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Dedicated to the rabble.

*The fall of peoples and of humanity
will be the signal of my elevation.* — Max Stirner

The restless, questioning spirit of the new human beings can no longer nurture themselves on Socrates' historical hemlock and Christ's legendary cross.

These two sacrifices, which have now fortunately fallen into the deep chasms of a shadowy past, were — undoubtedly — consummated completely at the expense of vigorous individualities, straining and throbbing manifestations of free life.

And I profess that, in contrast to Socrates and Christ, Diogenes himself seems to me to be a truly great innovator, since his wine cask has a different and much deeper meaning than Socrates' hemlock or Christ's cross.

But if Socrates and Christ, with their useless deaths, struck genuine individual potentialities until they bled horribly, wouldn't all revolutions following their path do the same?

Didn't christianity triumph over the nearly enviable pagan society through a revolutionary dynamic?

And all the liberal, constitutional, absolutist or . . . democratic republics, empires or monarchies, weren't they all born from torrents of blood, undulating over the scorched lands of war and revolution?

But why did the violent and feverish pulse of every revolution ever shatter, always freely, allowing new phantoms to arise again as sovereign rulers?

The answer is certainly not long in coming since no one will find it hard to understand that all revolutions were domesticated in various ways, and revolutionaries — with the exception of the smallest minority, the "madmen" — were always automatons guided by chimerical and fabulous phantoms.

But what value could those phantoms have for me? What use is any of this to me? To me, the Iconoclast, the killer of phantoms, the demolisher of old and new idols?

What use, for example, could the triumph of christianity be to me? To me, the ultimate anti-christian?

And republics and monarchies, and all the other forms of society that rise as “sacred” sovereigns and can only recognize the “christian”, the “subject”, the “citizen”, the “member”, etc., etc., in me? Since I don’t consider it hard to understand that in every form of society there must be a “system”, indeed, this system, the best of the best: Equality!

But every “sacred” system and all that is Sacred, whether divinely or humanly, demand renunciation and humiliation from me, the Individual. But that’s not all.

Because every form of society, born from the fragments of the old one that fell resoundingly into the void, has the conviction that it is the only perfect one. And it is precisely this dogma of perfection that drives to be so utterly reactionary toward the restless Rebel who does not at all intend to bow before the new God: today, for example, if the revolt against the depot of all Russia finds approval and justification in the foul local papers, they wouldn’t approve or justify a damned thing if such a revolt were to break in . . . the snow-white bosom of . . . liberal and democratic Italy. Quite the opposite.

But let’s take another step forward. Let’s suppose, for example, that tomorrow a Republic is proclaimed in Italy. In such a case, wouldn’t a very large portion of those who pretend to be furiously revolutionary today, themselves be the fiercest reactionary conservatives of tomorrow?

And if some “hothead”, some “madman”, some “enthusiasts” would want to undermine their new edifice, their brand new God once again? But here I think that I might hear certain good — perhaps too good — people exclaim: But then, isn’t he an enemy of the Revolution?! — No, no. Oh, good people, listen to me again since I am so revolutionary that I barely even recognize myself! And do you know why I am a revolutionary who can barely be recognized? For a reason so simple that it is great in its simplicity. Here it is: because I am a revolutionary guided only by the vast and uncontrollable impulse of MY expansion of will and potential.

There is no phantom guiding me, but rather there I am, walking. There is no chimerical dream of a perfect society of universal human redemption, but rather there is the absolute need for my potential affirmation before other potentialities.

The REAL interests that they have in fighting against me exempts them from my hatred since I have taken up my weapons against them only due to my REAL interests.

I may very well kill them for my triumph, but without hating them, without despising them; I am not struggling for phantoms!

Rather I despise beggars, misers, all those who don't dare to fight, but who only know how to beg and weep.

They are the ones who beg for fallen crumbs from the sumptuous table of my enemy.

And with these misers of body and spirit my enemy creates a blind and formidable power to launch against me in the battle that has started between we *Egoists*.

But what could these misers ever gain from the victory over me brought back by my enemy, i.e., by their master? Nothing more than the usual crumbs and eternal slavery!

But what are you then, oh rabble, if not the blind, unconscious, begging mass that launches yourself against me in defense of your Lord? Listen to me, oh rabble, you must vanish *as such*, you must have no place in the theater of new life.

Do you sneer? Are you maybe lashing out at me?

Could it be that with the blows of my lash I have succeeded in awakening an inner residue of pride in you that slept hidden in the remote corners of your mind that has been servile for centuries?

Already in the distance you can hear the war trumpet sound announcing the invincible attacks of the Unique ones against the phantoms: the State, Society, God, Humanity . . .

You turn pale and flee, dragging all your satellites into the abyss of the eternal void; and the rebellious phalange of Free Spirits and Iconoclasts advances into the stormy sky of the Future!

God, the State, Society, Humanity, etc., etc. have their own cause for themselves. If I don't want to subjugate myself God's cause, I am a "sinner". If I don't want to submit to the State, Society, Humanity, I am a "wicked man", a "criminal", a "delinquent".

But what is "sin"? What is "crime"?

Here again, I don't think there is any need for a long and complicated digression to analyze all this, since even children must know by now that the most serious sin that you can commit against divinity is to mock it, not obey it, desecrate it and deny it. In short, desecrating what is divinely and humanly "sacred" is the greatest "sin", the greatest "crime".

"Sacred"! This is the most monstrous and terrible phantom before which all have trembled up to now.

Here is the old, harsh tablet that the new human beings must shatter!

The FREE SPIRITS, the ICONOCLASTS, all those who have finally discovered in "sin" and "crime" the new spring from which the highest synthesis of life gushes.

And even the rabble, when it learns to quench its thirst at this new, unknown spring, will very quickly realize that it too is a granite potentiality.

But to do this, the rabble will have to stop letting itself be ruled by fear.

Oh, rabble, listen to me! I am not the new Christ come to sacrifice myself on the altar of your redemption. If I did this, I would be a madman and you would be a beggar.

I put my lips to your profane ear and launch a cry. A frightening cry that will make you grow pale. The cry that I launch is that of the great German rebel, Max Stirner. So listen to it, since only by virtue of this magic cry will you vanish as rabble in order to rise up again in the flowering potential of all of your individualized members. Here is the magic cry: "The egoist has always affirmed himself with crime and, with sacrilegious hand, has pulled the sacred idols down from their pedestals. It is necessary to put an end to the sacred; or better still: the need to violate the sacred must become general. It is not a new revolution that approaches; but a mighty, impetuous, superb, shameless, consciousless crime sounds in the thunder on the

horizon. Don't you see how already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent?"

But here again, oh rabble, I see you back away and shout at me with horror: "What ever is this crime? What does he mean by all this?"

Ah, rabble, rabble! Do you still not understand his speech?

Well, then, listen again. He's the one who's speaking: "Put your hand on whatever you need. Take it; it is yours. This is the declaration of the war of all against all. I alone am the judge of what I want to have." Now do you understand, oh rabble, what the crime that SOUNDS IN THE THUNDER ON THE HORIZON is? But you, oh rabble, may not yet know how to adapt yourself to the idea of eternal war, you who have cradled yourself like a poor baby in the sweet dreams of eternal peace. And who even knows how many idols you still have to worship and on whose altars you still have to sacrifice yourself!

Poor rabble!

And to think that even the blind would have to notice by now that anyone who isn't able to accept eternal war as his affirmation and triumph must accept eternal slavery for the triumph of fabulous phantoms, declared enemies of the *I*.

Yes, oh rabble, I have decided, yet again, to be completely sincere with you. And this is what my sincerity tells you — Today, you sacrifice yourself in blood-soaked trenches for a cause that is not your own. Tomorrow you may sacrifice yourself in lands made bloody by Revolution in order to later allow a new parasitic and corroding worm to rise on the seas of blood that streamed out in hot steaming spurts from your bronze veins so that a new idol could be raised up to sit over you just like the old God.

The consecrated chorus of Love, Pity and social Right will return, making itself heard, skillfully played on new harps, components of the most ancient symphony.

Rabble, listen to me! I still have something more to tell you. What I still have to tell you may well be the thing that weighs on me the most.

So here I am. I am UNIQUE and as long as you remain rabble, I will not be able to associate with you. When I do so, it will be in

order to draw you out against my enemy who is your master. But as rabble, you will not allow yourself to be drawn out since you still adore your Lord too much.

You still want to go on living on your knees. But I have understood life.

And anyone who understands life cannot live on his knees.

I have even understood all the traps that the owners of all this have set for me.

When they saw me march boldly to the conquest of my life, armed with all my uninhibited potentiality, they placed before my eager eyes all of their ridiculous and insane phantoms.

They tried to terrorize me with the hobgoblins of the "sacred", but since I, the Iconoclast, the Impious one, scorn and mock all that is "sacred" and "consecrated", and since, like Armida, I destroy the palace in which once I had to suffer enchantment, they threw off their sacred mask and launched themselves against me, imposing the most extreme against me.

That was the day, oh rabble, that I had the true revelation of what life is and what place my *Uniqueness* would have in this.

Now I live on my feet. My eye no longer knows sleep.

I recognize no one's rights against me. Only force can defeat me now, not phantoms.

I said, only force can defeat me. But I also use it. I no longer ask anyone for anything.

I am no beggar.

I only appropriate everything that I have empowered myself to appropriate through the capacity of my potentiality.

My revolution already started a long time ago.

From the moment I knew life, I took up MY weapons and declared MY war.

I struggle for a cause that is my own. No other cause can interest me anymore.

My enemies also struggle for a cause that is *their own* and against me.

But I don't hate them for this.