



Anarchist Individualism: E. Armand and l'en dehors

An Introductory Selection

The works collected here are all drawn from my translations. They cover a variety of styles and tones, providing, I hope, at least a sense of Armand's breadth, as well as introducing some of his key preoccupations. Works in the first section were signed by Armand. The remainder were probably composed by him, but, at the very least, display his characteristic interests and positions.

I. — Works by E. Armand

Life As Experience (1906)

I consider life as an experience—or, to be honest, as a series of experiences—that are to be rendered as rich, as abundant and as varied as possible. I think that individuals attain the state of consciousness, of intelligent reaction to the environment, to the degree that we analyze and renew the experiences of life, as we run the gamut of emotions or sensations, sometimes because we encounter them inevitably on the keyboard of our existence, and sometimes because, knowing this and wishing it, we provoke them.

What I say of life in this sense must be understood of the inward or intellectual life, that of the sensations or the affections. Life considered in terms of the accomplishment of organic functions — however indispensable these may be to the development of the inner being — hardly gives space for the complexity of experiences. Variety in the preparation of meals will never seriously interest the being hungry with true curiosity. Neither are there a hundred ways to breathe, to digest, to sleep or to reproduce one's self. In this domain, therefore, the field of experience is limited. And equally indifferent, to my mind, are the experiences involved in the quest for a "position", of glory, of honours, of a good reputation, etc.

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I maintain that we have an interest in multiplying the experiences of life: an interest for those who modify or renew them. Their horizon is widened, their knowledge increased, their sensibility refined; if they love experience for the experience itself, if they seek to educate

themselves as much as they seek to make a measurable and palpable profit, if they do not fear sorrow or dread pleasure, the possibilities for individual development seem almost limitless. I do not think that men can be made “good”, to understand the diverse situations of their fellows without judging them, if they have not passed through the crucible of experience.



To attain its maximum utility, the journey of research, the quest for experience, demands that it be recorded, reported, analysed and communicated to another, so that others may learn thereby how to live more fully, more amply — that they may be inspired to gird their loins, to take up their staff and to take to the road themselves.

I think that the Experience that profits only the one who has it fails to achieve its purpose. It is like a new process that a scientist discovers, but whose formula he keeps locked in the strong-box of his memory. Effort and experience do not achieve their power to influence and never provide intellectual pleasure, except to the extent that they are exhibited to the world, the world of the hungry and thirsty, as food or drink. It matters little that those who do not wish to consume it turn away, shrugging their shoulders. The work of propaganda is nonetheless accomplished: the fertile work that emanates from the self, from the heart of the individual to the world outside them, to illuminate the social ensemble, the work of distinction and of individual selection among the masses.

Naturally it is necessary, for it to be recorded and reported, that the quest for experience should be worth the trouble.



Life as experience is lived constantly outside “law” or “morality” or “customs” — all conventions calculated to assure idleness and internal stagnation to those who refrain from risking themselves, whether through fear or through self-interest.

Life as experience tears up programs, treads decorum under foot, breaks the windows, descends from the ivory tower. It abandons the City of Established Facts, out through the Gate of Settled Matters and roams, vagabond, in the open countryside of the Unforeseen.

For Experience never accepts the established fact as definitive and the settled judgment as beyond appeal. Indeed it wanders, the life without experience, as an “outlaw”, without a fixed abode, attired scantily or not at all — a fright to moralism, a terror to the proper, respectable bourgeois, who is in a constant panic at the thought that someone will come, one night, to pound on their front doors and to wake them from their stupefying habits.

Life lived as experience is not troubled by defeat or by the volume of results obtained. It is no more disturbed by it than by victory. Triumphs, failures, obstacles skirted, barriers overturned, falls in the mud, all are so many subjects of experience. One thing only is capable of troubling it: the thought that it might be lived uselessly or without profit.



All things considered, we conclude that the true educators are those who teach to embark without fear on the road of experience and to look Life squarely in the face — life with its incalculable wealth of diverse situations. The true educator does not seek to destroy sensibility, to annihilate feeling, to lay out the individual life like a piece of sheet music, to limit its vibrations, to narrow its breadth. Oh no! — For to make us think and value for and by ourselves, there is nothing like equipping others and arousing in them the desire for experience. And the more difficult that experience has been to pursue, the richer it has been in surprises, the more it has been interspersed with difficulties and saturated with pleasures, the less those who have risked it seek to impinge on the liberty of others to think and to act. And so will grow the number of those no longer afraid to live, because they have known how to experience.

The Choice (1906)

It is necessary to choose: to leave the wide road to others and to take the rough, isolated, scarcely traveled path where one meets madmen, pioneers and apostles — a path so dark that the heart trembles, terrified!

Ah! This is not the way that leads towards glory. The purest efforts remain misunderstood. It is unrelenting battle and never victory. We sow zealously, but we reap scorn!

Foul treason awaits you at every step. You cry and to your tears the echoes respond: mistrust. You labor, but in vain: there is never any result, for the effort must find its compensation in itself.

— It is necessary to choose, you say, and it is true that the day is waning. There is no greater error than to put things off until tomorrow. But haven't I already chosen? No matter the suffering, free, but often weary, mine is the narrow way.

Hurricane (1906)

1. Heaps of ruins. Pyres. Blood. Tears. Harrowing cries. Desperate appeals, interspersed with terrifying silences. Pitiful supplications, mad laughter.

Murmurs, quivering, hazy and indistinct. Raucous noises, like the waves when they crash into the rocks.

It is the wind of liberty that whispers.

2. Ancient customs, respectable scruples. Morales, rules, venerable prejudices. Codes, sacred books, dogmas, homeland, honor. Family, religion, home, virtue, modestly. Gods of the fields and of the hearth, borders. Fear of what people will say. Fear of the hereafter. Fear of future or present sanctions. Fear of the gendarmes. Respect for the flag, for the judge, for the legislator, for the magistrate, for the police, for the priest.

All of that lying piled up, defaced, crushed, ripped up, torn to shred, in rags. All of that burning, blazing, smoking.

It is the wind of liberty that fans the flames....

3. A heart that struggles, a soul beset by doubt. A hesitant spirit that seeks its path. All the supports that crumble, fail, subside, vanish. Disgust with a useless existence, the fear of the undefined, regret for the crutches of past times. A whole nebula of thoughts that go, come, revolve around one another, repel one another, attract one another, become mixed, separate. Peace following trouble, to soon give way to distress, a return toward the past, a stride toward the future, a new retreat, a new surge.

A total chaos act, facts and ideas, incoherently distributed, incomprehensible, inexplicable, unheard of.

It is the wind of liberty that purifies...

4. A soul calm as the waves on a lake. A sky pure as crystal. Loins girded for long travels, for voyages of discovery, for daring experiments. Curiosity, but no fear of the unexpected. Passion, but not fanaticism. The skirting of the abyss, but a balanced step. The brain active. The senses awake. The clear point of view of a SELF independent of all human judgments, but still incapable, in order to express itself, of doing without other men. A chariot with a thousand spirited steeds, but the reins in a firm hand.

The intense, burning desire to deepen life, to probe its mysteries, to know its manifestations, to enjoy it in all its forms, but the mastery and the conscious perception of the emotions, the sensations, the pleasures.

The wind of liberty has passed.

The Abyss (1910)

All the avant-garde sociétaires — social-democrats, revolutionaries of every shade, various communists — say that the individual is a “product of the environment.”

It would be more precise to say that individuals are products of their environment. And to add that the individual is more specifically the outcome of an ancestral line whose origin goes back to the animal night. Taking into account that in certain individuals the characteristics of temperament and constitution of a particular ancestor essentially dominate.

All the partisans of society — religious, secular, revolutionary collectivists or not — say that the individual is a component, and thus a dependent of the milieu.

The anarchist-individualists, wishing to make the individual being an independent, and thus a decomposer of the milieu.

The partisans of society see in the individual one stone in the edifice, one member of the body. The anarchists aspire to make of each individual being a distinct organism, a free associate.

From this arise two conceptions of education and propaganda:

1) The societary conception, which considers the individual as a cog within society and, in its most audacious dreams, does not go beyond the idea of the catastrophic or revolutionary transformation of the milieu.

It considers evolution a quantitative result, a question of numbers.

It takes the child or adult and, a priori, inspires in it the concept of obligatory solidarity, of necessary harmony, of an inevitable and universal common organization.

It proceeds by shaping the brain according to a model settled on in advance. It imposes a specific education.

2° The anarchist conception, which considers the individual being in isolation, as the cause or the reason to be of every association, opposes it to society and would boldly make of each individual life a catalyst destructive of every milieu imposed or suffered.

It considers every form of emancipation as due to quality, to individual effort.

It seeks to make of the child or adult a being more capable of resistance, better endowed, determining by itself as much to meet its own needs and fend for itself as much as possible; a present or future associate of others more capable or better endowed in one sense or another. Apart from all intervention, all tutelage or all protection of the State or the community.

Anarchist education does not proceed by coercion, but by free examination, by voluntary elimination. It proposes, it selects.

And these two points of view are irreconcilable.

along the way (1911)

In these days of sweltering heat, I do not feel the slightest desire to soar too high, intellectually speaking. I will take this occasion to recount some of my impressions of recent times.

I travel frequently, confining myself as seldom as possible in the cars of those trains where, in summer, you not only roast, but are also subject to all sorts of more or less “undesirable” promiscuity. Most often, I go by bicycle, at a moderate pace that allows me to feast my eyes on the landscape, always new, that unfolds as I advance. Sometimes, passing through woods and forests, I feel myself completely filled by the aromas of certain essences, whose fragrance is a revelation to me, or stopped by the sound of some songbird, which I seem to hear for the first time. I have learned to love nature and if I sometimes miss the city, the big city, I have learned that life is appreciated more fully by considering apart from the long rows of six-story houses, so monotonous in their uniformity.

I attribute part of the change that has taken place in my understanding of things over the last twenty or so months to my bicycle rides. The rest is due to the fact that I live in the country. There was a moment in my life when I learned that the swift never goes swiftly enough. I would have liked to roll a hundred leagues an hour. I was blind to the flowers and indifferent to the perfumes of the countryside. I considered them as things very distant and not very real, like Muses. It was above in paintings that landscapes interested me, and still not all of them. It was the qualities of the picture that determined my appreciation of nature.

For some months now, I have tasted reality. And I have found it superior to fiction. I have seen the same river that far overflowed its banks during the winter months, a mass of water that resembled a lake, change, in the warm days, into a paltry little trickle of water that a child could step across. I have seen the fields, desolate and bare in January, full of stems with heavy spikes of grain in July. I have been subject to flooding and withstood drought. I have encountered, at three in the morning, men and women who went to the fields bearing sickle or spade. And at nine o'clock at night, I have met carts laden with fodder and straw, led slowly by a drowsy driver—or rather by his horse. And all that, that is life.

And I have also contemplated the ocean, “whose limits we do not see” and which makes us think of the infinite, the sea whose constant undertow is like an image of the slow, but eternal activity, like a representation of that movement that we are assured constitutes all life.

And it is because I have made my way more slowly that I have been able to appreciate more. Because I could come to a stop when the desire took me. Because I had liberated myself from the obsession with being at a given station at a given hour. Because I remained in charge of whether hastened or slowed down. And that freedom — a relative as it still may be — has been well worth the drawbacks — real as they are — of long journeys by bicycle.

I do not mean to say that I am entirely cured of the irresistible need to go fast, common to all who have lived long in the big cities or who remain there. It is a fever with which one is infected at birth, I fear. I try to react against that tendency to constant overexcitement that is characteristic of our era—an era drawn towards an intensity of life to which human beings have become slaves. Everyone is in such a hurry to produce, to enjoy, to create and to move that it has resulted in constant overproduction and overwork. Wishing to go fast, we have destroyed originality; wishing to eat up the kilometers, we have lost the spirit of observation. We perhaps acquire more, but we know less deeply and are superficially familiar with many things. We have accumulated countless formulas and all of this quickly, very quickly. And like food that we eat without chewing, all that we have learned has not profited us much.



“Live your life:”... To live one’s life is just the opposite of spreading it out on a platter. How can you claim to live your life when you are unable to keep your secret to yourself?... To live your life is not to live for those close to you, not even for the closest, but to live for yourself. (1917)



Regrets (1922)

Ah! I would have liked to always show myself honestly;
But often, too often, I was afraid of the punishments that might be imposed.
I was afraid, and this fear, poisoning my days,
Was a heavy burden to bear: — a dreadful chain.

To show myself, naturally, unmasked, uncolored,
Smiling when joy lights my way;
In times of setbacks: sad or shedding tears,
And my brow furrowed when haunted by doubt.

To show myself, naturally, without veiling my passions,
Extinguishing the glare of my desires as they blaze, intensely;
Without fearing to flaunt my actions
Or to say nothing of them, as I think best.

I preferred to be silent or to speak like a deaf man,
Holding back my urges with an tremendous effort.
By not daring to always show myself honestly
How many hours of pleasure I have lost, squandered!



Nature always aims at the complete use of the faculties and aptitudes of every organism, thus to its erosion, thus to its destruction. Erosion or consumption, this is the end of natural economy. (1923)



Plan for an Epitaph (1923)

If someone asked me what inscription I should like to see appear on my grave marker—if ever the luxury of resting in a tomb was given to me—I would first respond that I desire to sleep my last sleep in the nearest hole in the ground. If my friends insisted, this is the epitaph that I would be pleased to have them place on the slab recalling my memory:

He lived. He gave himself. He died unsatisfied.

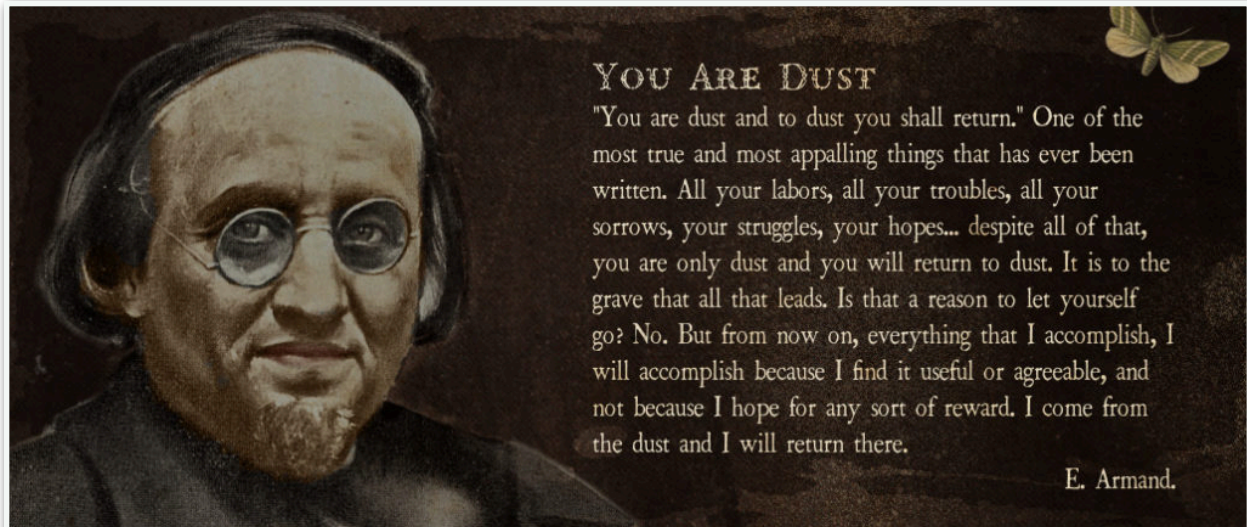
He *lived*, that is to say, he knew all that life can bring of joys and sufferings in an existence such as his own. Being neither insensible nor indifferent, limited by his conditions of fortune, he felt more deeply certain joys and sufferings, the joy of being able to express his thought in particular, and the suffering of not being able to express it with all the scope that he would have wanted. He lived, he knew poverty, he made mistakes, he was exposed to criticism—deserved sometimes—to slander, to envy, to the hatred of the governors and the incomprehension of the governed. He lived, loved and traveled, as permitted by his circumstances and his associates, the gamut the mounts from purely sensual love-experience to love-affection in the most profound sense of the term. He loved, was disappointed and no doubt caused disappointment. He thought himself disillusioned, broke with love, returned to it, and often considered it only as a dessert, a kind of recreation. He lived, that is to say, he evolved as he was spurred by his temperament, these opinions modified by the influences to which he was prey—although he hardly let himself make a start—and finally his reflections, his meditations.

He *gave himself*. Just as he was. With his aptitudes and resources. Constantly struggling to draw the greatest yield from himself. He espoused with enthusiasm, with passion, even with frenzy, the opinions, the aspirations and the demands that he spread, that he displayed as the result of his cerebral realization of the moment. He varied in his accounts of the conception of life, in his opinions, but while maintaining the interior assurance that neither interest nor the search for human esteem would have the least part in his variations. He believed himself sincerely sincere. He gave himself without counting, valuing the effort as much as the results, without hesitation, and only reined himself in order to assert himself in a new activity. He never allowed himself to treat lightly subjects of the intellect or sensibility, questions of ideas and questions of sentiment, even if only in passing or incidentally. He took himself very seriously. He gave himself as much as he could, seriously; sometimes losing his way, he retraced his steps and did not allow himself to be turned away by the contrary fate, by the persecutions, even by the prison; he repeated his experiments, disregarding those of the past; he persisted, persevered, did not yield, indifferent to the judgment of others, and never wishing to be accountable to anyone but himself for his deeds and actions.

He *died unsatisfied*, dreamed—now old—of living out his youthful aspirations, build up pipe-dreams, and, unable to attain or only able to attain in part the designs that he had proposed to himself, departed unhappy, protesting against the adverse circumstances. Until the

last hour, he searched, planned, imagined, created, tried and strove as much as it was possible for him to make an effort, until the last minute, anxious, worried, tormented and yet aware of having accomplished all that it had been possible for him to do.

He *lived* all that it was possible to live; he *gave himself* without reserve, drawing from within himself all that it was possible to draw; he *died unsatisfied*, lamenting until last hour, because he had barely lived.



Liberty, Mother of Order (1925)

Liberty, mother of order: it is Proudhon who wrote that, if I remember correctly, and the anarchist individualist Tucker took up that phrase, who used it as an epigraph for all the time that his newspaper *Liberty* endured. Anarchy the mother of order—are you kidding? Not at all! The most amoral, the most asocial, the most alegal of the anarchist individualists can associate for a specific time and task, establish a contract to this effect and set certain instructions, establish certain statutes with a view to carrying out successfully the task that they have determined to undertake... But then what is the difference from the social contract that holds sway us? You speak without knowing what you are saying. The contract, the statutes and the directives of the anarchist individualist association are voluntary; you are free to join or to stand aside. In all times and places, no authority, no government, no anarchist State will force to take part in them. And if you wish to remain isolated, you will naturally not share in the profits or products of the association, but not anarchist individualists who take part in it will dream of excommunicating you from anarchism..... That is where the distance lies between anarchist society and the anarchist association or milieu: it is not imposed on you, while the authoritarian society forcefully includes you within itself, forces you to submit to its laws, customs, habits, traditions, etc. The anarchist disorder is the obligatory social contract, the anarchist order is the voluntary contract, proposed and never imposed — which links and holds only those who accept it for the time and purpose proposed — and terminable under the conditions agreed upon before setting to work. Am I clear enough?

Without Amoralization, No Anarchization (1926)

I

At times Liberty takes the form of a hateful reptile. She grovels, she hisses, she stings. But woe to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who,

having dared to receive her in her degraded and frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in her time of her beauty and her glory.

Macaulay: *Essay on Milton*.

The men of order, those we call “honest folk,” demand nothing but gunfire and shellfire.

Renan: *Nouvelles lettres intimes*.

I read and hear it claimed that anarchism is beset by a crisis. This is not precisely correct. In truth, there is a conflict between the static and dynamic conceptions of anarchism, between those who want to gregarize and stabilize anarchism and those who want the revolutionary, individualist spirit to remain and simmer permanently within anarchism. At base, it is more a question of two methods than of two ideas. It would be extraordinary if a competition did not exist between them. It is precisely because they compete that, far from being stagnant, anarchism asserts itself, develops, expands and surpasses the narrowness of a church or a party.

The organizers of traditional anarchism have long attempted not only to create an orthodox anarchism, “ne varietur,” but to stabilize the anarchist idea by integrating them into the general aspirations of humanity. To cite one name among those of the thinkers who have lent the support of their talent to that effort, I would name Kropotkin. Let one read carefully *Mutual Aid*, *Modern Science and Anarchy* or the *Ethics*, where are summarized very quickly the aim of the author of the *Words of a Rebel*: to demonstrate to his readers that the principal demands of anarchism are in agreement with the needs, knowledge, experiences and facts of human evolution, of the history of living organisms. If we believe Kropotkin on the matter—and if I have understood him clearly—all the observations, all the events in the history of living beings tend to the establishment of a social system of morals, to such an extent that nature itself could no longer be considered amoral. We see where this is going: anarchist communism, as Kropotkin and his friends or disciples understand it, arises naturally from the aspiration of humanity for a state of things better than those presently existing.

I do not want to sift the Kropotkinian idea through a close critique and entirely empty—in order to account for its value as a factor in individual evolution—the content of the three elements on which Kropotkin built the system of morals: mutual aid, justice and the spirit of sacrifice. Nor do I want to dwell on the mystical and too often metaphysical character of the Kropotkinian Ethics, to show that scientific culture and language is not always enough to prevent us from taking pure phantoms for beings of flesh and bone. As an anarchist individualist, an anarchist associationist, I understand that we make use of our own sensibilities to create a line of individual conduct; I understand that we associate with individuals endowed with approximately similar sensibilities, that we then act according to a group guidelines. But to set up the manner of behaving of one individual or group as a universal, *absolute* morality, that is what does not appear anarchist to me, that is what I rise again.

Let us suppose that Kropotkin had succeeded in persuading all the anarchists that anarchist communism was the form of economic system toward which humanity tended in its aspirations and dreams of a better future. There we would have it: anarchism stabilized, crystallized, petrified.

That is to say, it would no longer exist, dynamically speaking.

Indeed, the day when it is accepted that there is only *one* single anarchist moral system, only one unique line of anarchist conduct, it will follow that anyone who decide against or places themselves outside these guidelines or this moral system could no longer be considered anarchist. At that moment, Anarchism would have no reason to envy Church and State: it would have its moral system, one and indivisible, its sacrosanct, stagnant morality. There would exist an anarchist morality of the sort of which Boyer spoke the other day in the issue of the *Ecole émancipée* where he proposed a “proletarian morality” for the approval of the pedagogues supporting the C. G. T. U.

I cannot understand how thinkers like Kropotkin have not realized that by seeking to establish a single anarchist moral system, they would return to exclusivism, to statism. In order

for Anarchism not to be transformed into a tool for social or moral conservation, it is obviously necessary that all the ethics, all the antiauthoritarian means of *living life* compete within it.

In *anarchy*, there are as many “moralities” as there are anarchists, taken individually, or groups or associations of anarchists. Thus, in anarchy, one is amoral, or put another way: every moral system presented as anarchist is only so relative to the unity or the group that proposes or practices it. there is no absolute anarchist morality, so no one can logically say that it summarizes or incorporated the demands, the desiderata, the relations of *all* the anarchists.

The anarchist work cannot consist of moralizing anarchism, but of amoralizing it, of destroying among the anarchists the final remnants of exclusivism and statism, which can still lie dormant in the *spirit* of their relations between individualities or associations. My or our line of conduct only have value for me or our group or our association—or again for all those to whom it gives satisfaction, among those who already carry its seeds, to whom I have had to explain it, to whom we propose it so they can find what they seek, perhaps without really knowing it. My “morals,” our “morals,” are only valid for those, individually or collectively, to whom they are suited, not for everyone and not for others.

In other words, *we relativize* what we call ethics, morals or rule of conduct according to individual temperament, to instinctive or natural affinities that lead human unities to act in isolation or to association for specific ends and for a desired time. We do not modify our means of conducting ourselves relative to an injunction or imperative superior or external to the isolate or associate. We declare ourselves *amoral* with regard to all morals drawn from religion, science, sociality and even nature itself that stand in the way of our aspirations, desires or appetites. Being anti-authoritarians, we refuse, of course, and in every case, *with respect to ourselves*, to have recourse to violence or to any form of governmental or statist coercion in order to satisfy our desires or gratify our passions.



It is because the present anarchist mentality is saturated with *petit-bourgeoisism*—it will be necessary to return to the question—that so many anarchists are so slow to understand that the collective or individual amoralization of the social milieu is a powerful factor in anarchization. The more the human milieu is amoralized, the more the guardians of religious or secular morality, those who want to keep human societies within uniform rule of conduct or absolute moral systems, feel their usefulness diminish. The more amoralization saturates the relations among men, the more the idea that an imposed, common moral system is necessary to living *happily* disappears; we feel the need for moral instructors less and less. Unconsciously, a new basis for ethical relations between isolated individuals and associates appears: it is the unity or association that sets out the rule of conduct to be maintained in order to reach the maximum of sociability, a sociability that in no way answers to a moral conception of good and evil, to a transcendent *a priori*, but is based on the self-interested observation that no one is, can or wants to be an object of consumption for me except to the extent that I am or can or want to be such for them.

I have, the other day, touched very rapidly upon one point on which it is appropriate to insist, warmongers, the marshals of domination, the grand masters of exploitation and the blackmailers [maitres-chanteurs] of politics are glorifiers of public or private virtues, lay moralizers, defenders of religion and wholesome traditions. When the global butchery of 1914-1918 broke out, it was under their flags that the honest, puritanical, moral anarchist theorists, communists and individualists alike, came to line up; how could all of these factions not have made a united front? They were all partisans of a unique, common, universal moral system; the wolves do not eat each other.

II

The Larousse dictionary defines the word *morality* as: *the relation of an act, of the sentiments of a person, with the rule of morals*. From this comes the expression “certificate of

morality,” to designate an official confirmation of a clean criminal record. Each time that I hear morality spoken of in a publication that calls itself anarchist, to whatever degree, there comes to my mind, unbidden, the idea of a “certificate of good behavior,” delivered by the police chief of the district.

As I wrote in the last issue, the word *morality* would never have appeared in the anarchist or anarchist-friendly journals if the anarchist movement had not been swamped with people coming from bourgeois backgrounds, who have brought with them the notion that it is important to conform, in matters of morals, to the established rules.

An experience that is already great, a familiarity that does not date from yesterday, has shown me that a great number of people who declare themselves theoretically as advocates of anarchism have been seduced particularly by the teachings of Rousseau, humanitarianism, and the revolutionary aspiration to egalitarianism revealed by the writings of certain anarchist dogmatists. From that comes an all too obvious tendency to make pronouncements on the acts and movements of comrades, valuations and judgments like those issued by the representatives of bourgeois society and those chiefs of police who deliver certificates of good behavior.

When, in 1900, I entered into contact with the anarchists, I came from a Christian milieu; many times, I have been stupefied by comparing the materialist declarations of certain anarchist theorists with the judgments they passed on the conduct of comrades who had taken seriously formulas like “no gods, no masters” or “with neither faith nor law,” which makes concrete, in a brief and clear form, the whole individual anarchist idea of life. I could not understand how, after having battled the law and the prophets, both religious and secular, they could bring, with regard to certain kinds of individual behavior, condemnations that would not have been disapproved of by the judges in the criminal court. As I did not consider propaganda a profession and did not wish to make a vocation of it, I would have long since dumped these respectable folks, and that would have saved me some unpleasantness, if afterwards I had not been convinced that these judgments simply reflected the bourgeois education (primary and secondary) received by these theorists, of which they have never wished or been able to rid themselves. Later, fortunately, I met real anarchists, liberated and freed from the education of the schools, who avoided, in general, bringing judgment on the actions of their comrades. When they ventured to express an opinion on their manner of conducting themselves, they did so in relation to the anarchist conception of life and not some standard of morality established by the supporters of bourgeois society.

I meet old *compagnons* who tell me that they have withdrawn from the movement because of the disillusionment they have experienced, meeting too many anarchist theorists with bourgeois inclinations. Where they hoped to meet men who had abandoned social prejudices and moral preconceptions, they found only minds, so spineless as to be ridiculous, whose ethical mentality differed in no way from that of their porter and their housekeeper.

Not that, forced by circumstances, the anarchist individualists do not disguise themselves, but in the manner of the Calabrian brigand, who disguises himself as a carabineer in order to rob a stage-coach. Every concession that the anarchist individualist makes to the social milieu, every concession that seem to make to the State, they make amends by undermining the notion of the necessary power, by demonstrating to all those with whom they come into contact that there is no need for morals and moralists, for imposed, obligatory leaders and magistrates, in order to fulfill the organic individual functions and for humans to get along.

But where is the giant who will get on with the task of amoralizing and immoralizing the anarchist men and women, of making them catalysts of the amoralization and immoralization of the human milieu? For it is only then, O anarchy, that your advent could be foreseen.

The First Ray of Sunshine (1926)

The first ray of sunshine! The planet seems like a giant, waking and stretching. A shiver runs through the countryside, a thrill of renewal and love. Nothing that meets my eyes is like what I saw yesterday, when the rain fell and the mist grew heavy. From the soggy paths to tall, still

leafless trees, from the wet grass of the trails to the sheet of water that replaced the stream, which for so much of the summer was dry, there is not one of those familiar aspects that does not seem to me to be transformed. Who would have said that the woods still harbor so many birds? Yesterday, the fields were bleak and the horses harnessed to the plows bent, weary and apparently aimless. Today, the meadows shine as if some painter had colored them with dazzling greenery, and the beasts digging in the furrows seem to understand, so happily do they raise their heads, the importance of their labor. Yesterday, the girls hid themselves away sadly and not a female form appeared on the roads. Today, the villages are full of headdresses and overflowing with smiles.

One ray of sunshine is enough to produce all that. And what all await, from the trees whose branches wave in the breeze to the little girls whose eyes sparkle; what is awaited by the arable land and the little songbird alike; — vaguely, instinctively, irresistibly; — what they anticipate, all of them, beings and things, in that ray of sunshine is love. Love, not that caricature of love depicted by those who dream, in some moonlit garret, in a moonlight that illuminates only the roofs; not that platonic and powerless love that stems from pathology more than from poetry; — but the love that embraces, that fires, that burns, that possesses and renders fertile.

It is that love that is heralded by the first ray of sunshine. It is that love that all beings already feel taking hold of them. It is to the solar caress that the sun aspires, to the warm and fecund caress that allows the seed to rise up and fulfill its destiny.

And as I approach the city, I cannot stop myself from suppressing the quiver that had seized me, me as well, putting my being in harmony with the physical ambiance... The noon hour sounds and, behold, from the vast buildings emerge crowds of men and women with busy looks and blackened clothes. Why this haste, this precipitous invasion of the stalls where food and drink are sold, this rapid and unhealthy absorption of food? Why this movement in the streets, these vehicles that pass each other, pass each other, stop and leave again, quick as lightning?... These wretches, do they only know that the first ray of sunshine is theirs, that the whole earth rejoices in it and that its caress has brought a thrill to the flanks of the females of every species organized beings?

We meet, it seems, anarchists who both praise the benefits of civilization and slander authority. I cannot understand them. I profit from civilization because I can't help it, but I don't feel more proud of it. Who will then tell me who is superior or inferior: the animal that has its fill, has all that it can of life, without knowing the constraints of morality or compulsory production or the civilisé of the 20th century, slave of who knows how many conventions and forced, in order to eat bread, to remain shut up in some dark building, while outside the first ray of sunlight shines.

Profound sociologists and austere moralists assert that men is much better off living in society or, in other words, creating an artificial life at the expense of their individual independence. They assure us, these wise men, that men live less "impulsively" when they not have to fear bad weather as much, when their existence depends less on chance and risk. Perhaps there is truth to this, although I doubt it—take as proof the unfortunate vagabond whom I met on the train, an hour before writing these lines, between two gendarmes. The sun flooded the plains of Beauce with light, regardless of who enjoyed it: it was the symbol of Nature, broad, lavish, heedless of rules and conventions.

In this railway compartment, humble, with tattered clothes and a dirty, unkempt beard, the tramp twisted a tiny bundle in his hands. These two gendarmes and the wretch between them, are they not the symbol of civilization, good for those who prosper, a cruel mother to those who fail.

One can traverse society, even pass through it in order to accomplish one's work, but to remain there, to consider oneself a member other than as a last resort, that appears to me incomprehensible for an anarchist.



My Body Is My Own (1927)

The river of delight flowed between banks strewn with fragrant shrubs, studded with perfumed flowers;

And my determinism in the moment drove me to cast myself into it and to abandon myself to the embrace of that flow sequined with seductions.

But, behold, from different points on the horizon loomed shadows that look as if they were alive.

First, a shadow dressed in black, which called out to me in an unctuous voice: “Your body belongs to God,” it whispered, “and to us, his representatives on earth, and you have no right to dispose of it.”

Then another shadow, which seemed to consist of nothing but metallic gleams and which held erect a banner floating in the wind: “Do not dive into that enervating water,” it ordered me. “You do not have the right to dispose of your body as you wish; it belongs to the homeland and to us, who are in charge of defending it.”

Then a shadow that wore a peaked cap, dressed in a leather tunic and bearing in its hand a cat o’ nine tails: “Get away,” it rumbled, “your body belongs to the social body.”

And then yet another phantom. This one wore a long black frock coat, which fell to its heels. Under one arm, it carried a thick, black, intimidating tome. “What do you want to do, my child,” it murmured, in honeyed tones, “don’t you know that your body is destined to be a vessel of virtue?”

And from the right, from the left, there then surged all sorts of revenants in the shape of men, who gesticulated and protested in every tone and manner that my body belonged to someone or something that was not “me.”

But I rebelled and I did not listen to them, these shadows with the appearance of human beings.

For I am an individualist and anarchist and “my body is my own.”

And it is up to me to know if it is right or not to let it be bathed by the promising, rippling and penetrating waters of the river of delight.

On Friendship (1928)

1. I love my friends for what they are, just as they are. Not for what I would like them to be.

2. I take pleasure in seeing them develop. According to the phases of their individual blossoming.

Not because their evolution takes place according to my own desires or preferences. But instead because in this way they fulfill their reason to be as human beings. And the happier they are — the more they realize their particular conception of life — the stronger my joy becomes.

3. I do not love them on the side of good and evil. I love them beyond good and evil.

If I loved them on the side of good and evil, I would love them in the manner of the moralist, the legislator, the inquisitor or the slavemaster.

4. Why do I love a friend?

For a characteristic trait of their character, a tendency of their nature, a detail of their way of being — a mode of thinking, of expression, of action or of realization that is their own — that makes a corresponding fiber vibrate within me.

As long as that vibration persists, they remain my friend.

5. Beyond good and evil, certainly. In disgrace or in triumph. In inconsistency or in conformity. In vice and in virtue. Even if the search for their individual equilibrium, even if the affirmation of their individuality leads or drives them to commit all sorts of acts: reprehensible to the great majority, incomprehensible to me.

6. As long as the vibration persists, I will remain faithful to my friendship. For friendship has nothing in common with caprice. My friendship is Adventure and Experience. Probably the most formidable of adventures. And perhaps the longest and most complicated of experiences.

The True Camarade (1928)

Worthy, you are far too dignified to bear the thought that someone might have given more than you have received —

or that the one who gives to you might suspect that they have received less than their contribution —

I know well that you will say, “Fair is fair...” —

and that you consider yourself “an egoist among the egoists” —

But egoist, you are much too egoist —

to admit that, being able to give pleasure to someone in your world —

you would refuse yourself the delight of doing so —

I am well aware that you speak constantly of “reciprocity” —

but you never believe you have paid enough for a smile, reimbursed a kind word, acquitted a sign of sympathy —

you are much too individual to accept that, in their relations with you, that one of your own should have reason to fear that they have not been paid in return —

You insist, to all who will listen, that you are only bound by the terms of the contract that you have concluded with one of your own —

but I have seen you, a thousand times, torment yourself, wrack your brain, asking yourself — if you have exactly fulfilled your obligations —

“exactly” —

that is, exactly as intended by the one who had contracted with you —
at the moment when you signed it —
You are much too “unique,” too proud —
to not exhaust, to the utmost extreme —
the capacity to give, to make and to satisfy —
in order not to leave, hands empty and their desire unfulfilled, the one of your own who reached
out to you —
imagining you rich in possibilities...

Questions You Wouldn't Ask Elsewhere (1931)

I am in search of the link that could make men
— in any case a certain number of men —
more brotherly with regard to one another.

So many plans have failed that sought the same end: of the economic, political or intellectual
order.

If we tried for the pleasures of the senses,
for sensory joy,
for voluptuous enjoyment?

Isn't the avoidance of suffering justified because we can still enjoy life?

Isn't enjoyment the sole reason for the persistence of the ego on the earth?

Are there not pleasures that are easier than others,
close at hand?

Among them sentimental enjoyment, sexual enjoyment, erotic enjoyment?

Without underestimating the other orders of pleasure,
have we derived from this category of enjoyments all that it can give?

Is not the one who helps me obtain pleasures of this sort
more of a brother, a friend, a camarade to me?

Am I not more the brother, the friend, the camarade of the one that I help obtain satisfactions of
this sort?

Is not pleasure, natural or artificial, a good conductor of sociability?

Is not the one who strives to increase the sum and the intensity of my sensations a better
camarade?

I am in search of the link that could make us better camarades, you and me.
I do not impose, but propose.

I pose some questions for you, but I solve them only for myself and those of « my world », those
who, having understood me and knowing what they want, accompany me in my experiences and
experiments.

Isn't there enough hatred in the world,
so that, at least in a separate milieu,
it is friendship, affection and amorous camaraderie that are the pivot and reason for being of
union ?

I do not impose myself. I just pose some questions
and — being an anarchist — I solve them only for myself and for those who wish to accompany
me on my journey.

An Unlikely Story (1933)

.....
Will I survive the night? I feel that I have reached the extreme limit of my existence. For two days my limbs have refused me any service and twice in forty-eight hours long dizzy spells have robbed me of consciousness. It is likely that I won't survive a third such attack. But I am still lucid enough to put my thoughts in order and sort through my memories one last time. I am not sure what secret design I obey, blackening these slips of paper to recount how we—Hermann and I—have wiped out the human race. It has been a long time since I buried Hermann in this Sumatran cave, where I have slept so many nights that I cannot remember the number, here on the flanks of Mount Ophir where I have doubtless been preceded, before recorded history, by the precursors of men. That jawbone, there on my table, which Hermann discovered while digging at the back of the cave, is not the jawbone of an ape, but neither is it the jawbone of a human being.

Why write these things that no one will read? What determinism must I obey, I wonder, old and dying man that I am, since no one will decipher my notebook?

I remember the state of the planet before disaster struck. There were no longer more than three great regions on the globe. The first, which had its capitol in Lisbon, included western Europe, according to a line traced from the North Cape to the mouth of the Torne, dividing the Gulf of Bothnia and the Baltic in two to lead to the mouth of the Neman. From there a new line led to the mouth of the Vardar, in the archipelago. Every part of Europe situated to the west of that limit, together with Africa and all of the Americas, constituted an immense territory whose language was an English much more infused with greco-latin terms than the English of past times.

The rest of Europe and the part of Asia delimited by a line running from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Amur constituted a second territory, with Astrakhan as capital, speaking a Russian strongly mixed with Turkish, Persian and Arabic terms.

The portion of Asia to the east of that line, Australasia and the rest of Oceania formed a third region, with Hong-Kong for capital. The common language was Japanese—or really an amalgam of Japanese, Chinese, English as it was previously spoken and Malay.

While all other dialects and idioms had disappeared, they had not been able to adopt a single language and, up and down the ladder, functionaries in the three territories had to understand English, Russian and Japanese.

Just as they could not establish a single language, they could not, despite technological progress, communicate with the other planets. All attempts in that direction had failed.

The globe counted around 7 billion inhabitants: two billion in the English-speaking region, two billion in the region speaking Russian and three billion in the region speaking Japanese. Lisbon had one hundred million inhabitants, Astrakhan fifty million, Hong-Kong two hundred fifty million, spread over immense expanses. Thanks to wonderfully developed agricultural, manufacturing and chemical technology, these seven billion earthlings had sufficient food, clothing and habitations. But that was due to an administration regulating the acts and deeds of each in all their details. First, two hours of work, sufficient to ensure the monitoring and maintenance of the active machines, fabrication and calibration of new machines — hours for entering and leaving the canteens, hours for entering and leaving the sleeping quarters, hours for the distribution of articles of clothing — immense refectories, dormitories and shops, all separate for men and women — hours for physical culture and hygiene, hours for sentimental promenades, in the course of which space was made for sexual encounters — hours for artistic, theatrical and intellectual recreations — regulation of vacations, 65 or 66 days per year — complete education and tutelage, from weaning to the age of 20 — maternity and its consequences facilitated and controlled, subject to the most suitable care — in the evenings, obligatory attendance in the assembly halls where news was posted, etc., etc.

And hovering over all, seen or unseen, an administration of the dictatorial type, elected by suffrage of two or three degrees, depending on the case — a Council of Service Directors, with 50 members among the English, 64 among the Russians and 70 among the Japanese, headed by a

grand Arbiter, to whom was accorded the right to direct to the voters by referendum any decision that seemed beyond the capacity of the Council of Service Directors to judge.

After a century and a half, there was not a single earthling who would break the rules of daily life and the great problem of the use of leisure had been definitively solved. The vast majority had come to devote themselves to occupations so harmless that the administration of things could be regarded as a guarantee against any upheaval. The latest statistics only showed ten thousand public library patrons over the entire world who were past the age of compulsory education. The remainder of those over twenty used the hours intended for amusement and recreation in sports requiring little brain expenditure: bowling, for example, dog races, horse races, races of farm animals, either real or mechanical; greased poles, competitions in fishing, dancing, walking, etc.

Illnesses and infirmities had disappeared. Life had been extended by half. People died between 140 and 150 years old, on average, and it was only two or three years before passing that they lost their strength and were allowed to interrupt the sweet hours of daily work. Thanks to a hygiene developed to the extreme, to a partly chemical, healthy and exactly dosed diet, to the elimination of the least resistant factors, to the disappearance of physiological misery, it is hardly once in ten years that there was reported an isolated case of smallpox, yellow fever, malaria, congenital syphilis, tuberculosis, cancer. Immediately sent to an inpatient center, the patient was cured, immunized against an unforeseen relapse and rendered sterile. Nothing had been spared for the construction and arrangement of bacteriological laboratories for the cultivation of infectious fermentations and anti-fermentations, microscopic technique and that of inoculations and serums, etc., etc.

Hermann was head of the Berlin laboratory, specially devoted to the culture of the most virulent bacteria. On the shelves of fifty rooms, carefully classified, were vial after vial, containing, in their different degrees of evolution, all the microbes imaginable, both those that had once had such devastating effects on the human race and those that sometimes still ravaged domestic animal species. The study of bacillary pathogenesis having fascinated me from adolescence, I had obtained leave from the Paris medical center to be sent to the Berlin laboratory, where, very quickly making friends with Hermann, he had placed me at head of the classification department.

Hermann was one of the few earthlings who devoted the leisure hours assigned by the regulations to his intellectual culture. He was one of the most assiduous readers of the Berlin Library, one of the best in the world. He had never been found taking part in or attending the puerile and frivolous spectacles that monopolized the hours of rest of the vast majority of his planetary co-inhabitants. He had realized that there had been a time, unorganized and chaotic compared to the one we lived in, of course, but where, on the contrary, free discussion in intellectual, economic, political, ethical and other matters prevailed. Administrative education has demonstrated for centuries that everything that preceded the present state of affairs was fatally and necessarily harmful, detrimental, tainted with malignancy, corruption and evil individualism. Hermann and I discovered, to our amazement, that in ancient historical periods individual initiative had suggested deep and varied thinking and research and had led to multilateral and polymorphous achievements. We quickly deduced that the level of intelligence, comprehensiveness and individual understanding was much higher than that of our contemporaries, to whom the method of free examination had become quite foreign.

At the time of our story, the big, indeed the only concern of all was the replacement of the last name by a personal number. Instead of being called Dupont, Smith, Müller or Perez, it was a question of being designated, for example by A: 230.704 I, D, 87.985 IX, Q. 2.300.009 C, Y. 5.625 IV, the millions of combinations of which the letters of the alphabet (all languages were written in Latin characters), Arabic numerals and Roman numerals are susceptible to indefinitely number the inhabitants of the globe according to the territory where they were born and the section of this territory, according to a system similar in principle to that of the numeration formerly employed for automobiles. I would add, by the way, that there was only one form of transportation left: the plane.

So, for about a year, the people of the earth had been passionate about this issue. Successive referendums had discarded a numbering plate worn on the garment, to finally adopt an indelible tattoo engraved on the body. And on what part of the body? A vote decided (the vote was obligatory in all territories, and blank ballots prohibited): the electorate, almost unanimously — 5 billion votes against 40 votes — voted for a tattoo on the right buttock (one on the forehead having been rejected back previously.)

What wind of madness blew over us when this result was announced? I still seem to see Hermann stamping with indignation and repeating, as if answering a question asked by someone invisible: “Yes, yes, I have known it for a long time, humanity has descended to the last rung of stupidity, it is not worthy to live.” How, that night, did we get into the transport plane assigned to the laboratory; how did we stack the most virulent vials of cultures within: plague microbes, cholera microbes, typhus microbes, a hundred others? How did we break the horrible receptacles?

Twenty-four hours were enough for us to circle the earth. It was appalling. Unaccustomed to the virulence of epidemics, the people could not react against the poisoned atmosphere, made even more deleterious by the miasma exhaled by the bodies of the dying.

Sheltered in this cave, long prepared without my knowledge by Hermann, we escaped the reach of the plague thanks to a process of immunization of which Hermann alone held the secret. On a subsequent hike, all we found, sprawled over the face of the earth, was putrefaction and rotting bodies. Hermann later explained to me that he had cultivated the infectious fermentations in such a way that a single vial would have been enough to make the lower atmosphere of the globe unbreathable. We had thrown ten thousand from the height of our plane.

I feel my strength abandoning me. A mist veils my eyes. And yet I still have something to say. For quite a long time — how long, I have not been able to specify — every time I venture to the foot of the mountain, I see, always more numerous, troops of beings who are, perhaps, not quite apes and who roam the forest. There is no doubt that since the disappearance of men, apes have multiplied in this country. So have the apes escaped the epidemic? On my last outing, eight days ago, I saw a group of these beings walking upright. There were about fifty in all, among them children; one of them, stick in hand, led them. They followed the shore...

I lack the strength to continue; I am dying, one doubt torturing me...

Has our attack...?

Challenge (1941)

I know that you mock those whose white hair does not forbid [them from] loving, for I know you well, you who maintain that love has only a time, and who, mocking, would thus adapt the alexandrine of the fabulist—“It is one thing to build, but to love at that age!”—if you happened to remember it. I know you well, but I am not afraid to take up the challenge; underhandedly or openly expressed, your sarcasm leaves me indifferent and I do not fear it, for I feel I am part of the race of those who have cherished life to their last breath and, wisest of the wise, have understood that if love has not ennobled life until its end, it has not been worth living.

I count myself among the race of those who, right to the edge of the black abyss from which no one has ever climbed back out, are capable of tenderness and love, and of fidelity to their tenderness and love. An archer who stretches the bow of his will to the utmost, I want it to be this way; I want it because in this way I obey the impulsion of my natural energy; I want it this way because in this obedience I affirm my personality. Doubtless I have a different conception of love than your own, for I have caught several among you talking of these things in such base terms that I have felt ashamed to belong to the human race, disgusted to be a man!

Ah! do not speak to me of Greece and the Greek miracle! These sacred springs and these inspired hills and all these forces of nature that the Greeks had deified, they had existed since the world began and had lost none of their freshness. The emergence of Ida, like that of Olympus, dated back to some far-off geological folding. Apollo, Dionysos, Eros, Pan, the

nymphs, satyrs, fauns and sylvans had not allowed time to bite into their eternity, and this Greek miracle, which has never brushed your brow with its wing, consisted in endowing the oldest gods with so much eternal youth that when they loved they were always twenty years old!!

Some Necessary Clarifications (1945)

The individualists of our type appear willingly as *amoral*, *alegal* and *asocial*.

AMORAL, you understand, but in relation to morals imposed from outside, to conventional morality, to the bourgeois morality and the moralist hypocrisy; which does not prevent them from constructing a policy of personal conduct, or even a collective ethic, in which the postulates of morality are frequently, in practice, much more demanding than the imperatives of the common moral systems.

ALEGAL, you understand, but in relation to law imposed from outside, to written law, that of texts; which does not prevent them from complying with the summons of an internal law, often more rigid than the articles of the most draconian Codes, and to foresee severe moral sanctions with regard to those among them who have, without legitimate and duly justified motives, thumbed their noses at engagements voluntarily contracted, betrayed the confidence put in them, or used fraud or misrepresentation in their relations with those in their circle.

ASOCIAL, you understand, but in relation to the imposed gregariousness, to the obligatory societarism, which does not prevent them from associating voluntarily and, if they are poussés by their temperament, from seeking occasions to associate for all sorts of activities, to be faithful to the clauses of agreements to which they have subscribed without any external pressure and to prohibit any termination of the agreements reached, except in the cases mentioned in the contract of association. Asocial, but *sociable*.

The New Mentality (1946)

What distinguishes the world or humanity of the an-archist individualists is that it does not sanction the advent of a party — whether political, economic or religious — of a social or intellectual class — of an aristocracy, an elite or a dictatorship. This world, this humanity only exists as a function of a new mentality of another conception than that which dominates archist society, of a different means of situating the human unity in the human milieu.

The major and indelible characteristic of that new mentality is the place that it makes for the human unity, considered as the basis of all activity, of every social achievement — the the human person, considered in all situations as intangible, as inviolable. It is the absolute impossibility for the social of oppressing or bullying the individual. It is, in the relations of every nature that they can maintain with one another, a matter of placing on the same footing, on a similar level, collectivities and isolated individuals, totalities and unities. In other words, it is the assurance that no disadvantage or inferiority — in matters of agreements, negotiations, ententes, contracts, etc. — could result for the human person from the fact of living, evolving, producing or consuming in isolation.

No humanity will be to the taste of the an-archist individualist if it is not based on that “new mentality.”

My Friend Pierrot (1957)

Sic itur ad estra (*Pages roses du Petit Larousse*). — This is how we rise to the stars.

My friend Pierrot came to visit me. As you all know, my friend Pierrot has become a celebrated, famous, popular singer. They can't get enough of him. He receives fabulous fees. They may well be lighting a fire at the neighbor's, but he isn't concerned with that at all. Any more than with Colombine. Poor Colombine!

Nor is he concerned with the moonlight. What my friend Pierrot wants is to go for a stroll on the Moon, the true one, the authentic one, not the one by the light of which lovers exchange

promises, but the one whose unstable ground is composed of high mountains, immense craters, cirques and deserts, where life is impossible for beings constructed as we are, because — as the most eminent astronomers report — there is no water there, no air.

My friend Pierrot reads the papers — or at least skims them. Since the launching of the artificial satellite that goes *beep, beep, beep*, he has been on tenterhooks. It's useless to reason with him: he wants to take a trip to the Moon. — "When," he asks me, do you think the first departure will take place: in eight days, in a month, in a year?" I regret not being able to inform him. Like him, I have learned that it is possible. Nothing is impossible from now on. Archimedes asserted that if you gave him an adequate lever, he would lift the world. Our own scientists and technicians are certain that if they are given the proper vapor, the spaceships that they will construct will sail across the interplanetary spaces—with still better to come, it is understood.

They have accomplished so many miracles, our modern sorcerors, that we hardly know where it will stop. See this box placed on the table, equipped with a few knobs. It is enough to turn one of them in the desired direction and we hear what is being said or sung in New York, Tokyo, Honolulu, etc. Isn't it marvelous? And that airplane that hums above our heads, it carries you a thousand kilometers an hour; tomorrow, it will complete the circuit of our poor little globe in less time that it takes to digest a large meal (large meals are harmful to health, incidentally). And, as if that was not enough, our technicians have invented mechanisms that can be sent to their destination, launched from a point unknown to all except those who operate them. Planes of fantastic speed, remote-controlled devices able to carry machines capable of destroying everything that exists on the Earth, as the minuscule experiment of Hiroshima has allowed us to glimpse. This is progress!

Well! My friend Pierrot, you will go to the moon, just as soon as the means are found to allow you to endure the conditions of the journey. And we will discover them. In my imagination I already see you decked out like a deep-sea diver, your oxygen tank within reach of your nostrils, settling cozily into a comfortably furnished spaceship. I do not guarantee, naturally, that things will happen this way. Either way, I know that you won't be concerned about the expense. You have assured me that your bank account — American, Swiss or Uruguayan — is well stocked...

As for what you will encounter on the surface of that natural satellite of the Earth, neither you nor I know anything about it: an absolute desolation or forms of existence of which we have no conception. (You have alluded to subterranean formes of organized life, but I know that you know your Jules Verne and value his *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.) Don't let yourself be too captivated by your imagination, my friend Pierrot. It is likely that prior to the establishment of a regular service from Earth to Moon and back, stations will be built on the lunar soil, provided with everything possible allowing humans to survive there. That is not a work for tomorrow, no doubt, but it will take place rapidly. You will go to the Moon, my friend Pierrot... In eight hours, in a month, in a year?... Who knows?

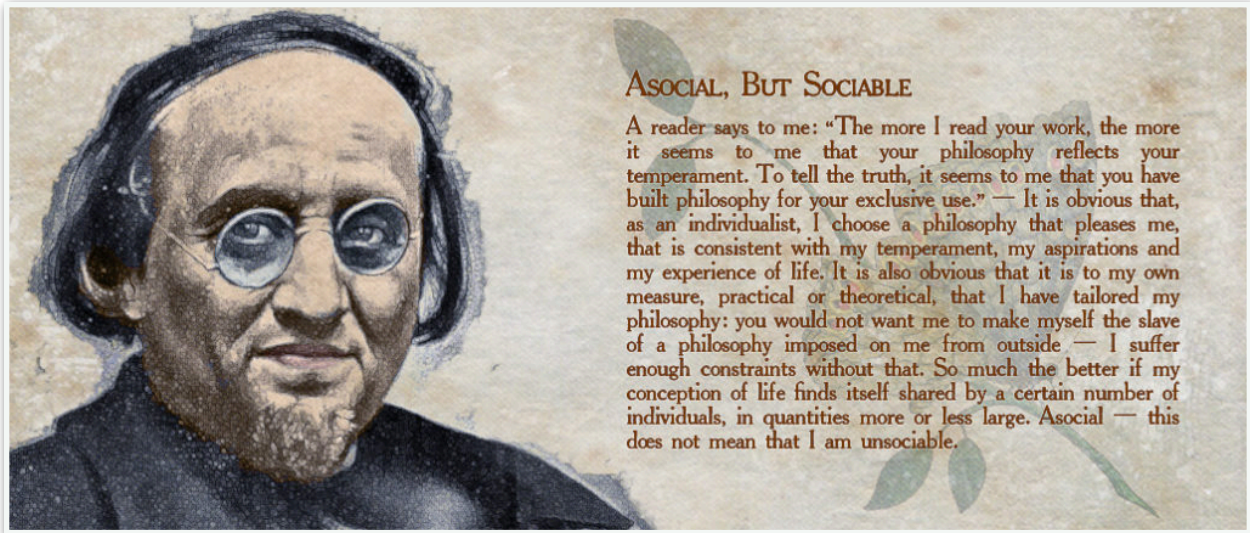
I don't dare examine the consequences that could arise from the landing of human beings on the soil of our old travelling companion. The leaders of the human herds are in the grip of such madness that it is better not to think about it... The Moon, last refuge of colonization and last battlefield of the colonizers. Here again, who knows?

Before we part, my friend Pierrot, let me speak to you frankly. I liked you better playing the guitar or mandolin, warbling beneath Colombine's windows. Or vagabonding around the Chat Noir. I liked you better pale, powdered, naive, lovestruck, even when you exchanged some blows with Harlequin. You were a poet in those days, thus an anarchist, not always eating your fill, mocking the third and fourth estates alike. You were ridiculed, it is true, but you were as free of *mais* ambition as you were of bank account. You passed, joking, carefree, but sentimental, and you would have laughed if anyone predicted that one day you would be gripped by the longing to leave for the Moon, other than astride the rays that it reflects. I know well that it is Progress that has pushed you to cast off your white rags, symbol of your disgust with everything that soils,

stains and makes ugly the individual. But I liked you better that way. It is understood. One of these days, you will go to the Moon, my friend Pierrot... Bon voyage!



— I have recently had the pleasure of paying a visit to the *camarade* Benj. R. Tucker, whose ideas have been made known to you through our study of the work of Mr. Paul Ghio. Benj. R. Tucker is a great admirer of Max Stirner and of Proudhon, no one will doubt it, and of Mr. Henry Maret. He does not give of himself lightly, so we can only congratulate ourselves on his cordiality, as well as the graciousness of Mme. Tucker. Benj. R. Tucker is not very affectionate toward the libertarians of this country and it was not without a smile that he frankly declared to us that “there are not three anarchists in France.” (1904)





II. — Documents from *l'en dehors* (1922)

The Individualist

as we understand them, — *our* Individualist — loves life and strength. They proclaim, passionately, the joy and the enjoyment of living. They admit openly that their own happiness is their goal. They are no sort of ascetic and the mortification of the flesh disgusts them. They are passionate. They present themselves openly, their brow crowned with vines, and sing gladly, accompanying themselves on the pan flute. They commune with Nature, whose energy stimulate their instincts and thoughts. They are neither young nor old: they are the age that they feel. And as long as there remains a drop of blood in their veins, they struggle to win or to secure their place in the sun. They do not impose, but neither do they wish to be imposed upon. They renounce masters and gods. They know how to love, but they also know how to hate. They are full of affection for their own, those in their circles, but they have a horror of false friends. They are proud and conscious of their personal dignity. They shape themselves internally and react externally. They gather themselves and spend themselves lavishly. They care nothing for prejudices and laugh at what others say about them. They have a taste for art, the sciences and letters. They love books, study, meditation and labor. They are artisans, not mere laborers. They are generous, sensitive and sensual. They are hungry for new experience and fresh sensations. But if they advance through life on a chariot fast as a whirlwind, it is on the condition of feeling themselves the master of the coursers that carry them along, it is animated by the will to assign to wisdom and sensual pleasure, as circumstances decree, the share that legitimately falls to each of them in the course of their personal evolution.

l'en dehors

wants to be a lively, vibrant newspaper, a journal of combat as well as individual culture. It will situate itself resolutely at the extreme left of the antiauthoritarian movements. In every domain, it will take the side of the original against the routine, the adventurous against the timid; for the disobedient against the slave; for the rebel against the beggar. It will assert itself for anyone who takes a position on the margins of legal and conventional good and evil, beyond the social categories and ideological schools, against the formalists, the pacifiers, the pharisees, the tartuffes, the prostitutes and judgmental. It will place itself on the side of the victims of civil, military or religious authority; of those rejected or ostracized by societies resting on the skill of money-lenders, the cunning of career politicians, the servility of business journalists.

l'en dehors

will stand against the strongbox individualists; the bourgeois individualists, whether avowed or shame-faced; the social climbers on the lookout for every advantage, provided that it furnishes a chance to “succeed”; the wheeler-dealers ready even to renounce instrument-domination and tool-exploitation to add to the popular clamor — as soon as they glimpse a means of grasping success.

l'en dehors

will not spare the sullen individualism, the affected individualism, the individualism in the manner of Hugo's Thénardiens; the “I couldn't care less”-ism of the individualist pseudo-comrades who pretend to have accomplished their “personal revolution” and completed the cycle of their experiences, because they are holed up — at the price of what renunciations or self-effacements! — in some mediocre situation, or because they have painfully amassed a paltry capital. We will not let ourselves be fooled by the verbose varnish they use to excuse their nonchalance, their laziness, their opportunism, their adaptation to bourgeois individualism. We cannot imagine a hearth without radiance, an internal life without external activity, a shaping of the private personality without a reaction against the oppressive and demoralizing influence of the atmosphere. We make no concessions on this point.

l'en dehors

takes the side of the producer,—whether isolated or associated. Here, “to produce” naturally means to create, to imagine, innovate, transform, transport, teach, etc. To produce is to render materials — from the substance of the brain to stone from a quarry — suitable for the aim to which we have destined it. But, here, to produce is something else as well: it is to harness all the resources of the senses, to extend all the energies of the mind and muscles to think and act with originality, to imbue with his personality even the most insignificant of the tasks to which we devote ourselves.

Here, we will consider any gesture, any act accomplished by the human individual in order to develop, shape and fulfill his being and his life as a productive act or gesture. To live in isolation —by temperament or because one is convinced that man is strongest alone—or associated with comrades to whom we feel ourselves linked, for a time, by affinities—whether sentimental or intellectual or realistic—is still to do the work of the producer. To resist the influences that put the autonomy of the person in danger, is still and always to behave as a producer concerned and conscious of the value of their product. For, here, we will consider the individual life the most precious, the masterpiece resulting from individual effort.

l'en dehors

takes the same position for the consumer — whether isolated or associated. But, here, “to consume does not only mean the use or assimilation of production. To consume is also to want the product that we use to be marked by originality and bear an individual stamp. It is to insist that it is not deprived of quality, nor of finish in execution; so that it evolves in its form and its capacities for use. To consume is not only to ask that the produce offered brings pleasure to the eye and the satisfaction of an appetite, it is also to give the producer no respite, to urge them to constantly create and develop new values, previously unseen utilities; it is, finally, to promote the emergence of a mentality that will more comprehend monotony, repetition and sameness in the productions than domination and exploitation in the activity of the producer.

l'en dehors

will defend the cause of the emancipation of women and that of the emancipation of men. It will battle with all its energies the system of the double standard: different morals depending on whether the woman is or is not tied to a boyfriend or husband, — whether the man is or is not tied to a girlfriend or wife. *L'en dehors* will demand for the woman, for the man, for the mother, for the father — in the state of cohabitation or not — the right to decide for themselves, individually, in the economic domain as in the intellectual, in the sphere of their sentimental activity as in that of their sexual activity.

l'en dehors

will speak out against unilateralism of every sort. It will not be specifically scientific or naturian, hygienic or eugenicist, tolstoyan or anti-war, literary or vegetarian, artistic or free-love-ist, syndicalist or revolutionary, an organ of propaganda in favor of the universal language, “colonies” or educational works with a libertarian tendency; *l'en dehors* wants above all to be an organ of struggle, of propaganda, of anarchist individualist achievement.

But all of aspects of human activity will be exposés, examined and discussed from the point of view of anarchist individualism.

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Because *l'en dehors* wishes to situate itself at the extreme left of the anti-authoritarian movements:

it will campaign against every conception, every doctrine, every regime involving the dispossession or deprivation of the means of production to the human individual; dépossession ou privation du moyen de production; or interdiction or restriction on the disposition of their product, resulting from their individual effort; or, finally, any interference or intrusion of the milieu in the relations among individuals;

it will work to free anarchism — even individualist anarchism — from the Marxism that saturates, corrupts and weakens it. And this will not be the least of its tasks;

it will ridicule pitilessly any idea of a “future society” conceived in the manner of a secular paradis or based on the practice of a universal happiness that runs like clockwork; it will show itself the implacable adversary of every social arrangement that does not foresee, authorize, postulate or solicit the attempt or realization of the various experiences and experiments that it is possible for human to imagine, as soon as the recourse to constraint is absent; it will vigorously denounce the deficiency and danger of every conception of a “new humanity” that does not leave the field open to the simultaneous practice of all methods and all systems possible — and that in all domains — without any reservations other than mutual respect in their application.

l'en dehors

wants to be an organ of combat for the individual — associated or isolated — against everything that tends or aims to restrain, constrict or hinder them; — to prevent them from expressing, inventing and fulfilling themselves; — from doing or living their lives as their please, at their own risk and peril, without involving others except those who wish to voluntarily ally themselves with them, without infringing on the liberty of others to be and to act.

l'en dehors

has nothing to do, and wants nothing to do, with the individualist who wish for the theories that they issue or profess, not to justify what the vulgar and the moralists call “passions” or “abnormalities” (as it is purely logical to situate ourselves to benefit our opinions), but in order to hide themselves, to show themselves to their comrades, to those of “their world,” differently than they are in reality: truthful when they are boastful, disinterested when they are passionate, firm when they are wavering, etc. Or else to “judge” or value the works of their companions in ideas, other than by accounting for the temperament or the conception of life that animates them.

l'en dehors

wishes to be the newspaper for those who yearn for *reciprocity* to replace violence and deception in the relations between individuals; who wish to substitute, for a so-called social contract, imposed by force and ruled by arbitrary will, legal liberty for each to behave in their way and to regulate through mutual agreement their relations with every human individual or collectivity. Of those who wish to establish, in the place of monopoly the ideology of uniformity, the free play of a healthy competition, based on the complete access of the individual being — isolated or associated — to all possibilities, to ensure a full return on their personal efforts.

l'en dehors

has nothing to do, and wants nothing to do, with that pseudo-individualism that claims — under the name of “competition” — the “right” to advantage or assert oneself, to play one’s cards right, without any sort of counterbalance, at the cost, to the detriment of the comrade who, in a general sense, finds themselves — through unforeseeable circumstances — stripped of opportunities to learn, to know, to improve themselves; bereft of facilities for movement and publicity; deprived of the means of production.

III. — Statements on the Anarchist Entente (1928-1929)

What Is the Anarchist Entente?

Each tendency making its own propaganda, each association functioning as it intends, each journal putting forth its specific claims. No polemics among persons or tendencies. No competition of shops or attempts to corner the market. Neither absorption, nor fusion, nor confusion. To each their place in the sun, their tactics, their advance and pace, their realizations and experience, provided that they do not entail recourse to the State or to governmental sanctions. Peace among us; war to the archists.

That is the anarchist entente.

The Anarchist Entente

Not bound to march in lockstep, nor necessarily regulate your pace by that of the isolated individual who races in front of you or that of the association that ambles along behind you. To each their own rhythm and affinities; to each according to the terms of the contract to which they have freely consented. Without meddling with the cadence of their neighbor; without interfering with the gait of the group next door; without finding fault with the movements of those who prefer the shoulders to the pavement, the undergrowth to the clearings and vice versa. A clear path for all types of advance: running, rushing, walking, wandering.

That is the spirit of the anarchist entente.

The Anarchist Entente

undertakes no fool's errand, no sympathy or affinity links it to those who create bad blood, to those who do not wish to subscribe to the conditions for which it is formed.

It owes them nothing and they have nothing to demand of it. It is for peace; they are for internal warfare. It desires that all the forces of anarchy should be employed — each according to its internal logic and its own direction — to tear down the various columns on which the temple of anarchy rests; they want the energies of anarchism to be exhausted tearing each other apart within the camp. There is neither compromise nor reciprocity possible between the *entente* and the dissension. They are separated by an impassible gulf.

The Anarchist Entente

does not signify an abdication. That would be cowardice. It does not imply a renunciation of our doctrinal or ideological sympathies or antipathies. That would be deception. It realizes the anarchist individualist idea of not encroaching on activity, propaganda, expansion, experimentation, association and attempts other than our own — different from our own — even opposed to our own, it being understood what it means TO RETURN THE FAVOR.

The possibility
in the anarchist milieu,
of association
between individualists or communists,
for the purposes that please them,
according to the contract agree upon,
without meddling
in the function or nature
of other anarchist associations,
and without anyone hindering
the propaganda in support of these associations:
this is what is entailed by
THE ANARCHIST ENTENTE.

The freedom,
among anarchists,
for each tendency of anarchism
to assert itself
as the circumstances demand
without impinging
on the determinism of its neighbor:
this is what is demanded by
THE ANARCHIST ENTENTE.

*Not one penny,
Not one line,
Not one listener
For the drudge-work of anarchist discord.*

IV. — From *l'en dehors* (1928)

Some Reasons Why Mr. Tout-le-Monde Does Not Like « l'en dehors »

Mr. Tout-le-Monde is not only encountered in the mediocratic and democratic milieus, he abounds — a cliché of which there are thousands of examples — in extremist and avant-gardist circles.

l'en dehors does not confuse agitation with propaganda, raised voices with reasoning; it does not believe that it is because one prints reams of paper that *ideas advance*. Mr. Tout-le-Monde imagines, on the contrary, that the more disorderly things are and the more clapping there is at meetings, the more converts are gained.

l'en dehors takes seriously the notion of the contract of voluntary association; it teaches that before committing to any enterprise, to any campaign, it is important to know who we are dealing with and what is going on behind the scenes: it wants us to be certain, before we make the effort, where we stand, what we expect from our associates and what we have a right to expect, reciprocally, from our comrades in combat, experimentation or labor. Mr. Tout-le-Monde does not make certain, is not forearmed, does not guarantee. He is fickle, capricious, unconscious, erratic, blown about like a weathercock in the wind; he is one of those who, having put his hand to the plow, cannot prevent himself from looking backwards.

Mr. Tout-le-Monde can't stomach that the sexual should be presented as we present it in *l'en dehors*. He is disconcerted, this good fellow: he fears that the discussion of such things will disturb the routine of his contemplative life, interfere with his habits of thought, make everything topsy-turvy in his conventional brain. Emotional plurality, simultaneity; associations of camaraderie made richer because they embrace amorous reciprocity—the horror!

Even the title of *l'en dehors* makes Mr. Tout-le-Monde's hair stand on end: "Outside of what?" He mutters. He has still not understood that it is outside of him and his kind.

You have nothing in common with Mr. Tout-le-Monde and you love *l'en dehors* for the same reasons that he does not like it. So it is up to you to spread it around judiciously, to find readers who will reflect, subscribers, to rally comrades to its theories, friends fit to transform its aspirations into living realities. — L'EN DEHORS.

