

Of Individualism and Rebellion

Renzo Novatore

1922

There are those who maintain that the human being is by nature a social being. Others maintain that the human being is by nature anti-social.

Well, I admit that I have never been able to clearly understand what they meant by their “by nature,” but I have understood that both sides are wrong, since the human being is social and anti-social at the same time.

Need, want, affection, love and sympathy are the elements that push him toward sociability and union.

The craving for independence and the desire for freedom push her toward solitude and individualism. But, while individualism operates and is realized against society, society defends itself from its attacks. The war between “societarianism” and “individualism” is thus a fertile war of vitality and energy. But, while the individual is necessary to society, this in its turn is necessary to him.

Individualism couldn't possibly exist if there was no society against which it could affirm itself and live, expand itself and rejoice.

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Among human beings — only the rebel is the most beautiful figure and the most complete being. He knows how to be the potential tool of his desiring will. He knows how to obey himself and command himself, to preserve himself and destroy himself. Because the rebel is the one who has learned the secret of living and the art of dying.

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The one who falls rebelling against each and all, prevails even while falling.
And prevailing means instilling the flame of her thought and imposing the light of her ideas in others.

But the fallen rebel's truest follower is the one who, when falling, knows how to rebel even against the "rebellion" of the already fallen hero.

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Anyone who wants the spirit of rebellion to become eternal must want the child's rebellion not to change in its turn into the father's tyranny.

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If my father rebelled against my grandfather so as not to be a slave of the paternal faith, I rebel against my father so as not to be a slave of the faith that made him rebel in his turn.

How could it make my son be tomorrow what I am today?

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Only from the ruins of everything the rebel has destroyed can the creative genius be born.

But what does the creation of the genius prepare if not a new rebellion?

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I agree with Nietzsche in believing that there has never been any need to question a martyr to know the truth. But desiring force, daring audacity and skillful creative will are treasures inherited only from the genius, the rebel, the hero.

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I have seen a genius "steal" and an idiot throw a deadly bomb at a state minister. The first stole so as to live independently and create in freedom. The second killed because of a hidden personal hatred and the will to die.

The first carried out a "vulgar, common crime" and is a "common criminal." The second carried out a "political crime" and is a "noble and generous political criminal." I now ask all subversive, political people in general, and anarchists in particular — if in facing this fact, it is a chance to raise another "political crime" up into the splendor of glory and the feasts of the sun so as to cast "common crime" into the mud.

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Alas! There are still too many who look at the work. But before looking at the work, I look at the creator. Yet even for many — so many — anarchists, it seems that the individual counts for little...

The majority of them are still among the rabble who say: “Human beings don’t count. Events and ideas count.” And this is why, even among us, many higher, sublime beings have been cast into the mud, while many idiots have been raised up in the sun.

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I deny the right to judge me to all those who don’t understand the voice of my yearnings, the howl of my needs, the flights of my spirit, the sorrow of my mind, the thrill of my ideas and the anguish of my thought. But only I understand all this. Do you want to judge me? Okay then! But you will never judge my real self. Instead you will judge the “me” that you yourself have invented. When you believe you have me between your fingers to crush me, I will be up there, laughing in the distance.

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