off with home-made grenades. After that he had to keep a safe distance from the village.

Despite being an outlaw, he continued to develop his individualist anarchist ideas in libertarian papers. I did the same and we aroused the anger of the theoreticians of anarcho-communism. One of them, Professor Camillo Berneri, described us in the October, 1920 issue of *L'Iconoclasta* as "Paranoid megalomaniacs, exalters of a mad philosophy and decadent literature, feeble imitators of the artists of opium and hashish, sirens at so much an hour."

I could not reply because in the meantime I had been arrested and shut up in a House of Correction. But Renzo replied for both of us and took "this bookworm in whom it is difficult to find the spirit and fire of a true anarchist" to task.

More than a year later I was provisionally released from prison, but I could find out nothing regarding the whereabouts of Renzo. Finally I received the terrible news that he had been killed.

He was at an inn in Bolzaneto, near Genova, along with the intrepid illegalist S.P., when a group of *carabinieri* arrived disguised ashunters. Novatore and S.P. immediately opened fire and the police responded. The tragic result was two dead, Renzo and Marasciallo Lempano of the *carabinieri*, and one policeman wounded. This was in 1922: a few months before the fascist march on Rome.

if it calls itself anarchist. Novatore:

No society will concede to me more than a limited freedom and a well-being that it grants to each of its members. But I am not content with this and want more. I want all that I have the power to conquer. Every society seeks to confine me to the august limits of the permitted and the prohibited. But I do not acknowledge these limits, for nothing is forbidden and all is permitted to those who have the force and the valor.

Consequently, anarchy, which is the natural liberty of the individual freed from the odious yoke of spiritual and material rulers, is not the construction of a new and suffocating society. It is a decisive fight against all societies — christian, democratic, socialist, communist, etc., etc. Anarchism is the eternal struggle of a small minority of aristocratic outsiders against all societies which follow one another on the stage of history.

Those were the ideas expressed by Novatore in *Il Libertario* of La Spezia, *L'Iconoclasta* of Pistoia, and other anarchist journals. And these were the ideas that then influenced me as I was well-prepared to receive them.

During World War I Novatore refused to fight for a cause that was not his own and took to the mountains. Astute, courageous, vigilant, his pistol at the ready the authorities failed at every attempt to capture him. At the end of the war the deserters were amnestied and he was able to return to his village where his wife and son were waiting for him.

I was sixteen years old and had run away from home and my studies, freeing myself from my bourgeois family, who had done everything they could to stop my anarchist activities. Passing through Saranza on my way to Milan, I stopped to get to know Novatore, having read his article “My Iconoclastic Individualism”. Renzo came at once to meet me together with another anarchist called Lucherini.

We passed unforgettable hours together. Our discussions were long and he helped me fill gaps in my thinking, setting me on my way to the solution of many fundamental problems. I was struck by his enthusiasm.

His appearance was impressive. Of medium height he was athletic in build, and had a large forehead. His eyes were vivacious and

of a higher, more beautiful life? Where are the strength, the courage and the daring that my pagan spirit, anarchically, loves? Wherever are they? ... Oh! ... It is useless to trouble myself in looking... In today's bourgeois, industrial society, there are only the base and cowardly... There are only servile slaves...

The hero belongs to a past era, to the splendor of gallant epics and of free, adventurous, warrior energy... Perhaps he will belong to future Anarchy, when the individual, no longer tethered by the legal yoke, will renew the audacious deeds of the past for the complete triumph of himself..

But now? Now there is only the brutalized plebeian, resigned to his fate, and the small-minded, pitiful petty-bourgeois, puffed up with arrogance and saturated with vulgarity... Obsequious subjects and despotic masters splash about in the filth that covers the world in a sad shroud, like worms in the mud. But under the rags of the one and the luxurious clothes of the other, a chicken's heart beats. Both are weak, enervated... Thus, the proletarian isn't able to emancipate himself, as the tyrant rules not by virtue of his own force, but only through the passivity and renunciation of the people...

Today there is only litter, mud, dung...

The pirates have disappeared from the Oceans, the bandits have disappeared from the forests... The virile instincts and vigorous feeling of humanity — distant memories... The hero is dead...

* * *

Flowering oases in the sad desert of human putridity — blossoming roses amidst the stinking fetor of the sewer — we, nomads, vagabonds, rebels, will produce the divine miracle. We, we will revive the Hero. Banned from society and damned by the oblivious crowd, we preserve in the fragrant garden of our hearts a gentle nightingale that sings melodious songs of Nostalgia and sorrow.

Tempered by struggle and arduous peril, we host in the cavernous twists and turns of our minds a red demon, always ready to go wild with irresistible force.

And when the nightingale warbles, the demon leaps onto the bloodstained battlefield where the furies dance the macabre round dance of destruction and the waltz of death.

We are the poets of negation and revolt, the singers and authors of

ever more sublime madness.

In the fiery craters of our inner volcanoes, made with the lava of emotion and the fire of passion, we've fed our lust for life... And to Society that wanted to impose its laws and its morals on us, we will firmly respond with our "no," while all others repeat their cowardly "yes."

Now we are at the mercy of the battle. The decisive, mortal battle... With smiles on our lips, we have leapt into the abyss of supreme adventure, at the bottom of which the nymph and the harpy wait for us. Either the intoxication of triumph and liberation from every shackle, or the glorious end in the whirl of war.

Proud and disdainful, we have valiantly played our last card, and it is, therefore, necessary for us to intensify our effort and increase our energy a hundredfold to achieve victory.

We have already been brave fighters. Now we much become heroes. It is necessary, indispensable.

For the good outcome of our cause, for the elevation of our individuality.

* * *

And toward Anarchy — matrix of liberty, fount of joy, treasury of power — we, children of Pride and eternal Rebellion, will go forward with greater energy and force, toward the Anarchy that is not the dream of pietists, not the goal of the weak, but the means with which intrepid and desperate iconoclasts are able to get rid of even the harshest chain.

We will all march on while the blue river of courage overflows from the deeps and the mad wind of Audacity batters us with wild fury, in the thick of battle.

And we will fire our arrows, honed with hatred, against the strongholds of the law and of Society ... And we will embrace freedom on Christ's desecrated altars... Hypocrites and cowards will fear us; the rabble will shout for our heads without thinking... But what do the curses of fools matter to us?

We are the aristocrats of thought and action, solitary dweller of the highest peaks, and reptile drool could never concern us...

On Renzo Novatore

My soul is a sacrilegious temple
in which the bells of sin and crime
voluptuous and perverse,
loudly ring out revolt and despair.

These words written in 1920, give us a glimpse of the promethean being of Renzo Novatore.

Novatore was a poet of the free life. Intolerant of every chain and limitation, he wanted to follow every impulse that rose within him. He wanted to understand everything and experience all sensations — those which lead to the abyss and those which lead to the stars. And then at death to melt into nothingness, having lived intensely and heroically so as to reach his full power as a complete man.

The son of a poor farmer from Arcola, Italy, Abile Riziero Ferrari (Renzo Novatore) soon showed his great sensibility and rebelliousness. When his father wanted him to plow the fields he would flee, stealing fruit and chickens to sell so that he could buy books to read under a tree in the forest. In this way he educated himself and quickly developed a taste for non-conformist writers. In these he found reasons for his instinctive aversion to oppression and restriction, to the principles and institutions that reduce men to obedience and renunciation.

As a young man he joined the Arcola group of anarcho-communists, but he was not satisfied with the harmony and limited freedom of the new society they awaited so eagerly. "I am with you in destroying the tyranny of existing society," he said, "but when you have done this and begun to build anew, then I will oppose and go beyond you."

Until he was fifteen years old, Renzo included the church in his poetry. After that, freed and unprejudiced, he never planted any roots in the gregarious existence of his village, but often found himself in conflict with both men and the law. He scandalized his respectable family, who wondered what they had done to deserve such a devil...

...Novatore, who was influenced by Baudelaire and Nietzsche, asserted that we had needs and aspirations that could not be satisfied without injury to the needs and aspirations of others. Therefore we must either renounce them and become slaves, or satisfy them and come into conflict with Society, whatever kind it may be, even