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1913

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I mean by individualism a certain method of thought and life. Or perhaps a necessity of thought and life. Do we not live and think in the measure to which we are individualists? What is not individualist in me repeats, obeys, imitates. Even among the most passive there is doubtless a living hour where he sought within himself his reasons to obey like a cadaver. In order to annihilate his spirit, his heart, and his consciousness he had to appeal to his consciousness, his heart, and his spirit. His sole royal gesture was an abdication; his sole manifestation of life was suicide. And yet, in order to cease being a man he had for one minute to perceive that he was a man.

The most social of thinkers remain individualists in the measure to which they remain thinkers. The constructive power of a de Bonald, the verve of a de Maistre: the individual merits, the real life of these writers, and not the servile pro-slavery conclusions that express only their limits and banality. Charles Maurras is superior to the supporter who repeats him, because Charles Maurras has laid out a personal and ingenious road towards the abyss of triviality.

Every man has passed through, even if in a fleeting unconscious moment, Descartes' provisional doubt. Most have been

afraid, have retreated to the refuge of their old thoughts. But the terrifying moment has nevertheless enriched them. Now some of these old thoughts have again become thoughts for them. Until this point, they had only been words.

I find in the measure that I seek myself. But what do I find in me: Life; a life: *my* life.

What is my life? What is my deepest will? Will to pleasure, will to power, or will to harmony? Epicureanism, imperialism, or stoicism?

Are men so various that Epicurus and Nietzsche were able to plumb their ultimate depths, as did Epictetus? I wouldn't have the presumption to accuse of superficiality any of those who have attempted to find themselves. I only know that the will to harmony in me is more profound that the wills to pleasure and power.

More liberating as well. To be sure, profound epicurean pleasure comes from myself, but the pain through which it allows itself to be troubled comes from without. You, Nietzsche, do you not know what compromises are demanded by all human powers and to what point the master is the slave of his slaves? It is only through contempt for pain and fear, by contempt for all authority and obedience that I liberate my being. The social is always one of my limits, one of my troubles. As long as I don't ideologically suppress pain, death and authority through contempt I am incapable of a true thought and a true joy.

In the concrete, I don't escape from death, illness, social control. But laughter suffices to deliver the spirit.

He who awakens to individualism rejects, in a first movement of revolt morality at the same time as the social. The priests of all servitudes have so capably mixed together the one and the other in the confusion of their sophisms… Insofar as I free myself from men and things I find love in myself. The free harmony I love in myself I love wherever I meet it. And just as the acorn in the teeth of the pig puts me in mind of the vast shadow of the oak, the man who consents to the worst

social crushing still provides me with the nostalgic richness of a dream of love.