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Futurism and Anarchy

Renzo Provincials

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Contents

I	5
II	6
III	7
IV	9

IV

Therefore, futurists-anarchists and anarchist-futurists, two ideals, two classes of people who will complement each other.

How many times anarchists rose in defense of exploited young people, of disowned wits, learn to fight, alongside politics, the daily battle against literary theocracy, against editorial exploitation, just as ignominious as capitalist exploitation.

In this way a great victory will be obtained, a glorious victory: having marked a new battle, a new sacrifice, a new claim on one's program, on one's flag.

Or, I should well be proud, if these poor notes of mine could persuade the comrades to the truth, to the need of what I expounded, of what I incited.

Comrades of Italy, comrades from all over the world, we understand our mission! Let us throw the Futurist ideal into the torrid and protean fire of the flame of our ideal and from this flame, from this purifying wash, leaving all the waste, all the shame, all the ignominy bait victorious and triumphant, like a great Titan de l'Erebo, the true, the great, the only Futurism!

Renzo Provinciali

I

they were not tempted by it, seeing how the Futurist manifestations were badly inspired, indeed misinterpreted by men who had only the name and ambition of the Futurists.

And they are fully justified.

Rather blameworthy were the repeated attacks that, at the time of the foundation, were made on Futurism by our newspapers (the Libertarian, the Uprising, etc.) who, seeing this absorbing atmosphere around Futurism, lashed out harshly, without caring to investigate carefully how good and beautiful it was.

More conscientious instead were the articles of the Demolition of Nice, which was able to give Futurism a fair and enlightened judgment.

But, going back to the subject, I want to address to the companions who read me the reciprocal of the previous question:

Is it possible that, coherently, a deadly war can be waged against all sorts of political, civil, religious, and military authorities, against conventionalism, prejudice, exploitation, and injustice, when one wants to encourage art and a past that is nothing but exaltation, the apotheosis of how much one wants to destroy life?

Is it possible that anarchists leave as much art as they want to destroy in life, is it possible that they leave to disturb, to disfigure a newly risen world, a new, free and purified, a stinking and gallows ancient art?

That would be a ridiculous and unjustified anachronism!

Is it possible, finally, that the anarchists are not Futurists? Or, never! I believe, I hope!

Anarchists have always been profoundly Futurist, and they will understand the urgent need to penetrate the Futurist ideal, into the true Futurism, Futurism free from dictatorships and ambitions, and so the anarchists will be even more perfect, more conscious of political and artistic claims.

Camille Mouclair, the clear French publicist, published some time ago in "la dépêche de Toulouse" an accurate study on Futurism, concerning the public's judgment and criticism and the current warlike events.

And indeed, the criteria pronounced by Mouclair in his long article are remarkable, dense with thought and varied in form, but incomplete and lacking, since he has just touched on the rough point, I will say so, of Futurism, the point of contact with the anarchist ideal.

The Mouclair says: "Futurism is forming, transforming itself, into a real party because it is becoming an integral part of political and social ideas". This is unquestionably true, but it is no less true that Futurism has never had a perfect apoliticality, that it has never shrunk into artistic manifestations alone, but, coming out of Marinettian confusion, it has often taken on various political tints depending on the events and the people that these same events promoted.

When Marinetti published his manifesto, which was later that of Futurism, in the "Figaro" in Paris on February 29, 1909, he certainly did not foresee this, so the Futurist manifesto was nothing more than the vibrant, violent, brand new expression of aesthetic and artistic judgments "of a young and delirious poet" as Mouclair says, of a great poet, I add.

But the present hour, the critical hour of Futurism, and two years of experience suggest, require Futurism to draw a clear and sure line in terms of politics. Thus all uncertainties, all doubts, all pseudo-futuristic people will be eliminated and a greater Futurism will arise from this purification.

But, and here lies the foundation, on what political ideal can the new Futurism be inspired? Already in the manifesto of Futurism, Marinetti exalted at one time: "war, the only hygiene of the world, patriotism, militarism, the destructive gesture of libertarians, the beautiful ideas for which one fights and dies.

Strident illogicality these, from a practical and political point of view, but equally exalting for an artist who ignores what logic is and pays no attention to aesthetics. And this artistic aestheticism can, could also be pitied then by the Futurist anarchist, not now that by some Futurists these aesthetic exaltations have been considered and evaluated as practical and real exaltations.

So I believe, indeed I am sure, that an explanation is needed between the two interpretations, not different, but opposite, which have been united by the obscure and unfortunate exposition of an artistic concept.

Is it possible that the anarchist Futurists, the subversives also in general, can still share the responsibility for Marinetti's and DeMaria's tripoline exaltations? No, certainly not. Therefore in this, his critical hour Futurism must declare itself, must define itself loyally and clearly, must pass its Rubicon.

II

Having examined this point we return to our question.

With what ideal should Futurism be completed? I like to answer with another question: Is it possible that a coherent man can simultaneously advocate the greatest and most general revolution in the field of the arts, want in this terrain the most complete and extensive anarchy, and be a perfect conservative in life? Or not ever, it would be a contradiction! Is it possible that anarchy and revolution do not walk hand in hand in both art and life?

How is it possible to imagine bourgeois art in an anarchist society and futurist art in bourgeois society? You agree that this is quite absurd. Therefore, Futurism cannot be understood and accepted until anarchy has spread throughout the world, and so anarchy will always be insuperably hampered by archaic art and culture made up of prejudice and conventionalism.

And in fact, the nationalists and monarchists understood at all before that Futurism was in stark contrast with their ideas, and for this reason, they always opposed him and even today, despite the hot and fascinating demonstrations Marinettiane, tending to gain, to lure admirers for himself, and gregarious for his futurism all these messengers have remained very cold, very indifferent letting the Marinetti to his convenience without worthy of a poor adhesion or much-sought applause.

In fact, how is it that a monarchist, an ordinary bourgeois, cold and cynical about how much freedom, socialism, anarchy, rebellion, can be inspired to exalt the great polyphonic crowds agitated by work and revolt?

And what is the school that is more similar to futurism, that also has a program of violence and action, rebellion and pride? Anarchy without a doubt. And it is only this ideal that can give Futurism what it lacks, that can infuse it with new life, that can purge it from the heterogeneous elements that distract it from its true path and that transfigures its demonstrations, its most vital manifestations.

This is the only way that will have to follow futurism, for historical necessity, or otherwise, following the path for which he walked, too late he will realize that that path leads him inevitably to the abyss.

III

But I would like to clarify another very interesting point of this parallel of mine between Anarchy and Futurism: the participation of anarchists in Futurist ideas.

But, in the first place, why were anarchists so uninterested in Futurist aspirations?

The reasons, indeed, are neither new, nor many: the anarchists never took an interest in them, either because they were too absorbed in the political and economic struggle, or because