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Stronger Wine! Madder Music!

Apio Ludd

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“Their lives are like their knitting: introspective yet mindless; fussy, exacting, repetitive and pale-tinted by the cheaper dye.”

– Rikki Ducornet

When I first encountered godless anarchy in the late 1970s, it was its excess, its unconstrained exploration and experimentation with the furthest realms of passion and ideas, and its desire and dreams that attracted me.

It was a magnificent feast.

Its wines and ales were strong, intoxicating and full of flavor, hints of spices, herbs and fruits from undiscovered realms of poetic imagination.

Its music throbbed with crazy rhythms, laughing leaping melodies, harmonic cacophonies of joy and rage.

It evoked wild, unfettered dancing, and I threw myself into it with total abandon.

At the time, one could still imagine that a whole new world was breaking forth...

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Of course, then, imagination was a lush erotic flower whose delectable nectar brought visions of its luscious utopian fruit...

Or so it seemed to me.

But puritanism—never truly defeated—has had a resurgence, building new walls and cages where old ones had broken down:

fear of crime, fear of drugs, fear of disease, fear of terrorism, fear of disaster, fear of poverty.

An endless parade of real and imagined threats that reinforce walls and armors.

But they're all just new names for the old puritan fears:

fear of desire and passion, fear of dreams and excess, fear of the other and of the unknown.

In recent years, much of what drew me to anarchist perspectives has been fading within anarchist milieus: the joyful embrace of life; playfulness; laughter in the face of the ruling reality; imagination and creativity; the capacity to dream. It seems that more and more anarchists are succumbing to realism, accepting the inevitability of the misery that surrounds us even in their own lives and relationships and with it accepting the misery of existing as a subculture within the present world.

Even personal choices get transformed into moral identities (veganism, straight-edge), high grounds from which to look down on others.

Retreating like hermit crabs into rigid ideological shells, many anarchists have developed miserly and miserable ways of thinking, acting and interacting.

I am not willing to accept this anarcho-miserabilism which is expressed in political correctitude, in new forms of puritanical renunciation, in the self-sacrifice of militantism, and in pragmatism with its willingness to limit oneself to “the possible.”

I could waste my time and energy writing endless critiques of the situation like some voice crying in the wilderness, but if I limited myself to this I would get drawn into the vortex of this miserabilism myself. It is necessary to go beyond critique, to go straight to the attack, and for this I want accomplices.

Attack in this case, means the active rejection of all aspects of this miserabilist way of acting and being in the world, refusing to succumb to the demands of political correctitude, of any morality whatsoever, of all calls for self-sacrifice or for being realistic. It means breaking down the barriers and bursting through the boundaries such ways of thinking and acting put up. This attack is a merciless game, as violent and cruel as it is playful...

Though I don't call myself a surrealist, my anarchist ideas and practice have certainly been influenced by surrealism. Its emphasis on desire, excess, imagination, creativity, poetry as a way of living, its exploration of methods for breaking down barriers within us and raiding the areas of our being that lie below the conscious surface, its attitude of total revolt, its capacity to combine uncompromising atheism with a strong critique of rationalism and scientism, its use of scandal to expose the realities of the ruling order—all influenced my way of exploring what it means to be an anarchist: an individual in revolt against the reality of this world. And there are still surrealists, many of them also anarchists, who are still exploring poetic revolt and its practical meaning in this world even to this day. Despite differences I have with some of them, I am convinced that there explorations have weapons to offer us for attacking all forms of miserabilism.

In the face of the current misery of this catastrophic civilization, those of us who desire a real transformation need to take up the dance of unfettered rebellion once again.

Now more than ever, we need to challenge all boundaries and refuse all constraints—first of all those that we have placed on ourselves.

And if imagination has dried up, we need to saturate it in these wines, unleashing the poetic intoxication of the marvelous. But let's be clear: Real poetry never watches its language or holds its tongue.

It trounces on political correctitude along with every other kind of rectitude with libertine mockery and lusty sarcasm.

It mercilessly tears through the armor of identity to reveal the glittering jewel of the unique.

It is a thief, a lover, a dreamer.

Yes, in a world of misery and disaster, freedom and the joy of life require the strongest wines and ales and the maddest music. The intoxication of poetic imagination and the soaring melodies and untamed rhythms of total revolt are the axis for the wild, unfettered dance of anarchic insurrection.

Let's take up this dance.

Let's leap, naked, toward the stars, our steps interweaving in lusty, erotic patterns.

At times, perhaps, we'll fall face first into the mud. But if we have no fear for our "purity", we'll just leap back up to storm the heavens in our dance of wild abandon.

Let's leave the misery to the rulers of this world with their petty regulations and miserable moralities. Our aim is to destroy this sorry world and its rulers so that we can take back the joyful creation of our lives.

And if we fail? What does it matter? By grasping our lives here and now, and dancing, intoxicated with rebellious joy and poetic wonder to the music of untrammelled freedom and the excess of desire, we will be the happiest people of our time.

I'm reaching out my hand. Now, who will come and dance with me?

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