

A Mano Armata (Excerpts)

by Alfredo M. Bonanno

¹*A Mano Armata* by Alfredo Bonanno, first published by Edizioni Anarchismo, Thought and Action n. 14, 1998, 2nd ed. 2009. **Reeking Thickets Press** machine translation, selection, and reprint, Occupied Lenapehoking aka Philadelphia, 2024, as supplement to reprinted collection *The Unexpected Guest, and a section of Palestine, Mon Amour*. Where text from the original work has been excerpted, mainly between sections, it will be marked with an ellipse in parentheses. Reading and printing pdf available online at reekingthicketspress.noblogs.org and on LibGen. Limited physical copies available, email reekingthickets@proton.me. Typeset in Bitstream Charter. Cover photo by Uliano Lucas (no connection with this project) of autonomist rioters in Milan 1975 in front of two military trucks torched during an attack on an office of the fascist MSI party, in response to the death of Giannino Zibecchi, revolutionary anti-fascist killed by carabinieri who struck him with a truck during a protest against the killing the previous day of 18 year old revolutionary anti-fascist Claudio Varalli by a fascist.



¹Translator – *A mano armata* literally translates to ‘with (or ‘at’, ‘by’, ‘to’) armed hand’, it’s also part of the phrasing of some crimes like *rapina* – as well as *assalto* – *a mano armata*, aka armed robbery, or assault with a deadly weapon, and is also analogous with ‘at gunpoint’. *A mano* can also mean ‘at hand’ or ‘to hand’ in the sense of a tool ready and available for use, as well as ‘hand-made’ or ‘manually’.

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«Bowles, that miserable bird of ill omen, cried out that it was the end and fell on his knees again with clasped hands. I was already making for the mainmast, clutching like a monkey at a bunting on the windward side, when I saw Captain Wilkinson do the same thing on the leeward side, brandishing an axe. And I saw him take his time to get up and hit Bowles with that axe so that he disappeared overboard, clasped hands and all. It was what he deserved, I thought, and I saw that the others thought the same. It is not right that those who have already surrendered should drag down with them into the abyss those who are still fighting for their lives, especially in the name of God» (B. Larsson, *The True Story of the Pirate Long John Silver*, Italian translation, Milan 1998, pp. 92-93).

Introduction to the second edition

Learning peace is not possible for me, I am a man of war. Just war? And who has ever fought an unjust war? That is why there are no wars that can be won. I do not want to lie lazily, alone, in this prison bed [2008] that is beside me as I write, where the white and pastel green walls, recently repainted, are reflected. My hands tremble and run to detach from the wall my old Kalashnikov with the bracelet of woven beads on the butt. I reattach it to the wall and look forward, my clothes are under the bed, some dirty, some clean, my left knee is waging its own battle against me, what could I say to it? How could I jump out of a window with its radical dissent? My eyes stubbornly scrutinize the future from which my destiny will come, thoughts fly like seagulls do in the sky of Trieste, they caw and screech as if they were plucking them. Today is a sunny day.

I could get this note over with in a few words, the previous introduction is still valid and I fully agree with it. Why shouldn't I do so? I don't know, but there is something that is pressing on me and that threatens to come out all at once. That's why I force myself, almost by force, to proceed in order.

I am writing the continuation of this text under house arrest, in Trieste, which is not a prison, but very close to it. A note of color? I don't think so. The word is also subject to the moods of mandatory restrictions, especially those that reverberate in time and space, in our idea of time and space.

Here lies the great contradiction that has always tormented my heart, I cannot think seriously about what I am without seeing that thought creates a gap between what I am and what I think about what I am. The more I delve into it, the more the gap widens, risking to submerge me in thoughtlessness or in a foresight that is resistant to any novelty that is truly novel.

The effort I am making here is to put myself, by saying, on the side of action, to timidly hint at the active and different experience, not to remember it with words full of fire. This space is enigmatic and ethereal. In action everything is active, that is, only quality, there are no words except the refusal to go beyond the point of no return.

The immediate condition moves away and approaches, now diaphanous and now luminous but it is not this movement that has consequences on the action, it is like a background buzz, a small immemorial noise of what I have been, that I continue to be, but that in the thing I am not. Forcing this life-saving contact means crumbling the action like friable sand in the hands, while the different consciousness, taken by the throat, becomes painful with an unbearable suffering.

Although I have not yet retreated into the checkmate of forced action, not yet returned to my protocol calculations, I am already beginning to suffer without knowing why. My hidden heart, the intimate cognitive composition of my courageous yearning for overcoming, burns like a living flame, burns and guides its defeat and scorn, while all around I see the pieces of the impassive mask I had worn falling. A trend, obviously, not definitive and yet still endowed with tomb-like characteristics.

I am an artist of astonishing disproportions, my ear denied for music catches them immediately, as soon as the first notes are pronounced. When I was immersed in the action my heart sang happily. Even now that I speak of it, that I speak of it to myself, obviously, the same unreasonable beat returns inside my chest.

This book, especially now, in its final form, is a reflection of my life, at least of a substantial part of my life. Wisdom? The word attests to something, first of all its own saying. It is a fixed point that it does not stammer, it speaks does not stammer, it speaks and uses words. Wisdom knows it is a veil, nothing more than an onion soul, that separates me from the impressions of glory of knowledge, but a veil that is always something if I start from myself. I present the word with a different condition and the word, in silence, understands that its saying is directed to destiny, the only listener enabled to understand the remembrance.

The processes of wisdom formation, useless and whirling movements, are all within the cognitive accumulation that I have created, it follows that if this accumulation is modest they do not even have a beginning. Sometimes the god's toy tears deep lacerations and leaves one stunned, but not much time passes and the little knowledge returns to give itself a reason, a functioning and above all a purpose. Here it leaps forward and everything ends before it begins.

But the stronger the knowledge, the more its emptying bears fruit in lightness and joy.

This process is architecturally deployed in relation to absence as an anticipation of what the word is called to say. In whatever way one turns around this problem, the word here does not defend the powers of the will, it does not follow a path pre-established by the latter, but has its own anticipation, its own imprint in the absence, that is, in what has already happened.

Saying is not able to grasp absence as if it were a presence, but by

subjecting it to rules it is able to internalize it as an anticipation of itself. In feeling light and in the silence that now takes over all my fibers, I no longer see this world conceived as a prison, even if I am really in prison.

Digging into the word is the exact correspondence to digging into myself. All this is always quantity, but not the quantity of perception, I let myself be perceived by the accumulation that wants to capture me, but my initial resistance becomes different as I proceed with the displacement. I propose myself as the master, or at least the concessionaire, of a wonderful process of lightening, I do not know if this in many aspects recalls the process of liberation, certainly it is a different process, there was a greater heaviness and the conviction of completeness.

To say quality is possible only if I become light, if I avoid so many connections that hold me to the starting dock like monstrous ropes and anchors. This event is not recorded by any testimony, except the silence that at a certain point closes my mouth.

The emptying that wisdom operates occurs within knowledge, at the point of greatest friction of the immanence of the world, accumulation. From the dominion of the will to control I move to the absence of this dominion in the rarefaction of silence. I have no critical arguments to oppose, simply silence in the course of essential and less essential, peripheral emptyings, which knowledge does not even notice, yet equally indispensable for the operation of wisdom, always in silence. In the old involvement I set out on an adventure of complete nucleus, absolutely other. Here I am quantity and quantity remains, like the word, which is quantity and remains such. There are no similar shifts in action, but specific movements and emptyings, which depend on me and which I renounce to a precise weight, then to another weight, not to the entire quantity, much of what holds the world upright remains in wisdom, and through the veil I see the child god playing with the top and showing me all his faces in a whirling succession.

The word always has a precedent, even if it is a strangled cry. The attestation and the antecedent correspond even if they appear the first time, in the antecedent, as a whole, the second time, in the attestation, as an incompleteness.

I say an incompleteness that claims to say an absoluteness, there can be nothing more terribly unsuccessful. I also sense some other layer in the word, not always carefully targeted, capable at times of emerging and giving account in a more intense way of the anticipation of the saying of which I have only uncovered the first layers and of which I do not possess testimonies that accept the cultural risk of keeping knowledge at a distance.

It is I who renounce knowledge, a mania of the world, protected by the evil spirits of power, to go towards the mania of wisdom, which I place before the word as a supreme provocation. Characteristic of wisdom is that by attacking knowledge it works and operates also in my

body, physically I am changed, making me capable of grasping lightness that previously escaped me. I keep myself distant from agglomerations, criticisms, constructions, even from the very remembrance, which the word does not yet say. Instead I approach the most extreme intimacies of the word, to what it will tell me differently, prompted not by knowledge, but by wisdom.

The involvement of the body in wisdom shakes the distance that haughty knowledge places between knowing and living. Life is also expressed in silence and in the emptying of thought of the thousand worries of accumulation, conquests and defenses. This life is thus proposed to the word. The lightness of life is equal to its drama, there are no separate levels to live successively one after the other. When it is knowledge that is realized, life shrinks, impoverishing itself, in wisdom it reinvigorates, comes out into the open. All these statements sound very schematic, knowledge is seen today in a critical way, that is, more lightened, but that is not what I am talking about.

Wisdom does not criticize knowledge, it puts it aside and in my chest dwell the movements of training, which was once called asceticism. This word too, has now been sealed and I can open these hermetic locks only by presenting myself as a liberator of knowledge. Wisdom works a great and profound change and makes it useless.

I don't know what to do with what is in the accumulation, or at least a part of it, if with these heavy loads I want to lift a feather. Wisdom is functional to the word that says the remembrance, but this is only an accident, it is not aimed at the useful awakening of the word that says. In this introductory amphitheater there is no utility in saying the remembrance. I know what this monstrous architecture hides, I know what it pronounces, destiny knows it too, but perhaps its laziness is prompted by unusual depths of the word that wisdom can turn into myth.

I accompany myself with this ghost of speaking and I hear remote redundancies of silences, of burning constriction in the throat, of fears and moans of pleasure, I hear all this, the roar of the animal that bites and the blood that comes out of the gash in the throat, I hear the whistle of the wind in the night, the wind that moves the dunes and modifies the landscape, I hear the crawling in the mud next to the enemy, without knowing oneself, without sparing oneself, without being able to pull back, without hesitating in the blow.

I feel this in saying that it is discharged in recollection and does not want to put something in order, indeed it shuns the fictitious order elaborated by memory which questions the conscience and brings it before the court of justice where every fact is weighed and evaluated.

Memory is in difficulty. I fix everything and I bring back, in the art of fixing, every condition of the peripherality that hosts me. This operation recalls the misunderstanding of the container of objects exchanged

for space, but it is nevertheless a starting point. I realize that it is an incomplete transfer, but it is also the basis of every critical denial, the solid basis that assures that the truth is not in what I want to transfer, however imposing the quantity of the transfer may be.

The action that takes shape from this inexhaustible possibility is beyond any possible experience to be transferred, it summarizes in itself something that is not present in quantity and that I know through experience not tried except for that different experience that I glimpse in remembrance, but that I always grasp as defeated quantity and not as programmed accumulation.

Action touches quality and produces transformation, but it is not free in itself, it can only make me experience quality, therefore also freedom, but only up to the crucial point of the question that does not accept answers, the question, is that all? I cannot insist endlessly if there is no objective answer, I would almost say generalized, an anxious questioning of the times is not enough, it may be that the answer is always absent, a persistent laziness.

The remembrance response forges an alliance between word and action, the most antithetical thing there is, the result should be silence or the discovery of new pulsating ways of the word, thematic ways found in the archive and symbolic, that is, capable of giving life to new hermeneutic directions. The tangle of words is often not clear-cut, but it doesn't matter, the meaning travels deep paths and realizes that for which the will has failed, that is, it has been put in a position not to harm. I listen to the word and it is this, incredible message and omen of destiny, in it sometimes a meaning resonates that is at the same time remembrance and barrier. A white wall that no longer reproduces the images of the cave but simply itself, because in the depth of this wall that is the absolutely silent and new word swim the imperceptible signals of destiny.

I know the indifference of the world I created, I take it for granted, I am an element of my reproductive framework, I dig into this grid of silence every day, and I hear screams and cries, desperation and poor bloody claws that uselessly chip away at a wall from which the mind cannot escape to find anything other than itself. There are no trees or birds in prison [2008].

The well of my excesses, the remote and useless religion of desires obtained because they were diverted from their channel that made them poor possessive attempts, the red acrimony that clouds everything and that closes itself with me inside, curling up like an enormous sheet of paper.

Mercy can wait, in the storm where I sail I have not taken it on board, I have forgotten it. I see in the black sky hasty clouds even blacker.

There are intuitions that blossom before my eyes and become a recognizable sign of the thing, even if animating them in images modestly

aimed at their coverage, and there are drastically irreducible ones in asking for the extreme excess of involvement, the latter accepting nothing but the leap. The clash with them does not allow for side roads towards the opening.

Champion of good against evil? Why these schematic angularities? Air, you have to open the window, look at the distant horizon, but not breathing that clean air that can only be breathed in certain historically significant moments or in certain well-defined conditions of the clash, I run the risk of not seeing beyond my nose.

In my opinion there are no lost causes, there are wrong causes. There are choices that I would never make, even though I have known people who have made them and they were not stupid imbeciles, and they respected me and I respected them, but not their choices.

Every deeper question regarding the remembered word, placed before me, reflects my image, as an insatiable and unfathomable sense, and yet, precisely for this reason approximately emblematic, intangible with respect to the ordinary protocols that that question presupposes even on a superficial level. I lose myself in this reflection, like the image in a puddle of water runs away at the first ripple on the surface. The stigmata of a lack, of an impossibility remain. Possession, pursued into its territory, proves unassailable.

Of the punctuality of action, the word of remembrance should preserve the synthetic conciseness, the desert of explanatory digressions, the silence of protocol codicils, but it is always an embodied and materialized word, capable of responding only to the tyrannies of grammar and the border correspondences of meaning.

If I do not accept, even through the shaky interconnections of existing labyrinths and walkways, this rooting cancels the sense that I have brought with me and the image reflected on the bottom of the cave will remain undisturbed in its place. The true fascination of my punctual action lies precisely here, in observing how those ancient petrifications open in an implacable and unstoppable way. What I will be able to observe will never be my possession, but a possession of my destiny. It is from the latter that the long-awaited signal will reach me.

In the long run, the whirlwind of facts produces a critical habituation, from negative the epistemological prospect becomes positive, it is better to accept than to refuse. It incorporates any proposal that presents itself with the perceptive characteristics of meaning, the rest, what has been torn away, moves further and further away in an icy silence.

It is almost impossible to listen to one's own punctuality as it is concentrated in action. To grasp the meaning of certain gestures, all capable of contributing to punctual action, is impossible, there is no distinction or distribution. I can have a discussion, but it is a matter of fragmented words, distracted, directed at themselves, sobbing the maximum con-

centration on something that is not a word. It is not yet the experience of true emptiness, but I am not far away, and all this is already an experience of quality. I can see it as beauty that eliminates the proportional distinction, as equality that eliminates the possession between yours and mine, as freedom that sucks me into the desolation of the thing. I can even answer the fundamental question, is that all?

The wall of coherence appears to be flawless, but the heart does not accept this smooth uniformity, and when I say heart I am referring to the intuition that discovers cracks where nothing would have made them suspect.

I fight against evil, but I do not know what evil is as uniformity, absolute evil. I can hypothesize it and see it where it manifests itself with fury and collaborates in the devastation, but this absolute macroscopicity needs many smaller supports that make it possible and are therefore equally responsible. I fight evil but its knowledge attracts me more than the knowledge of good. And then, what is good without evil?

I don't need other people's dramas, that's why I read fewer and fewer novels. We must avoid, by questioning a certain reality, committing the mistake of privileged production, we must not make it the object of objects. Hence the need to eliminate the positional hypothesis according to which, as a subject, I think one must find reality, a place large enough that I cannot help but imagine distributed in space, enormous, vast, but circumscribed and determined, the determination of action.

The effort to break down appearances is great, but necessary for the remembrance, this will produce others, of another kind, it is an irrevocable consequence of saying, but it will have partially resolved the dangers of departure, the excessive loads that knowledge lines up on the dock awaiting boarding. Leaving this load, even if only in part, on the world puts the word in front of an easier possibility of saying the remembrance.

The work on knowledge is long and in-depth, it cannot cut out a part of itself and declare itself satisfied. Wisdom has no acceptable limits, as happens with knowledge, once the emptying is set in motion, this proceeds without ever stopping. Prepared in knowledge it is not the daughter of the latter, wisdom cannot approach it, it must be pre-empted or diverted, the best of long preparation rejects heaviness and repetitions, which knowledge feeds on as if it were celestial manna.

The beginning of the emptying is a historical and meta-historical event, it prepares the difficulties that are on the carpet, part of the knowledge, it cannot help but accept the development called to beat the knowledge, each element of this tragedy is a new construction of wisdom.

I would not worry about the result of a reading based only on impression, on the hidden and never sufficiently stigmatized charm of the weapon as a supposedly invincible prosthesis. The clash is itself a goal,

there is no need to dissolve it in the emptiness of a rigid end to be observed as something chilling, guaranteed by an equally rigid means.

In action there is total violence, its completeness does not allow to oppose to this violence that tolerant meekness of which I am proud in everyday life, modulation of strength and genius of knowledge with which I slow down my instincts within the acceptable range to avoid trouble. All this is swept away in action, the attack cannot have limits because in action it is complete, the adversary is not seen through a dialectical deformation, he is there in his fullness, his disappearance is indispensable and takes the path of the cessation of existence.

Even in the reductive attack, where the enemy is struck in the realm of doing and with specific means of doing, where behavior motivated by anxiety is prevalent, I can gain a knowledge of myself that goes beyond my immediate desires by referring them to a point of interpretive convergence that cannot be simply considered a product of coercion.

By starting the interpretative tension in reverse, I am no longer close to openness, yet I cannot say that I am completely excluded from external influences coming from remembrance. The solution discards the restlessness and translates the movement towards openness into a disjunction between doing and not doing, between censorship and free access to fantasies, even the most remote with respect to reality.

It is certainly not a sense of duty that distances me from doing, while my simple inclinations, considered by the lawyer Kant as dispersive, are placed as peripheral sentinels guarding the cognitive protocol.

The intuition that consoles me in the extreme case of abandoning immediate convictions is the fruit of inclinations that are often subdued, dark, frozen in a sort of fear and self-condemnation without appeal. The weakness of intuition, when compared to the disruptive force of will, acquires its own capacity and unusual persistence because of its insistence. I faintly hear the voice of the one who is and who cannot not be. If I heard it loud and clear I would be beyond the point of no return. Crazy.

The universality of the protocol, contrary to the Kantian assertion, is valid without contradictions, but the existence of an eminently contradictory factual reality causes, instead of the tranquility of immediate consciousness, its restlessness and the conviction of its impossible completeness.

If I grasp these limits and elaborate them in their specificity, singularly and specifically I end up turning around the mirroring of my own restlessness. Here I sense that an insistence is like sinking into the dissociated conditions of producing, now into madness, now into the rules that govern but do not erase madness.

The obsessive, rigid, and ultimately punitive barrier of doing dovetails perfectly with the paths I sense can branch out from restlessness, mysterious paths, incapable of stopping at any instance of control. By-

passing the will, themselves too grandiose to be entirely controlled by the verification instances of doing.

The medium fades into the background, even if it then returns to capture the attention of the passive user of the event. A downgrading is a case, simply an unpredictable accident in the attack itself. The same black wind of the night blows on the opponent and on me, even if we are not both dying, at least not always.

He had taken the trouble to protect himself, to pay attention to all the movements of the day, before taking a new road he always looked back. All this was not enough. Suddenly a flat event like a football field turns out to be steep and difficult to overcome. In fact, in these cases it is almost always not overcome. It is life that presents the bill that for so long had remained hidden, beautiful and ready, in a crack, in an unexplored interstice. Death does not need justifications backwards, every new fact for me, for her is an old fact, discussed in all its details, no play of passions or resentments, simply happening. The old childhood returns for a moment, for the last daydream, to survive, and immediately it is the end. Fabulous.

In the account presented by life there are always errors of calculation, but against whom to assert them? Falling with his face on the pavement, stretching out his feet, that is what he thought, the injustice of his age, after all he was dying young, too young, but he could not appeal to a higher authority. The supreme authority had already gone, had turned the nearest corner and the dramatic chronicle he left behind did not matter much to him. In his infernal itinerary it was just one less small task, just that.

The need to eliminate the adversary cannot be said, the words would sound like empty rhetoric, neutral fantasy and vainglorious fundamentalism, for this reason the word revolves around it, daughter of memory it carries within itself the limit of death, the prohibition of killing. This can be said, its opposite cannot.

Sometimes life is abject, if only because of the crust formed by the miseries of organic degeneration. Few love the elderly, few hate children. Raskolnikov was wrong because he considered this reality punishable. Instead, it is without return. Humanitarian chatter is not enough, joy lies elsewhere. When only malaise and confusion remain, what is the point of continuing?

In the action, complete in itself, without any chronologically encircling time and without any place to memorize, my flesh was totally present in the quality, and totally exposed to the black wind of the night. The livid desert could at any moment, in the totality of possible moments included in my action, come upon me and cover me forever, nothing would have changed.

To move towards the thing means, for the other, to come to terms with a false autonomy, rampant in the same immediacy, Kant has marked

the potential of this autonomy that I consider servant of the will, considering it precisely self-imposed and regulated by reason. Hegel instead saw something more, the autonomy from which derives a freedom of the mind that is thus at peace with itself.

Autonomy has hidden itself long enough behind the traces of will, the time has come to unmask it, to probe the deep reasons for this camouflage.

How far can one pursue reflection on the limits of one's self-knowledge in the sphere of the will? Does the will also govern immediate desires and impulses? Or is there a longer-term assessment, where the will lags behind, mired in its own protocol obsessions?

In the end, renouncing the ideology of conquest and accumulation is a fantastic and unplannable project. Not even remembrance makes it easier. Identification with the painful need for involvement starts over again every time, and again the request for some sort of compensation for the loss suffered creeps into the immediacy. Wisdom comforts and can ultimately also contribute to a sort of relief from the problem, but it does not have a magic wand.

Leaving aside the leap, which is less of an interest here, the approach to openness is the product of the same cognitive solicitude, of the same pragmatism of doing that is dissatisfied with itself, even if these conditions must ultimately be overcome in the involvement that with its overwhelming stimulus to move forward, no longer takes them into consideration. The territory of the thing is, in the end, glimpsed from the immediate point of observation, a decontextualized space, where protocols are no longer even a memory.

The limit of the opening, the so-called threshold from which I greet with the gesture of the condemned to the stake, is not a specific moment, it is articulated in a changing variety, but identical to a previous intuitive complex, on the basis of which the cognitive load and the intuitive relief are intertwined in a whole of disordered instances that, observed from the immediate point of view, can also seem overdetermined for the purpose of going beyond, while they are simply a labyrinth of contrasts and impulses directed, sometimes against each other, to go beyond, in biunivocal correspondence with the multiplicity of access intuitions and abandonment relations.

Chromatic areas that slowly fade into one another without the assistance of peripheral protocol contours. This is the absence of purpose, there being no purpose in the action and having to first abandon the one present in the doing.

If now the word says those moments of red fog, I do not recognize them as mine, because I too am reluctant and afraid to open my heart completely, and so I sit on the ancient threshold of my ancestors who were farmers and carters and I listen to that fable, recognizing here and there the effort that is being made, and I praise it or condemn

its enormities, mirror of murky waters, only to then realize that these judgments do not apply to me or to my role.

I sit there listening to the wind pass through the leaves of the fig tree, down in the dead donkey's ravine, and I turn to destiny and its fictitious distancing, and I welcome it here, I invite it to sit next to me and listen to the word it remembers, and the entire architecture that emerges from it. And it seems to me that I rest my head on my father's shoulder, both of us sitting on the threshold of the house looking for a whole night at the sky set on fire by the bombings of Catania. And only now do I understand his love for me.

It is the word that calls itself into doubt after having expanded practically without limits, a triumph in the sign of defeat, a sign repeated endlessly, slowly, with composed awareness. Not a renunciation, which it continues to say, but the admission that the deep and insurmountable contradiction is in itself, in the saying itself.

Every negative criticism insists on the rough terrain of doing, denies the product but must do it from within, from the centripetal forces that deny the object and by hooking onto hypothetical correspondences affirm themselves and objectivity. Immediacy is thus clouded but not removed, it persists fixed on the content palette of the will. In the end the fatal impulse of the latter is reconfirmed albeit with hyperbolic openings towards probable interrogations and distortions. Critical stripping of its will, negative reaffirmation, its reconstruction based on the thinned-out precariousness of protocol conformism. Loss of harmony.

The long and twisted speech I make to the will is my speech with death, with my death. I desperately try not to be suffocated, even if the determination of the will is very strong and my resistance, at times, weakens.

Sometimes these strategies of mine are distorted and marred by their own relentlessness and are inconsistent, sometimes this very inconsistency makes them lacerating for the conservative responses of the will.

There is in some of the false paths and trails a sort of secret and enchanted fascination that carries me away, that prevents me from being a builder and creator of new rules, not because I am finally convinced that these too are rules, but because death watches me from the depths of the forest and keeps my danger signals, my survival instinct, awake.

These paths make me see that there is beyond the will, the fearful territory of the possible.

For the codified measure the factual possibility is an infinite and dizzying descent into Hell. The more I try to make my own the knowledge I am possessing, the more I seem to sink into the impalpable sands of a masked appearance that hides, without succeeding, a qualitative reality that continues to escape.

There is an intermittent sign of insufficiency or inability, a flashing warning of danger, that pushes me to dig my heels in on the edge of

an abyss that is swallowing me. Each new conquest is added to the archive, yet for me it does not seem like an addition, or it does not seem only an addition, but mainly a reduction of consistency, I dig to allow interpretation to come to my aid by tying my wonderful intuitions to forced doing, but this sometimes does not happen and words get lost in meaningless convolutions, when meaning is what they should have.

Sometimes I remain immobile, undecided, a prisoner of the need to want, this does not exempt me from productive fury, the two aspects do not contradict each other, they walk parallel and exchange strength and arrogance.

Any trace of indecision would be welcome, but it is not easy for me to beg for it, my tired eyes scan the long sequence of protocol signals, the world I created sleeps peacefully. My tormented dimension is alien to it.

This defeat openly declared in the constriction of the shouted tension, is the pain of the impossibility of telling destiny if not through the impossible and unspeakable task of telling action. It is in the constriction and in the defeat that I am describing here how I feel behind the word the breath of the night wind returning, it is here that the mystery of walking for long stretches with the company of the weapon at my side lies. And yet silence can be heavy and light.

The word draws its defeat from mystery and this is its greatness. Insisting on discursive rigorization is a sterile exercise of skill. Every arrangement that I invent, and that in itself presents itself to me as possible, does not reveal itself for what I think it could be, it is silent in its revelation and leads me elsewhere, it goes out of time and out of separateness, it requires an unthinkability that in the long run exhausts my repertoire and undermines the foundations of every rigorous arrangement of the word itself.

Action never takes the stage, even if I can remember it, it is never a direct lesson, a cornerstone of greatness in the face of factual misery. This is not what the word placed in front of the experience of the thing manages to tell me. If I force it I obtain a penalized, outraged, distorted meaning, forced to tell me something anyway, whatever means is enclosed in the word. What do I do, in these terms, with such a fragile ghost?

Is there any meaning in the dilemma of wanting to understand and no longer wanting to conquer through understanding? If there is, it is immersed in mystery, it does not come to the surface unless assisted by destiny that dictates the directions of living and dying, of giving up and insisting, of despairing and waiting with an open heart.

In the thing I am wise, I am the god who stands before me and stares at me enigmatically, I am the one who is and the watery eye in which my vision of his completeness occupies, that is why I am the madness that renounces and that at seventy and more years of age sees itself in a

prison [2008] as horrible as this one, amidst heart-rending screams, to find the thread of a possible going beyond, even further, and yet always tied to the chain.

I look around and stop regretting and realize that I am privileged. I know why I am here, the others do not know, they seem like ghosts living on an unknown planet.

The tension toward the thing proposes to me a condition of palpitating diversity not yet well understood, and this lack of understanding is not an accident, it is precisely my only possible way of facing the thing. Intuition reflects to me a condition that does not belong to me but to which I aspire, a distorting mirror of an absolutely other force to which, for the moment, reflecting on the basis of the knowledge that supports me, I do not have access.

Everything that is murky has its own brightness, sometimes blinding, one must not let oneself be fascinated and induced to close one's eyes out of fear.

Lucidity is the foolish servant of reason, it prepares the ground for it and thus prevents it from getting bogged down in its own squiggles between cause and effect.

The more I think I have reached a peak of knowledge, the more my lack of wisdom makes me fall back, towards the bottom of the new beginning, where I find new strength to return to die satiated by insatiable completeness.

I am old enough to understand that beauty and death cannot be reunited in the world I created. There must be an elsewhere, but the quality here does not allow me any understanding, I am the incomprehensible not the misunderstood. When fate offers me its hand I begin to sing silently, my heart exults in its mysterious depth.

I pose the mere possibility and flee from every crystallization, even from those that gradually materialize thanks to the tip of my pen. Only in this way do I think the action I read about is perfect, because I do not think it, I do not invest it with my intentionally interpretative beam, I continually postpone it, I cajole it perhaps, I do not capture it but I am captured.

Surrendering my claim is immediate separation and behavior, but in addition to being a banal fact, it is also a starting point to go further.

The completeness of action prevents any objective intention, except in the case of the fabrication of psychological fetishes suitable for fueling frustrations that do not concern me. Those who have lived the experience of action, those who have looked at reality with weapons in hand, know what the need for completeness is, know the total force of its presence, the rest is just chatter.

That is why one cannot have these friendly chats in front of the fire, recounting the events of the good and bad times of old. My defensive senses are horrified and retreat.

In the desert of the thing, quality comes to meet me, that is, it hallucinates my late capacities of perception, frees them from the prescribed and prescribable coordinates, assigns them to a way of grasping them that is only mine, powerful and delicate at the same time in its punctuality. I have no real answers, not words but only action in progress, the divining time of remembrance will come later with distrust and fear, with insecurity and perplexity, with the refusal and stubbornness of incomprehension. For the moment all this is far away, it's me and the action, enough with the old chatter.

The place of the archive is never fully moved in its explanatory power, but asleep in the repetitive and sealed stasis of the container, indifference and carelessness, like someone who takes and runs away without caring how he leaves all that remains. Unbearable heaviness of doing for the sake of doing, of caring for the sake of caring without caring to go beyond.

The throbbing intuition, authentic in its immense need to clash with the immediate defenses of the active conscience, easily gets lost and falls victim to an illusion expressly desired and therefore fabricated for this work, falls into extreme restlessness, into the symptoms of an inability to complete that are piercing and lead to a consciousness of limitation and impotence. In preparing for negative criticism I fill the emotions and discoveries of what cannot be catalogued because it is different from the others from various points of the interpretation without sacrificing its highest incandescence, its most radical message, provided with a dissonant sense.

The action does not proceed, it simply is. It has no flashbacks, nor is it a calm sequence of very clear intuitions. Its punctuality devours itself, internally, in the necessity of destiny not to use space, to deny its usefulness. Even in the remembrance I am not able to draw scenography if not of words, each sequence appears immobile, frames of petrified segments devoid of a practical project if not that which the crossing has delivered in a different way to the new consciousness. The solitude of the thing is hard and resistant, it is the small guest presence constituted by my different consciousness that is fragile and torn.

The clash, even violent, with the action, even if detailed in elements endowed with sensitive individuations but extraneous to my action, even delicate and gentle ghosts, seen in their thematic oscillation incapable of providing for me indications other than those of a willingness to receive my merciless attack, remains identified in an extreme, unique point, overturning all the good ordering intentions.

This does not exclude a cold inventory of memory, critically articulated, not superficial, in brief chapters, glossing over and light as a feather. On the contrary, the seriously addressed remembrance, even if made of words, abhors chatter, and when it is proposed or when it gets lost in it, it immediately assumes the haughty attitude of representation,

not of critical knowledge, but of tangential penetration, of cabotage, casual and devoid of responsibility.

The shadow line of intuition is illuminated by the conditions that remembrance digs into wisdom, a radical and utopian call, a subversion of protocol rules. Destiny comes to meet me and I do not oppose it, that is, I am now capable of not controlling it, I see it through the double-sided optical prism of wisdom and intuition. Triumphant certainties have been banished.

Faced with an unknown land, it is not possible to consult non-existent maps but to draw up a travel notebook, and yet the recollection itself cannot give a reason for these sporadic notes, they remain extraneous observations, sometimes even controversial and hostile.

Is it possible to suddenly find oneself, as in a dream, in the heart of a different experience? No, it is not possible, as it is the outcome of a long struggle, this outcome is not regulated by anyone, not even chance. Certain emblematic references intrinsic to some intuition can die of starvation if not vigorously and actively nourished.

Excess is a grazing passion, which cuts at the root and quickly takes me towards the source from where the images spring forth that the will tries to bring back within the rules, the analytical processes that govern the tormenting and anything but linear mysteries of reason.

Any sense of guilt, the error that has crept in and nested in my conscience a posteriori, is not reflected in my representative stubbornness, in this blind going forward along paths never traveled by anyone and perhaps completely extraneous to the very possibility of speaking.

Every step forward, every piece, which is still a word, throws a bridge before it onto the inconsistency of absence, of what is and cannot not be, but which the word struggles to identify because it is too tied to the codified perceptive techniques of knowledge.

It seems like an empty word, and it is, but this vanity is its strength, it refuses to let me understand, to become something else, and it proposes a different reading of itself, multiple, in order to be what it has always been, an original word, a strangled scream, a distant moan of barbarism in its essential solitude.

The question of the word is all here, it is not recognized for what it is, while what it represents bounces in the many justifications of content, the elsewhere is taken as testimony of what is in the word, but this complex being is only touched upon. This obviously happens here too, but the being of the word, its testimony, here opens like a rose and its petals are just waiting to wither. The dismay in the eyes and the senseless suffering of life.

Why not silence?

Silence is not the brother of laconism. They are opposites. The abolition of the word is possible and has some interesting aspects, its reduction is an error that is based on the possibility of arriving at saying

essential words, which is not possible.

There is in the unitary punctiliousness of active concrescence an unfathomable solitude that accompanies the grandiose phenomenon of involvement, the courageous and delicate path that begins from the overcoming. There is a leap towards the one that is of which the often fragile but dazzling intuitions are nothing but presaging leaps of future upheavals.

My unitary intensity is just a stain without protocol references, I have no contours, I do not attach myself to anything sufficiently circumscribed. To act is to be myself without anyone having previously given me permission, no condemnation has been pronounced nor absolution has been promised. Listening to this reciprocity is the sound of silence, the rarefaction of words until they fail. I do not want to accept justifications.

My presence in the thing slowly narrows my vision, an invisible silence takes me with it, nothing remains alongside the punctuality of my action. I don't hear the narrow voice of the one for all this happening louder, it is a distant redundancy, but I don't worry about it, I know now that it is a voice that no longer has a sound.

Around me, in the desolation of the thing, the action is, it does not admit late pain or torment, it limits itself to being what it is, it does not tear me apart, as immediacy did, it punctually reconfirms what it is, only this, it does not propose to me the theme of death, it is death, it does not make it, it is already completely, like the one who is and cannot not be.

I listen to the word of remembrance but it is not what it is, only I want to listen to it to prevent it from dying, but most of the time it sounds enigmatic and evanescent, it needs an explanatory support and it is precisely this superfluity that makes it silent forever.

Standing before this word I question it to deform the shadows of the cave once and for all, but I am bounced back like a ball. The sense that should be the tangible element inside it is something brittle, stringy, elusive. Sometimes it dies alone without even a cry of pain. Crumbs of inarticulate sounds keep each other company for a stretch of the road, then they too end up petrified.

In the terrifying noise of producing, insisting on my capacity for remembrance is an opposing of silence to the din, an unacceptable clash, yet a thin thread of breath pants somewhere. The dilemma has no solution, I can only lean towards silence, although this would deny my message to the inhabitants of the cave and their images that they continue to see on the wall. But this message must pass through the flames of the unspeakable, from which a truncated, stammering, itself shy word reemerges. What has become of my sophisticated accumulation?

The well-founded suspicion of the word denounces the betrayal that saying can commit, and inevitably ends up committing, against what

one wants to say. But this betrayal cannot be avoided by reducing the use of saying; on the contrary, it is necessary to increase the quantity of words, to broaden the discourse in every possible direction to harness the will in the best way.

It is not a question of putting together a plethora of words, but of building a real labyrinth without fear for the reader, without being impressed by the obvious inappropriateness that a well-educated person would notice. The accumulation of logical processes explodes the linearity of meaning and the contrast that derives from it.

But the word is incomplete and moves at the borders of life, that is, it works to corrode border territories, if well articulated in speaking, it penetrates to the lands sparsely populated by references and correspondences, but it cannot go beyond, towards the extreme solitude of action.

Completeness and incompleteness correspond more or less to absence and presence, the more or less is given by the region in which the word digs, a middle ground that is never fully explored and never completely unknown.

The true word does not exist, even if delusions may have affirmed the contrary, even memory knows it, that in its confused recording does not find words that can cover the sensations that I bring to the surface, confused, peremptory but also too fast and transitory to be fixed in a saying. The absence of what has already happened has a strong consistency that constantly replicates by withdrawing at every solicitation, and yet from this encounter that is also clash and contradiction, the architectural completeness of saying emerges and the dream of action comes back to life, in the same way that life becomes a dream.

I fall into the dark lake of punctuality and I still worry about turning back, about making the absurd balance between living and dying, of absence and the time of absence in the absence of time. Access to punctuality is unacceptable for the reason of doing, but it cannot be brought to completion without the excess, the overabundance of doing. In the end, even in my personal and irreversible confrontation with the one that is, there remains the fascination of a world created and inserted into the protocols and rules of production.

I don't care about impartiality, real or presumed. I have long debated in my heart about its possible existence, it doesn't exist, there are palliatives that are otherwise called making yourself safe, ensuring your survival. Disgust and boredom. I don't want to share or correct someone or something, if I did it the purpose was indirect, it was elsewhere, it was addressed to other desires. I have never tried to give the best of myself in writing, elsewhere you have to look, where your feet sink into the mud, where the effort of progress makes your eyes cry.

Sincerity in speech is the virtue of the weak. The strong seek it first in doing and, after receiving many punches in the face, they find it in

acting. Only action can be sincere, because only it is true.

The Lutheran fury, the extremism of the guardian of the orthodoxy of words, the last outpost guarding ideas, are nothing but philistine movements.

The fluidity of speech sometimes hides the emptiness of thought, in any case the absence of any attempt to circumvent the will. The same passion for heresy, if limited to speaking, is useful bragging.

From the accumulation I never learn who I am, at most I can get to fuel multiple suspicions about my disguise.

Touching on irritating topics is like touching raw nerves. We all, more or less, play a part and we don't like it when someone suddenly tears off the mask behind which we hide. A demonic didactic of doing thinks the opposite, but it can't be imposed for long, sooner or later it eats itself.

The internal comparison of action sharpens the punctuality capable of penetrating, of realizing the action. This does not mean that an increase in penetrating depth corresponds to an increase in the understanding of what is being acted upon. These orders of measurement are absolutely foreign to the different consciousness and are, if present as a trace, a legacy of the immediate modes of knowledge, equipped with strong aggressiveness.

A sudden intuitive event almost always unleashes an equally rapid storm that tends to calm down if I do not support it with appropriate work on the will to control, if I do not try to limit the damage of everything that means doing forced things. This work is long and leaves along the way a long trail of wasted intuitions, prematurely aborted, in a long itinerary of frustrations. The ship does not decide to set sail and cannot leave the ballast on the dock.

Absence is no longer completely so if it leaves a trace in presence, here in the world I created, daily repeated, daily word that never stops. On the top of the highest roof I observe the village where someone will die and I turn my apprehensive gaze around.

Thus the word crumbles the compact fiction of reflection, a reality usefully duplicated to be used on artificial but productive models of appropriate wisdom. This fiction fails to make me feel what is forever fused in my hard heart, and yet I work on this work until it hurts, until I desire to see myself from the outside, to feel the descriptive word that indicates with its implacable arm where I have lacked courage and have only indignation left, a currency easily spendable by any philistine. Impossible sign of the rearguard, destined for the pulper like any hypothesis founded on punctilious but inconsistent meticulousness.

I overturn my expectations, and my pains, I let the demon take possession of the word, make it torment and waste, raise it to excess where it cannot hold up as such and it falls into the vagueness of myth and dream, clown and mime, I let all this happen in an unbearable way,

subjecting myself to the wait for what destiny can answer me, to its possible offers, not a slothful wait but a preparatory wait for action.

The immense torrent that comes out of it cannot be stopped by my measured superstitions, the word says without taking it into account, even if I am afraid and make signs of impatience, it continues to say and the remembrance flow to show its bearing. My devices constitute an entire rhetorical system and remain insufficient. In the background the threat of oblivion that closes the listening of the saying, infesting every further insistence. The past remains itself despite the desperate incursions with which I try to move it, it denies itself to the multiplicity that I propose with imprudent frankness.

Yet I am sure of the path I am walking. I am sure of what will happen and of the potential of what has happened as the soul of the future happening. I am sure that from the current word future action can be born if this word does not wrap itself in the shroud of awareness of its own limits.

I can smell the stale stench from here, even from the old readings, mine and not only mine, from more or less literary avant-gardes of every era, all ended up in the attic, all committed suicide on the altar of their own inability to say.

But, say what?

The nothingness of phantasmagoria, the obviousness of utopian analysis slightly adapted to ancient common sense, the truculence of commonplaces, of invective that nevertheless hits the mark because the target is immensely larger than the bullet.

Desire must be seriously placed in the marginal sphere of possession, it cannot constitute the purpose of doing, in return it crumbles into the nothingness of what I desire, a ghost constructed by my imagination, which doing itself daily takes care of suppressing. The unachievability of desire is the guarantee that it burns here and now and constitutes the most lively nourishment of the intuition that something goes wrong in all the positions in which I try to accommodate and make my programs fit together.

Possession is the killing of desire, I cannot desire what I possess, I must only defend and safeguard it, measure and register it, verifying its correspondences and seals, if I close it in this way I possess its mute and stiff corpse.

The more I squeeze, the less I possess, even if it were the extreme synthesis, the skeleton of the world I created. This affirmation, to which I contribute with the forced doing that I continually feed, annihilates me if I do not break it with the renunciation of the will to possess and therefore if I do not accept the impossible safeguard of what can never be safeguarded.

If I remain a prisoner of a miserable perspective of acquisition, I massacre everything around me, my hunger for the unknowable feeds

on the putrid food of the known and turns me into an eater of corpses, completeness carves deep scars of absence into my body, signs of fire and flames where the sad metaphor of the absolute lives.

The dream of quality is at the center of my path toward the thing, it stands unattainable and incorruptible, excessive, immense. It has all the luxuriance of nature, even its stupendous objectivity, obtuse and cruel, mysterious, inscrutable, that no storm can scratch.

Access to the thing reduces the dream of the thing to my imperceptible punctuality, sooner or later it will lead me back to the task of remembering, the most intense and incomprehensible part of the active adventure, the word comes back into play again.

The pain depicted by the evening that becomes more intense, of the colors that now, from the bars, struggle to tell me something about the world outside. Deciphering this increasingly obscure message is not possible, in its details and in its meanders. There is no snow outside, only a horrible concrete courtyard. The brightness that my almost extinguished eyes reflect on me is the last attempt of light, then the darkness of critical denial. Here I will begin my work as a mole again.

The multiplicity of strategies and paths of doing does not lead to a technological management of accumulation, in the same way one can consider the cognitive effort as a crossroads of intentions that the very organization of the will of reason reduces to a coercion of doing, to a strictly unitary project.

A flow of cognitive phenomena can however be structured in such a way as to be able to escape, at least in part, from the all-encompassing will. This is not synonymous with randomness and arbitrariness that can be codified in turn in fairly controllable frequency modulations. Not the mechanism left to itself in front of the hinge-shaped schemes but a path built in reverse where pushes and facilitations stumble that are capable of throwing the protocol correspondence out of tune.

I am not saying that all this is not punctually present in my writings, extreme contradiction of my ill-advised statements of principle, a bird's eye view would immediately prove me wrong if I affirmed this frivolity. I say, on the contrary, that now and immediately we must work on words, if we want to speak to future possible actions and how we will implement them, even continuing to start, to be able to reconnect a logical and historical thread, from what has been done, mistakes first and foremost.

I cannot tell the truth, not even my truth, in the rampant chatter, while I am surrounded by supposed totalities that systematically reveal themselves through modest partial reproductions. I dream of the crossing that will give me back what I have stolen, but I cannot remain seated in an armchair, or even on a stone, I must leap forward, dispute the appearances of comfort that surround me.

Intuition does this sometimes. It grabs me, disintegrates me, makes

me explode, exposes, but only to myself, my wounds. To the world I am the same Philistine as always, even if I were to throw my credentials in its face, it would take them for pieces of waste paper.

If I persist, if I face the clash, what the world understands is only the interval that my diversity suddenly makes visible, not when and where I have entered into desolation. The intuitive tension of the border remains a confusion of mine, personal, that only upsets me, a threshold that allows me only a greeting on the already burning pyre.

Expand the words, make them explode individually, shake the exhaustive faith, surprising them, surpassing them, making the meanings held captive escape from them, shake them violently so as to surprise, in the end, every desire for mystification, for control.

Not a new flowering of beautiful abstractions, a new sequence of poetic stigmata, but an acceleration of action, a continuous revisitation of schemes and coordinations, compositions and styles. No embarrassment in the peripheries of the ridiculous, often this flowering is held back by the obsequiousness of conformism. The word intimidates, even if I demonstrate without scruples its limits and pretenses, and I too am intimidated, but I try to go beyond, as always.

But the will is there to control, so I must insist on an analytical project, completely limited to doing, that is capable of going beyond the technical obstacles and moral qualms, beyond the need to withdraw into myself to lick my wounds, I must cut the contours in an indefinite way, I must disillusion myself.

If reason remains the servant of the will, there is no destiny, but only the asphyxiation of forced doing resists and consolidates. By breaking this alliance, surrounding and confusing the will, there is a way to find an unknown path in the forest.

The astonishment at the immediate awareness of the superpowers of the will is extreme. Often one fails even to grasp the intuitive signals that trace a possible way out. I must disturb this sort of daze, bring to the fore the ridiculous claims of voluntary control, develop the signs and incisions of negative critical interpretation.

The life-and-death struggle with the will does not have as its objective the uncertainty of decisions, this is a stupid cliché. The problem of the dominion of choice and over choice is different from that of the obligation to choose, of forced choosing. The fragility of intuitions makes this second problem devoid of immediate reference of struggle, extreme and unpredictable oscillations derive from this.

Thinking of not wanting is a hopeless exercise, it is like breaking in two, accepting and not accepting wanting to choose. The wall that surrounds me grows higher and higher, this is not the way to deal with reality, you need to dig walkways and build labyrinths.

In the face of intuition, sensations arise that are dazzling, radical, and immediately directed at restoring order. I resist, this is the auto-

matic response of doing to itself. This resistance comes from the essential structures of reason that support doing. It is a typical reaction of the abyss.

Why accept intuition? Why put myself at risk if its mere presence is capable of upsetting my miserable certainties? I do not accept thinking about how to defend the prison wall in which I am writing these lines [2008]. If I were to accept this way of doing things I would be at the bottom of the abyss.

Faced with the clashes that intuition unleashes within me, my sensitivity sharpens and I cannot stop the clash between the outside of immediacy and the inside, my conscience does not want to fatten in vacuous stupidity. The mirror produced by intuition sends twisted signals, devoid of sense. The struggle to give them a sense without brutally subjecting them to immediate conscience, is without a future.

The frailty of intuition must be strengthened by my interpretative work produced on the will and its mechanisms. The result is to provide that apparent inconsistency, loaded with vital meanings, substitutions of diaphanous appearances with demanding involvements.

The chameleon-like journeys that I oppose to the will cannot all be emblematically distorting, that is, tied to the orthodox model of the labyrinth. Some of them must bring aid to the same will to choose, presenting lighter models, not only the heavy ones of the cut of significance or of the failure to land in the perceptive territory of sense.

The element of surprise, even in this authentic perspective, still works even if immediacy maintains its recovery capabilities intact.

I confront the one who is and I am in action, punctual in the thing, the world has painfully run aground at the Pillars of Hercules of the overcoming. I have no real different consciousness and not even a real immediate consciousness, I am balanced in front of the one who is and I listen to its redundancies that induce me now to an emotional closure now to a sudden opening out of time.

I compare myself and ask myself, this is enough to put me in a position to act.

One must be wise to become foolish. One cannot be foolish first and then try to become wise. Folly blocks the road to wisdom, but not vice versa.

Understanding, conquering logical and cultural tools, up to wisdom, the extreme terrain of consciousness is nothing but preparation for madness. Standing up against the world, standing firm in one's place while everyone else bows to the passing of things and rules, not fearing assaults and condemnations, scandals and excommunications, all this is necessarily seen as the action of one who provokes aversion and hostility.

Enemies surround him. The worst are sometimes those who share, but only on a theoretical level, his madness. Rising up against the rules

is madness, but it implies a deep knowledge of these rules, otherwise it is the other type of madness, the one that is not a consequence of wisdom, but precedes it.

Wisdom, remaining in quantity, seeks lightness; for it is necessary to distance oneself from everything that reminds one of and supports the heaviness of knowledge. The resulting stripping down does not undermine the rules, but rather essentializes them in the light of the logic of everything and now. When it can be defined as being in full contrast with the traditional organization of accumulation, one can speak of true wisdom, that is, its entirety reaches the sought lightness and the entire knowledge is emptied from within and its content deposited elsewhere, like a burden too heavy.

I am not saying that this search for uselessness is simply the cancellation of the useful trace that knowledge inextricably carries with it, I am saying that the affirmation of this contract with heaviness is realized as the reference points of the logic of domination disappear, leaving only the veil that once covered them, while now makes them identifiable.

In wisdom I empty myself and knowledge and converge in myself, even if I know that this experiment is destined to remain incomplete. Converging in myself means bouncing the ball on me, the ball Rilke spoke of, thrown by a stranger once, imperceptibly, lightly.

Wisdom is a container of myself, light, almost transparent, that allows me to affirm the usefulness of the world and its uselessness for me. It is not a rigorous affirmation, but why should it be?

This emptying of knowledge from within is an important conception of liberation, purely quantitative, of course, but weakened to the point of constituting a veil so inconsistent as to deny the utility of the self, the use of the self in a way controlled by the will. The emptying frees itself of knowledge without critically declaring it expired, which would be another way of attacking accumulation, which I already know, but it does so by delegitimizing its use, referring it to the world in which it is necessary for control and the perfection of control.

This whirling movement is almost imperceptible, like that of the spinning top of the child god, it is progressively absorbed by the knowledge that does not even notice it, the movement is for me, the many faces of the toy work for me and explain to me that it is not worth draining existence in doing if one does not at least know, and this is wisdom, that one can do without it, by acting.

If I stand against the rules I question them all, I cannot surround a more or less large perimeter of protection where I can declare the conventions and agreements suspended, and let the rest not be my enemy, it is precisely this rest that first senses my strangeness and declares it an enemy. Nor can the word resolve this opposition, because it belongs to the rules and is the word of logic, while beyond there is only the cry of anguish and fear.

Preparing the ship is not sailing, the crucial moment is the abandonment of the dock, the exit from the port, the first slightly higher waves, the song of fear that prompts the memory of what is left on the boarding line, the civilization of accommodation and comfort. A new vision of the world before me.

The essential point is the action, the point of the point, a wolfish rush towards the absolutely other, the gaze at the desert wind. The one is the cosmic reference, a place of metaphysical cracks and unknown tones, not separate and distinguishable.

In front of me the navigation, the sea reflecting the sky, the sky reflecting the sea. The territory of solitude and the ripples of the sea. It is life that waves, I would like to go back. This is a sign of the opening still far away.

The marine cemetery where life is just beginning.

Paul Valéry and his *métaphysique susoleillée*.

I distribute my atmosphere around these square millimeters that host me [2008]. My cell welcomes me every morning, the sun has not yet shown itself.

Immediacy teaches us to insist on not letting ourselves be overwhelmed by the discomfort of doing, it has little else to teach, thank goodness. It takes my throat to look at a slice of sky climbing on the table. The small window above recalls millennia of suffering, which is why the bars groan every morning when they are hit by the guards with the rubber hammer.

I breathe in deeply the acrid harshness of the cold morning in the half-deserted courtyard of the promenade.

Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas.

The underlying constructive ground of doing, where accumulation ultimately takes place, is intersected by unfulfilled and unfulfillable desires for completeness. Force plays a false and approximate role, incapable of guaranteeing linear itineraries. Attachment to protocols is less strong than it appears at an immediate level. Descending to this more intimate level is not possible except in the interpretative phase.

The highest point of this opposition is the experience in action, the going beyond simple saying. Destroying the enemy (the real one) on the level of chatter is a banal debate of opinions, it is on the level of action and future planning that we must clash, if we do not want to remain bogged down in the daily banalities of a sterile coherence to principles that risk remaining mummified forever.

Trieste, April 29, 2008

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Introduction to the first edition

Man's true weapon is the hand.

Man is an animal that nature has selected with a hand with a thumb opposite to the other fingers.

An animal that grabs, that wants to take, hold firmly in its hand, make its own.

The weapon in its essential meaning is therefore the prosthesis that increases the active capacity of the hand. Prosthesis meant in Greek the act of putting forward. Considering carefully, from the arrows whose tips were obtained from pieces of flint appropriately sharpened, used by our remote ancestors, up to the sophisticated weapons of today, which strike from a distance and multiply by thousands the single target of the past, the line of technological development is unitary and uninterrupted.

Using a weapon is easy. Even an imbecile can be armed. In fact, in most cases, behind a drawn weapon there is almost always an imbecile, or at least, someone who is forced with his back to the wall.

Society produces constant marginalization, its mercilessly competitive mechanism pushes an enormous quantity of people towards the extreme periphery of survival.

Lack of work is only part of the problem, often a cliché and an alibi.

Those who are unemployed somehow make do, reduce their demands, simplify their demand for goods, carve out a niche for themselves in society which, in this case, is even willing to help them out, to help them with some miserable subsidy, but first wants to make sure that they are willing to stick to the agreements.

The work itself can be such that it translates into taking up arms. Think of the soldier, the policeman, the bodyguard, jobs that institutionally require the use of weapons, and for which there is even a risk allowance that increases, even if only slightly, the basic salary emolument.

Whoever wears a uniform, any uniform, in the morning, putting the weapon in his pocket and taking up his service machine gun, does not reflect on the matter at all, these are conditioned movements, extinguished by the profession in the dulling of the moral meanings that the

gesture could still present, at the flicker of a little reflection.

Armed with a hand is therefore a problem of reflection, a movement of consciousness, a moment, even if extremely concentrated in time, in which the person holding a weapon tries to understand why he has chosen that particularly violent and aggressive prosthesis.

Returning to the question of the prosthesis, it seems clear to me that even in the most complex choice there can be a residue of stupidity. There is never a clear-cut placement in this order of things. Nothing is black and white. Life is nuance and modulation, even in stupidity.

I have seen comrades, whose human availability and revolutionary commitment I appreciated, handle a weapon with voluptuous accuracy and evident satisfaction, caress its smooth, burnished steel, admire its structure and power, a form of imbecility more widespread than one might think, even among comrades.

So, between the fist that holds the weapon and the weapon that is held in the fist, in the hand that hosts and masters it, there must be a contact, a sort of psychological boundary, always present in the consciousness of the individual who holds that weapon, who has decided to hold it.

This contact can never reverse its directional sense, that is, the object can never prevail over the critical condition that prompted its use, describing its positive elements as a technological prosthesis capable of increasing the capabilities of those who use it.

Of course, the very nature of this facilitation can go beyond a more or less extensive degeneration of the initial critical condition. The weapon makes one feel strong and invincible, and this condition of subjection to the prosthesis, if prolonged over time and increased by a certain availability of tools, can reach the extreme that makes one almost feel naked in the event of a lack of those who have become accustomed to going around armed.

And nudity is, in addition to being a fortuitous contingent occurrence, also more often, a psychological condition of inferiority.

The growth of power, due to physical possession, to the very contact between the skin and the object, should never escape the critical condition seen above, under penalty of subordination to the prosthesis and an inadequate capacity to see all the limits that the latter entails.

There is no doubt, in fact, that having a weapon in your hand does not, in itself, mean a willingness to use it. This is even more true in relation to the deadly power of the prosthesis itself. The growth of the illusion of power, sometimes ridiculously boundless, does not completely eliminate the vigilant moral evaluation of the consequences related to the concrete use of the weapon.

These two elements, which would seem to exclude each other, do not cancel each other out but rather forcefully confront each other and often end up, where imbecility has not already had the upper hand,

by constituting an irresolvable contradiction, sometimes charged with deadly consequences for those who have unwisely drawn their weapon without realizing that they are not prepared to use it.

In itself, the ferocity with which the weapon is used in many cases (just think of mass killings or executions, or the banal obedience to orders in the case of the military), is the exact opposite of understanding and deciding what one is doing. Not knowing what to do and doing it without knowing are equivalent and, in the long run, the bestial efficiency of the military and the professional killer ends up finding its own arrival station.

The use of the prosthesis I am discussing, the weapon in hand, is a matter of conscience. But what is a matter of conscience? It is the knowledge of reality made one's own, that is, critically introjected into the broad range of relations that constitute it.

No aspect of this overall movement should remain in that grey area where we keep the most difficult elements of what constitutes our actions, often disturbing because they touch correspondences kept secret but which are nevertheless within us and develop consequences that are not always predictable.

The weapon in hand is therefore the use of a technological reinforcement that should belong to the responsible decision of the individual.

I say should because it is not always possible to acquire, in this field, a sufficient critical depth. No execution of orders is therefore acceptable, no delegation, no ranking of skills in action. In the same way, no imbecile becomes what he is not simply by holding a weapon.

Here we find two arguments, contrasting with each other, yet linked together by a worrying thread of logic. The first concerns decision-making simplification, the second the exceptionality of certain situations that impose a sort of hierarchy of skills. Let's develop them calmly.

The critical decision of the individual, who assumes responsibility for the actions he carries out, is based on facts that should appear illuminated by a critical evaluation, not made evident by an ideological prejudice, which could hide an inadvertent trivialization.

If I decide to strike a person responsible for exploitation, I could also eliminate any critical light and simply rely on the symbol. Not that policeman, or that judge, or that doctor, or that journalist, etc., but any policeman, judge, doctor, journalist, etc. There is no doubt that the reasoning makes sense, and has been done, and, within certain limits, remains shareable in the abstract.

But in practice it determines a considerable risk, that of critical zeroing and of entrusting the decision to banal ideological maximalism.

The willingness to delve into the specific condition of the enemy you want to strike is not important to avoid striking a possible "innocent" person, because no one is innocent, but it is important to avoid trivializing the action itself by reducing it to a simple knocking down of skittles,

all the same in the night of ideological fogs.

And then there is another argument, the recurring one of the imbeciles, who not by chance always embrace, with fervor and passionate heat, this thesis which spares them any critical burden which, given the limited mental capacities at their disposal, they would not be able to deal with.

These considerations do not contradict the thesis of hitting the heap, which I retain the memory of an old polemic, since, on the contrary, the identification of the heap is a more difficult critical question and not a secondary access to decisional trivialization.

Let us now turn to the other topic: the need, in cases of particular difficulty, for a hierarchy of skills. Here too, the problem must be traced back to the critical analysis carried out by the individual.

Thus the tendency of the stupid person to consider himself omnipotent returns, also because of the armed prosthesis that chance and not his own conscious choice has placed in his hands. The illusion of omnipotence leads directly to not understanding the difficulties of the situation, to underestimating them precisely because of his own incompetence and to considering himself capable of doing what in fact he is not capable of doing. The problems of this particular type of imbecility are unimaginable.

Learning about difficulties is an essential part of critical learning. Not being able to properly evaluate one's own limits, avoiding embarking on ventures beyond one's strength, is a presumption that prevents the open-mindedness necessary for learning. The same goes for all the times that critical evaluation is replaced with simple enthusiasm or, even worse, with a superficial love of danger, or desire for risk.

Returning to the beginning of our discussion, it seems to me that we can now see more clearly the relationship that exists between the weapon in hand and the ability to understand.

I would like to point out, however, that every capacity of consciousness, which draws nourishment from the intellect to expand into the field of possible relationships, but which does not stop there, going beyond into action as a condition of continuous passage that is never concluded, nor conclusive, every capacity of consciousness is only in a minimal part a gift of the so-called nature.

In its essential component it is effort, reflection, experience, test, courage, search for difference. If all this analytical apparatus is thought to be set aside as junk by taking up arms, because the burnished prosthesis makes us omnipotent, the error is serious and will not be long in making its nefarious effects felt.

These effects are of two types, once again only apparently antithetical.

The first is given by the critical incapacity that dries up the possession of the weapon into an empty protuberance capable of generating

every type of inconclusiveness, from getting killed, to killing without knowing why, waiting for the very fact of having eliminated an enemy to bring forth the critical clarification that should have preceded his elimination.

The second is given by the fact that many comrades have held back from taking up arms and attacking because of the incorrect belief that they are not suited to the use of those prostheses, thinking of them as suitable only for a certain type of person and not attributing their evident (sometimes even pathetic) inadequacy, as would be right, to a lack of critical analysis.

Ultimately, the problem remains the same: nobody gives us anything for free, there are no easy conditions to enable us to gain possession of the knowledge indispensable for action, and thinking of the weapon only in its limited (and marginal) technical characteristic of use is just another way of escaping from the fundamental problem of critical knowledge, the measure and active condition of every attack against the class enemy.

As seen in the preceding pages, I have tried here to focus all my attention on the problem of the weapon in hand, on why, at a certain moment in life, a man aware of what a weapon means, of its deadly destructive potential, decides to take it up, and, above all, to use it.

I believe I have at least contributed to making people reflect on the mechanisms behind this decision, logical and emotional processes that are sometimes unclear and often taken for granted as trivialities that are best not to think about at the time of action.

But these banalities are themselves the banalities of theoretical analysis, of the critical examination of the situation that is being faced in its entirety, and to define this aspect as secondary, or unimportant, since when we are "at gunpoint" we are the strongest, the possessors of the magic prosthesis, is a tragic error.

The weapon, due to its close connection with the theory that critically penetrates the world, is therefore something more – as we have seen – than a simple piece of iron, and this something more can take on more complex consistencies and forms than the burnished and heavy object that we usually call a weapon, that is, it can take on the appearance of a relationship, of a codification of relationships with a view to achieving common goals, in other words it can take on the appearance of an organization.

Organization is also a prosthesis, and all the considerations made above are valid for it too, with some more delicate and difficult clarifications, which I will endeavor to make here below, hoping for the attention of my few companions, willing to follow me in this reasoning.

Here the problem of expectations returns. There are those who imagine that everything depends on the outside and that a force, unknown to them and for this reason imagined beyond all human mea-

sure, arrives to give a meaning to their life otherwise banal and subordinated to current opinions. Expectation that systematically ends up being disillusioned.

This man is irremediably condemned to remain waiting, even when he advances, chest out, onto the stage of what he mistakes for History, and declares war on the world in the name of a force that exists only in his unfertile imagination.

Outside of this nonsense, outside of every pompous display of one's own ignorance, there is concrete reality, and here, in the same movement that produces critical analysis, the form of specific organization is born in function of a project.

It is not this form that determines the project, but it remains an instrument of the project, even if at times it presses at the doors of the attention and emotionality of the individual comrade, soliciting broader significance. The ductility of the form of the organization is therefore an essential element, if the latter must be an instrument of a project and not, on the contrary, steal from it all the care it deserves and keep it for itself, in a dull quantitative growth.

I do not want to go into the specific organizational choice here. Personally, as an insurrectionist anarchist, I have come to the conviction that the best solution, therefore the most suitable form of specific organization, is the "informal" one, others may convince themselves differently, and prefer perhaps more rigid structures, deluding themselves into thinking they can obtain more concrete results in the short term: acronyms, communiqués, claims, campaigns, and all the old junk to which a not so recent era of the history common to each of us had accustomed us. Absolutely free, for goodness sake.

If someone thinks that the prosthesis is useful because of its rigidity, come forward, propose seriously and discuss seriously, instead of affirming or modulating gradations of value. But, please, do not start from the instrument, start from the project that the instrument must use, otherwise everything is trivialized in the flattening of the thesis that "any cop is the good one".

Starting from the project means critically analyzing reality. And here the problem comes back to bite its own tail. Those who do not have the possibility of carrying this study to the end have two alternatives: either they choose what is being developed, that is, what is circulating, more or less approximately, in the debate among comrades; or they decide on their own to find the means to think differently, but really differently, the suggestion, good for all tastes, to always and in any case limit oneself to saying no being only a pathetic side of banality.

Now, on the table there is both the discussion on the informal organization, as a revolutionary instrument of struggle for an attack against the institutions and the men of power, and, quietly and with little success, the structured hypothesis of a more rigid organization: acronym,

political declarations, basic strategic choices, campaigns to be claimed, etc.

In short, an organization that speaks for itself, that does not propose critical margins, an organization that knows what it has to do and that acts in the name of efficiency. After all, otherwise, what kind of prosthesis would it be? I ask myself, and I ask you: can an imbecile, or worse still a stubborn ignoramus, sure of knowing the universe thanks to his own ignorance, accept the first hypothesis, that of the informal organization that would force him to a critical analysis of reality of which he himself, first of all, recognizes himself incapable? Certainly not. He prefers the second solution, that is the only one that "thinks for him", or at least that gives this impression.

That's why I put these texts together, because the comrades mentioned here were all able to think for themselves, especially when they were armed.

I hope that, for once, this reading will be an opportunity to reflect on what needs to be done and not just another way to fantasize about the past.

Catania, July 31, 1998

Alfredo M. Bonanno

«Lack of individuality takes its revenge everywhere: a weak, thin, dull personality, which denies and disowns itself is good for nothing – let alone good for philosophy. "Altruism" has no value in heaven or on earth; all great problems demand great love, and only strong, full, confident spirits, who rest firmly on themselves, are capable of this. There is a noticeable difference between a thinker who approaches his problems in a personal way, so much so as to find in them his destiny, his necessity and even his best happiness, and one who approaches them "impersonally", that is, trying to touch and grasp them with the antennae of cold and curious thought. In the latter case, however promising, one gets nowhere: in fact, great problems, assuming that they let themselves be grasped, do not let themselves be held by invertebrate and weak men, because this has been their taste from eternity – which incidentally coincides with that of all worthy women. How is it then that I have not yet met anyone, not even in books, who has faced morality as a person, who has recognized morality as a problem and in this problem his personal necessity, anguish, pleasure, passion? Evidently morality has not been a problem up to now; rather, it was the very point at which, after all the distrust, the disagreements, the contradictions, an agreement was reached, the sacred place of peace, where thinkers also rested from themselves, breathed a sigh of relief, began to live again. I do not see anyone who has dared to criticize moral value judgments; I feel that even the attempts dictated by scientific curiosity, by the flawed experimental imagination of the psychologist and the historian, who often anticipate a problem and grasp it in flight without knowing exactly what it is they have grasped, are lacking in this sense. I have scarcely found a few stray hints to begin a history of the origin of these sentiments and value judgments (which is quite different from a criticism of them and still different from a history of ethical systems); in one particular instance I have done everything to encourage a tendency and an attitude towards this kind of history – in vain, I seem to understand. These historians of morality (especially English ones) are of little importance: they too are innocently subject to a certain morality and, without knowing it, are its squires and followers; with that ever-so-faithfully repeated popular superstition of Christian Europe according to which the characteristics of moral action are altruism, self-denial, self-sacrifice, or pity and compassion» (F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, V, 345).

(...)

The moral fracture

That an action is considered “just” is not a sufficient element of judgment for it to be put into action, executed. For this to happen, other elements are needed, some of which, such as the underlying moral consideration, are completely extraneous to the objective validity and “justness” of the action itself.

This is visible in the difficulties that all comrades encounter when they find themselves undertaking actions that, in the light of logic alone, seem faultless.

This is, as I will try to demonstrate here, a moral obstacle that must be overcome, an obstacle that leads directly to the creation of a real moral “fracture”, with consequences that are not always easy to predict.

We have long supported, together with many other comrades, the uselessness of large mass demonstrations, peaceful and demonstrative. In their place, and alongside demonstrations, also mass, but organized in an insurrectional way, we advocate the possibility (or rather, the necessity), of small destructive actions, of direct attack against the structures of capital responsible for the current situation of exploitation and genocide on a global level.

Putting aside any discussion of method and political evaluation, I think it is useful to reflect a little on the different personal disposition towards these actions.

In the end, in each of us, no matter how much theoretical study we have done, some ghosts remain alive: other people’s property is one of these. Others could be other people’s lives, God, the civility of behavior, sex, tolerance for other people’s opinions, and so on. We are, to limit ourselves to our assumption, all in agreement against property, however, the moment we reach out to attack it, an alarm signal goes off inside us. Centuries of moral conditioning act without our knowledge and unleash two reactions, equal and opposite. On the one hand, the thrill of the forbidden, which leads many comrades to senseless petty thefts often beyond immediate and inevitable need; on the other, the discomfort for “immoral” behavior. Putting aside the thrill, which does not interest me and which I willingly leave to those who delight in these things, I want to insist on the “discomfort”.

The fact is that we have all been reduced to the state of “herd” animals. This is not the place to quote and I do not accept any progenitor in an absolute way. The thing is obvious. The morality that everyone (“everyone”, therefore also those who deny it in theory and then find alibis of all kinds to avoid transforming this denial into practice) shares is the “altruistic” one, respectable in behavior, tolerant in relationships, egalitarian and leveling in utopias. And the territories of this morality are still to be discovered. How many are the companions who proudly declare to have visited some of them and who would then retreat in horror before their own sister’s breast? Perhaps many, certainly not a few.

And we are always prisoners of an idea of slavery, the moral one, when we justify before ourselves (and before the tribunal of history) our attack on private property, by stating that the expropriators must be expropriated. In this way, we reaffirm the “eternal” validity of the morality of our previous masters, leaving it to posterity to judge whether or not those into whose hands we have placed what we personally expropriated can be considered expropriators.

From justification to justification we rebuild the church, almost without realizing it. I said “almost”, because deep down we realize it, but we are afraid of it.

If we take away property from others, this fact has a social meaning, that is, it constitutes a rebellion and, precisely for this reason, the owners of property who are attacked must be representatives of the class that holds the property and not simply owners of something. We are not aesthetes of the nihilistic act, for whom it would be fine to take away alms from the poor man’s plate because that “is” property too. But the act of expropriation has its own meaning precisely in the class position, not in the “incorrect” behavior that the person we intend to expropriate has had in the past. Otherwise, we should exclude from the legitimacy of an expropriation a capitalist who pays his employees according to union rates and does not let them lack anything else provided for by law, in addition to not selling at exorbitant prices and not lending at usury. Why should we ever concern ourselves with these things?

The same problem arises when we speak of “destructive” acts. Many comrades cannot find peace. But why these acts? What is the outcome? What validity do they have? They do not benefit us and are only harmful to others.

Attacking, for example, just for the sake of argument, a company that supplies weapons to South Africa or finances the racist regime of Israel or designs nuclear plants or manufactures electronic equipment that is then used to better direct traditional weapons, and many other activities of the sort, does not emphasize the specific responsibilities of the person being attacked, but rather their class position. Specific responsibilities are an element of judgment for strategic and polit-

ical choices, class position is the only element of judgment for ethical choices. In this way, a little clarity can be made. The moral foundation of the action lies entirely in class differentiation, in the different belonging to two components of society that cannot find mixtures or alliances and whose existence will end with the destruction of one or the other. The political and strategic foundation, on the other hand, determines a series of considerations that can also be contradictory. All the objections listed above are obviously attributable to this second aspect and do not concern the moral foundation.

But, without realizing it, it is precisely in the terrain of moral decision that many of us find obstacles. After all, the mass demonstration, peaceful (or almost), in any case simply declarative of intent "against", was another thing. Even the very violent clashes with the police were another thing. There was an intermediate reality, between us and the "enemy", a reality that allowed us to save our moral alibi. We felt sure of being "right", even when we took - in the context of democratic dissent - positions not shared by the great mass of demonstrators. Even when we broke some windows, things always remained in such a way that we could fix them.

In directly confronting the attack, we, alone, or with other comrades who can never give us any psychological "cover" of the kind we received so easily within the "mass", things are different. Here we, as individuals, decide our attack against the institution. We have no mediators, no alibis, no excuses. Either we attack or we retreat. Either we fully accept the class logic of the clash as an irreducible and solutionless opposition, or we go back towards bargaining, distinctions, linguistic and moral deceptions.

If we reach out and infringe on someone else's property - or something else, but always belonging to the class enemy - we must assume all the responsibilities, without being able to find excuses in presumed conditions of the collective situation as a whole. That is, we cannot postpone the moral judgment, regarding the need to attack and strike the enemy, to what others think, who, all together, contribute to determining the "collective situation". Let me explain this point better. It is not that I am against mass, counter-informative and preparatory work, against those intermediate struggles that must always exist in conditions of exploitation and misery. I am against a symbolic (exclusively symbolic) approach to these struggles. Therefore, they must be directed at obtaining results, even if partial, but concrete, immediate and visible, but with the premise of using the insurrectional method, that is, a method based on the refusal of delegation, on the autonomy of intervention, on permanent conflict and on self-managed grassroots structures. What I do not agree with is the insistence of some on the need to stop here, when they do not claim to stop before, to a simple struggle of counter-information and denunciation, moreover orchestrated and

paced on the deadlines provided by repression. It is possible, indeed it is necessary, to do something else, and this something, at the present time, in a phase of violent and rapid restructuring, it seems to me can be identified in the direct, pulverized attack, towards the small objectives of the class enemy, objectives that are clearly visible in the territory (and when they are not visible, the work of preventive counter-information can make them visible with a minimum of effort).

I don't think there can be anarchist comrades who are against these practices, at least in principle. There may be those (and there are) who say they are against them based on a general consideration of the social and political situation, because they don't see a constructive mass outcome in it, and I can understand that. But there can be no condemnation a priori. The fact is that those who distance themselves from these practices are far fewer than those who, while accepting them, do not put them into practice. How can all this be explained? I think it can be explained precisely by this "moral fracture" that crossing the threshold of someone else's "right" entails in many comrades, like me and many others, educated from an early age to thank and apologize at every turn.

We often talk about the liberation of instincts and - in truth, without having clear ideas - we also talk about "living one's life" (a complex subject that deserves a separate study). We also talk about the rejection of the illusory ideals transmitted to us by the bourgeoisie in its victorious moment, at least rejection in the counterfeit terms in which those ideals have been imposed on us through current morality. Finally, we talk about the real satisfaction of our needs, which are not only the so-called primary needs of simple physical survival. Well, I think that for all this beautiful program, words are not enough. When we remained stuck on the shores of the old conception of class, based on the desire to "reappropriate" what had been unjustly taken from us (the product of our work), we were able to "speak" well (even if we then practiced badly), of needs, of equality, of communism and even of anarchy. Today, when this phase of simple reappropriation has been swiftly modified before our eyes by capital itself, we cannot resort to the same words, the same concepts. The time of words is slowly coming to an end. And we realize more and more every day that we are tragically backward, that we are enclosed in a ghetto of discourses within which we stop to bicker about topics that are now devoid of real revolutionary interest. And this while people travel quickly towards other meanings and other perspectives, slyly pushed by the improbable but effective solicitations of power.

The great work of freeing the new man from ethics, that enormous burden that was once built in the laboratories of capital and smuggled into the ranks of the exploited, this work has practically not even begun.

[Published in "Provocazione" n. 12, March 1988, p. 7] (...)

The elusive beast

There is a connection between what I can do and what I dream of doing. Between being content with the world as it is and trying to turn it upside down. This connection on the one hand touches the eternity of life in its unattainable, perhaps incomprehensible unfolding, on the other the buttresses of a modesty that has had only a few possibilities of defending itself.

Cursing your own inability is useless, the means to fight are not given away by anyone on the street corner. You have to tear them away from the walls of the temple, face the wrath of the gods who are worried about their fate, and the greedy tenacity of the enforcers assigned to the custody.

Sharp teeth and gaping jaws have fled at the first sound of a dog swatter. One must climb steep streets, difficult paths unrecognizable on the government condominium maps, meet danger face to face in the rarefied air of the heights, where it is not possible to play on misunderstandings, while elsewhere a smoke-filled cockpit can lay bare the frightened soul of a man-eater.

It is not the symbol of the mountain that interests me, nor that of the clearing to be sought in the impenetrable forest, the heart of man hides dark possibilities yet to be discovered and unpredictable seeds from which to bring forth fruits that the revolt has not yet had the chance to see. But this impressionable muscle for now beats timidly in the recesses of its own allocation.

He is a giant who imagines himself scaling the sky and has not reckoned with his own feet of clay. Why this weakness? It is not a question of muscle or of means at his disposal. It is certainly not firepower that distinguishes the elusive beast from the frightened soul who continues to tell himself the same stories of ghosts from the past in order to be able, in the evening, to close his eyes and find the restorative sleep of so much effort.

The prosthesis, when there is one, always needs a concrete reality to graft onto. I have seen fully armed destroyers decide to surrender and I have seen the elusive beast at work. Two different universes.

There are many threads that keep us tied, threads that the con-

science raises and subjects to periodic maintenance, threads of respectability and sacredness, threads so tenacious that they cannot even be scratched by words, indeed the more these words are exalted and exalting, the more those threads that mummify the conscience become stronger and thus slow down any stimulus to revolt.

If these threads are not broken first, and it is the work of the individual who must grow together with his companions in a similar effort towards action, roaring is only a linguistic gargle.

By breaking those threads there are no more proportions or measures, everything is suddenly overcome. The enemy's defensive architecture is equally strong and, perhaps, insurmountable, but its structures are no longer an obstacle for the beast that lunges at them. They do not fall, sometimes, they remain standing and it is precisely the animal with the strong and invincible sharp teeth that falls, and what does that mean? Perhaps for this reason a thousand other equally elusive beasts will not rise from their oblivion and launch themselves into the attack of that architecture without making calculations of centimeters or grams?

The enemy, if we look closely, is inaccessible with ordinary means of attack. When he does not immediately end the life of the elusive beast, he cuts its claws and teeth, tames it, offers it a meal and a salary at the end of the month, or, much more banally, gives it the opportunity to roar, to roar as much and as it wants (art. 272 of the Italian penal code has been abolished).

The wall that thus raises intelligent power is higher and stronger than any cage in the zoo.

Reflection can be woven with lightness and transparency, but it always remains a preventive structure of action, even in the best people it does not fail to highlight the melancholy that pervades the world of waiting, of postponement, of preparing oneself in view of being strong enough to do something.

The sadness of the inevitable failure is sometimes compensated for by the search for an even greater failure, that which cannot be concluded, put into action now and immediately, might as well be left open, possible but open to discussion and mutual deception, in the best good faith. In this way the preparatory work coils like a snake that wants to swallow its own tail. I certainly cannot fall into the trap of the worse the better, I cannot even fail to see the disproportion of forces. I am a serious person, me.

Yet the signs of pain are here, before me, not the pain of others, but my own, my own carrying of the incised flesh and the tortured bones. I can lay out this pain in its ugly fullness and I can cover it with the bandages of modesty.

Only the elusive beast, in its barbarity that cannot be assimilated by the stupefied big kids who play at being terrible, knows how to radical-

ize its refusal of domestication without spending much time examining the real limits not only of roaring but also of acting, of landing its own single, albeit deadly, blow.

The blow that is delivered without hesitation and without embarrassment, in itself without need for justification, the impersonal and objective grip on the throat, proud to say yes even in the face of awareness of one's own limits and weaknesses, characterizes the elusive beast.

The intuitive vision of action should be freed from all the memories and habits that crowd preventive reflection. It should be spoken of soberly and without that emphasis that inevitably falls into repetition and going back to what has already been said. A roar is more than enough, two risk becoming a chatter.

Every time you should be ready to leave to go further, to get out of the port of waiting where the boat is now tired of rocking in the same waters. This departure does not happen because the enemy has given a sign of weakness, but only because it must happen, because it is impossible for it not to happen. It can also be an instant without a sequel, a flash of the paw, it can instead be the instant that will be followed by the one in which it is allowed to witness the attack inflicted, the anger finally exploded, the action.

This is why the beast is elusive. With all due respect to the wait-and-see and the aspiring conquerors.

[Introduction to the second edition of *The Elusive Beast*, Trieste 2009]

If you chase it for a long time, the animal becomes ferocious.

He realizes how the so-called civil cohabitation is a ridiculous feature of the state fetish, and how underneath it remains intact the ancient repressive substance of domination, that of an indisputable absolutism because it is certain of its own strength.

The beast had sensed it, even when one stroked it along the fur, when one addressed to it brotherly words of comfort and tolerance, so that it would not feel the full force of the quills of the collar or the teeth of the bit with which one curbed its good-natured and lustful exuberance.

The chain had been extended to the edge of the field and, in recent times, even colored. Thus, his eyes of a tame beast had been able to see, as in a dream, what remained of the distant landscape, never reached because unreachable, always desired.

And then, as if for fun, he began to show his teeth to his master, to make a few rude noises, a few too many howls.

It's not that the master no longer has faith in the chain, even if it's longer, it's that he doesn't want it to get out, that other chained animals might allow themselves to gnash their teeth, make dirty noises or howl while looking with longing eyes at the distant landscape of freedom that they should never have looked at.

Here, from time to time, to test on which side lies the strength and ferocity, the master tightens the collar, shortens the chain and perhaps locks the beast in a cage. And these are nights of dismay for every desire for freedom.

All masters use the logic of example (what a tragic mistake that the chained ones also dreamed of a similar one), and they know that it is a logic that works.

At first, faced with the whippings and the shortening of the horizon, the howling and the gnashing of teeth seem to cease, then suddenly they start again, and it is a great deal of trouble for masters and grooms.

Deep down, something escapes the sclerotic calculation of domination. Like any monopolist, the one who produces and manages the force must also have the intelligence to set an acceptable price, otherwise, the result is reversed. By pulling the rope too much, it breaks and the beast can go free again.

In fact, strange as it may seem, the chain, the bit, the collar, and even the cage, with its padlocks and its guards, are only objects, symbols of a captivity that, to truly be a restraint and suffering, must be experienced as such, must be accepted, made one's own.

The beast that howls and bites the chain is already on the way to break the hesitation, to sail towards the free sea, to free one's mind from the acceptance of constraints. There are no stronger bonds than those made one's own, those that one no longer complains about and that, in the end, are considered means of survival and not impediments

to life, as in fact they are.

From this point of view, the master's whip or the groom's shortening of the chain are welcome, they are sacrosanct acts of domination that banish chatter and misunderstandings.

The master tortures, kills, locks up, massacres, reduces the chances of life of the beast to a minimum, he is not a friend of the beast just because he has lengthened the chain or thrown him a few more bones. Not more than a thought, for goodness sake! We are rational, beyond any possible doubt. We know how much the "the worse, the better" is to be condemned, we want to find other ways to revolt and revolution, we want the first to be well directed and the second well loaded with positive consequences for the free society of tomorrow.

And what if that very shortening, that out-of-measure repressive gesture, that well-placed blow, dissonant in the peaceful democratic atmosphere that softens the camp of the chained beasts, what if that very superfluous wickedness of the master, suggested by the fear of the howl or the gnashing of the beast, what if that very repressive act, so reassuring for the miserable conscience of the dominator, were to be the occasion for the unleashing?

Who can say? Each of us tolerates his chains more or less well, colors them or has them colored, carves out a niche in the social condition in which he lives waiting to die. Naturally, he does not realize it, he dreams, and dreaming he rambles and stammers about freedom, but then a thousand accepted and justified constraints guarantee him and keep him from unleashing himself.

Every now and then a small sign of impatience, without serious consequences: the blank ballot in the ballot box, or abstention, a muffled bang, some noisy route in the city clogged with junk and indifference, even a stadium-style squabble with the police, in short a few peeps rather than a real roar. The beast wakes up as a chick and does not realize that it is training to squawk in the farmyard.

In truth, there are other signs, apparently more consistent: the large structures of attack on power, compact and ferocious ranks of manipulators of chains, capable of quickly replacing, in the control processes, the old instruments of the new power, the revolutionary one.

New masters, ready, behind the scenes. A great shuffle of roars and bleats in the field, great confusion of iron and padlocks, you in, me out, vice versa, then everything goes back to how it was before.

But the unleashing is something else. If it happens, then the beast is uncatchable. There are no chains to hold it. It can only be killed on sight, but first you have to see it, for the moment all that remains is to hunt it down.

Beware. Power knows how dangerous a beast that feels hunted can be, before being caught and killed. It knows how much freedom the hunted beast can live and how much it can make others live.

Beware. Here we enter a terrain where the master no longer feels at ease. It is the terrain of true freedom, not of the gaudy colors of chains smuggled in for new pieces of freedom graciously granted.

Once I understand that those chains, and all the other procedures of lengthening and shortening, are nothing but lucubrations of my mind deformed by the conditions of captivity, I am free. There is no obstacle that can stop my race.

Everywhere the symbols and concretizations of domination yawn defenselessly, everywhere domination is forced to stretch out in space like a gigantic octopus to occupy the places without which its very existence would be meaningless. This primary necessity tends on the one hand to expand, on the other to close. Let's see how and why.

Nothing is more evident, under everyone's eyes. Expanding into space, establishing lines of connection, is a vital necessity for capitalist domination.

Telematics makes it possible to unify in real time distant operating units, as long as they are connected. The complete series of these connections now encloses the globe like a spider's web, the satellite supports themselves would be inoperative without this network, largely made up of optical fibers.

The dismemberment of the traditional factory in the territory, already completed at the end of the 1980s, but since then accentuated thanks to the possibilities allowed by the connections with increasingly distant operational units devoid of any geographical logic, today creates a productive condition that dominates the practicable space in its entirety and does not take root in a small portion of it, entrenching itself like a fort attacked by the Indians. The calculation of production costs is the only means used by capital to evaluate its own spatial configuration.

On the other hand, the dominators, the masters of the beast, the included, try to close themselves in places highly defended by armed janisseries and sophisticated electronic instruments, making their homes similar to bunkers controlled by robots.

All this is not enough, and they are the first to realize it, so the next step will be the construction (already underway) of a cultural wall that will increasingly distance the excluded from the included. To desire (even to desire freedom) you need to know, to know you need to understand, to understand you need to have the right cultural means.

By gradually removing these cultural means, by reducing the excluded to a soft mass of acquiescents in search of some solution to the problem of survival, we deprive them not only of the capacity to understand, but also of the capacity to desire.

If the beast breaks the chain, it does not break down the cultural wall, it will not be able to quickly relearn to desire, to enjoy, but it will immediately go in search of another pleasure, that of tearing its master to pieces.

Torn the master to pieces. It seems easy, but it is not. Seeing him like this, in front of me, at the moment I decide to act, and the unleashed beast takes over, a thousand pieces would not be enough to satisfy my revenge.

But not just a thousand pieces of his person, not just him, but all the other masters, and their nefarious progeny capable of feeding the future dominion, and the infamous category of grooms, of those who collaborate and embellish the chain and the collar that tightens my neck.

Finally free to breathe, I would like to include everyone in my unstoppable murderous desire of an unleashed beast. And here, suddenly, I stop. Not being able to hit them all, not being able to reset the world to start over, I must find a criterion of distinction.

It is not true that the beast has no criteria. It does not have them in the first moments of freedom, which intoxicate and burn the throat, then it must necessarily have these criteria by which to distinguish. And what are they?

The first criterion is the zeroing of all values, all weighing suddenly fades in the face of one's own total risk. Freedom is not a matter of judgment, nor a yardstick for evaluating the world.

The beast that has broken the banks knows that it has put its own life at stake forever (it will be killed as soon as possible) and therefore wants the lives of others to enter its game as well, and the goods of others that are more important than their own life. In this phase any objective is good, any shadow of the evening takes on the role of the hated master or the miserable henchman who repaints the symbols of dominion.

Not always behind the shadow is the consistency of the object that one wants to destroy. From the first disillusionments the beast becomes cunning, sharpens its quills, improves its hunting technique, but mainly learns to distinguish.

Distinguishing makes me more effective, not stronger. If I stop to evaluate, I give my opponent time to prepare his defenses, and these are summarized in one conclusion only: my death, my death without distinctions.

The claws shorten and the moral evaluations begin again: this one yes, that one no, this one is more to blame than that one, that other one makes acceptable excuses, poor thing, we have to understand him. The beast begins to become reasonable. The moment of capture, of death, approaches.

I, a reasonable man, understand the mechanism of distinction and I share it, I know that the passage from primary and essential rebellion, in its absoluteness that erases everything before itself, to reflection capable of distinguishing before striking, corresponds to the complex journey towards revolutionary awareness, and I also understand that having never been a rebel, in the sense just described, before attacking I have

always given myself the means to distinguish, but I do not escape the charm of the erasing beast, so I do not feel like endorsing the passage to distinction as a process of acquiring broader revolutionary capacities. Different yes, broader perhaps, better certainly not.

The self-confident strength with which the beast, finally unleashed, moves in the darkness, perhaps striking indiscriminately, always comes back before my eyes. He who puts himself on the line, totally, is totally free, therefore he can destroy whoever he wants. Nothing can stop him, except a force greater than himself, capable of killing him. Or, something that is born within him, within his own conscience, something that begins to speak the strong and intolerable voice of moral judgment.

Even the millennia of atrocities, after all, become smaller again in the face of this very high voice; ferocity and blood are, like torture, characteristics too innate in the master, and too linked to the very memory of the whip, to be suddenly discovered by the beast in some hidden corner of its wounded soul.

But not death, the radical blow that erases the adversary from that opportunity to continue to hurt, to strike and to torture, death is felt by the beast as the only solution within reach, the only price to be paid by those who in their life have ended up leaving too many unsettled accounts.

To complain about the innocents slaughtered by the barbarity of the unleashed beast is human, because man is first of all a truffle that hides behind the finger of morality. Still, for example, he has not learned to ask himself why the great offensives of offended nature, but he will have to hurry to do so, if he does not want to erase himself forever.

Of course, I feel faint when I learn of the many massacres that daily enrich the edifying readings that we all more or less do. And I am moved to indignation at my impotence (or that of the competent bodies, government, police, State?) that cannot put a stop to those misfortunes, and my eyes shine when a well-intentioned person brings a truckload of provisions to the miserable survivors. Finally, a good soul.

I get bogged down in distinctions. Critical light becomes a means of justifying, not a design point from which to start.

The triumphant beast has no such problems.

Distinguishing does not only mean weighing: this is guilty, that is not, this is more guilty, that is less guilty. Distinguishing, first of all, means saying this yes, instead of that, because it corresponds better to my project which, starting from this, can articulate and develop better than starting from that.

The project makes the revolutionary. But the unleashed beast, on the day of its triumph, does not necessarily have a project. It may simply have the need to destroy, even the first person it comes across, just around the corner.

And what if this first person he meets, around the corner, isn't a

master? What if he isn't even a chain painter? What if he's innocent?

No one is innocent, the beast might reply, finally triumphant in his freedom. Where was this so-called poor man when the master had me on the chain and was making me gasp for air by tightening my collar? Was he perhaps there to restrain his hand?

Or did he belong to that large group of innocents who urge the use of the whip and the cage to feel safe in their poor suburban homes? And even if this innocent you speak of - the beast could continue, breathing deeply - were, extreme hypothesis, a revolutionary bent over his own projects of liberation, intent on thinking about how to destroy the master, and the chain and all the rest, but absolutely speechless in the face of my own existence in freedom, and without the means to stop those who sooner or later will end up striking me down, what do I care? Why should I spare him?

And the poor little puppy, a defenseless and tender little baby like cream, who certainly hadn't even come into the world when his master was studying the length of the chain with which to tie me and the dimensions of the cage that would enclose me, this poor little being that I could carry with me, holding him with all the delicacy of which my powerful jaws are capable, and raise him with my milk, and protect him, and make him strong and robust, do you think that, once he had become strong and robust, he wouldn't immediately contrive to build me a new chain and a new cage? Why should I spare him?

Try to say that these reflections are wrong. Bestial maybe yes, wrong no. And the masters know it, and that is why they try in every way to lengthen and color the chain.

They know that pity is a feeling too subtle to withstand the whip, they know that they cannot invoke ethical rules, they who have never had as a rule anything other than the rate of profit, that 3% which constituted the world of the big landed bourgeoisie.

Beware of the beast, everywhere is their watchword, do not wake it, let it ask for something and get something, do not reduce it to the extreme consequences, it could be very dangerous.

From somewhere else comes a persuasive song of progressive possibilism. It is addressed to the chained beasts, and it is the work of freed singers, of poor harmless but tenacious little beasts, capable of showing non-existent mechanisms directed towards liberation as if they were glasses of water for a thirsty person.

Be patient a little longer, these disguised priests say, the paradise where the chains will fall is not, in truth, in the other world, the one indicated by the Church, but right here, in the history that is heading towards freedom. The beast swallows bitterness and dreams of biting into their tough bones at the first opportunity.

But what is this freedom that upsets the ordered, and forced, life of the beast? Some might say (rightly) that it is the unleashing, the putting

into play of itself, others would say, the finally mature consciousness of itself, still others.

The sum of these things, the most attentive would finally conclude, with a wise manner. And they would all have seen only one aspect of the problem. The unleashed beast is freedom itself, it is not only a free beast, and since freedom spreads without limits and without measures, it unfolds in all its strength, decides and seizes, seizes and crushes, crushes and makes its own, with the only obstacle of a greater force that, confronting it, kills it.

This beast has the beauty of freedom because it is pure like freedom, it has no calculations, not even that of greater effectiveness, it cuts the grass at the root in front of it, but burns everything behind it, it does not preserve anything of what it faces, but it does not even preserve anything of what could be useful to it tomorrow.

For her, tomorrow is only today, the violence of destruction is her life. And you, sacrosanct rectors of ethical canons, want to talk to her in terms of what she must do! Be careful, she could crush you without even realizing it.

Save your complaints for when we hold his funeral.

Freedom is this absolute lack of rules. When it appears in the world, even through a tiny crack, it turns things upside down, nothing can negotiate a better neighborhood with it, only a greater force can counter it and destroy it.

Acceptance of the rules is the primary condition of civil coexistence, and this can have a considerable level of freedom, but it is not freedom, let's say it is the renunciation of freedom for a higher presupposed ideal, that of social peace. Only that those who draw interest from this surrogate ideal in the first place are the exploiters, the organizers of the game, while the great mass of the bystanders is simply played like any dead weight, now here, now there, to tip the scales now to one side, now to the other.

Freedom is a dazzling dream, not an event of accountants. No one who has not had his skin flayed to a bloody pulp by the misadventures of exploitation can dream this dream. The scholars of the revolution, raving about projects and reconstructions, with their perfected methods, sometimes reach an equally considerable ferocity, but they do not have the essential strength of the beast, its absolute purity that comes from unleashing it.

But can we imagine such a beast crouching around the corner of our house? Or is it so rare that we can discuss it here as a hypothetical event, a flutter of the eyelashes of the monster that breathes peacefully in the depths of each of us?

If one thinks of the millions of human beings led to the slaughter in holy and parsimonious resignation, one can be almost certain that the elusive beast does not exist, a figment of the imagination of writers who

are inadvertently dedicated to frightening the wealthy, those who have much to lose. If one looks at the evening spectacle, which I have had the dubious privilege of observing so many times, of hundreds of convicts who quietly return to their cells, like sheep to the fold, one must think more of fantasy than reality.

Beware, well-fed masters, beware, diligent grooms, the beast can unleash itself at any moment. Try to put it with its tail against the wall one more time, try and you will see.

Many good men in caps and ermine, dozing among their papers, have never thought of this eventuality. Hidden behind the code they believe themselves safe, and safe they are, as long as they remain within the loose chain, the flexible rules of dialogue and tolerance. Be careful not to let this veil that hides your wickedness fall, the beast might notice. Do not push the game too far.

I know very well that you are not stupid, and that you think of a future world managed in the best possible way by your enlightened intelligences, I know very well that you often scold those among you who still support the obsolete theory of the shortening of the chain, and I also know that perhaps without even realizing it you have, from time to time, a feeling of sympathy for the poor beast, a feeling of the soul that however never reaches the point of advising you to get too close to its claws.

I know all this. I know how just you are, of your justice of course, and how eager you are for the truth, for your truth, justice and truth that make way before you but never question the chains that guarantee your dominion.

I understand you, even if I wouldn't lift a finger to help you seeing you in difficulty, the beast doesn't. The beast doesn't understand you.

The strength of the triumphant beast lies entirely here, in not understanding, in not finding your arguments valid and (in truth, my dear sirs) not even mine. It does not find them valid not because it rejects them but because it does not even care, it does not even consider them. Wasted breath, nothing else. Its strength is incomprehensible precisely for this reason, it would be like asking for clemency from a volcano or an earthquake.

Try to lead her with her tail against the wall, now, after you have read these pages, try, if you can find the courage, to shorten the chain, to tighten the collar and the bit.

Try it.

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