

In the Circle of Life

In Memory of Bruno Filippi

Renzo Novatore

1920

*The people who desire to be themselves
never know where they are going.*

.....

*The final outcome of knowledge consists in recognizing
that the soul of man is unknowable.*

Without being an imitator of rabid Papinian¹ cynicism or a superficial and perfumed "voluptuary" like Guido Da Verona; without feeling the ironic skepticism and the sorrowful bitterness of Mario Mariani on my lips; I feel and affirm that life cannot be at all worthy of the name if we do not live it as Artists, as Rebels, as Heroes.

Schopenhauer, in his powerful and frightful volumes of metaphysics, is anxious to show us that Life is sad and that for this reason it isn't worth the trouble of living it. But the art drawn from the most profound and lyrical human sorrow throbs to exalt the heroic Beauty that in the divinatory exaltation of symbol is transfigured by creative joy that shows us savage purity, that sheds light on the loving spirit, that teaches us to live Life madly. If politics, socialism, christianity, humanism, logic, coherence, right, duty, just and unjust, good and evil, truth and justice, are already boring, vacuous, and slumbering things, phantoms that have grown dim and vanished in the anthropocentric sun of the unique negator; parodies of a dying civilization that inspires nausea, repugnance, and contempt in us; Art teaches us the great love of Life. We have the need to love it "up to the annihilation of being". Sorrow and Anguish are the pure fountain of pulsating Beauty for Art. It is in the sulfurous chasms of Sorrow that Art lays its luminous roots in order to be able to fling the verdant happiness of its branches high among the mysterious conflicts of the winds, in the dance of Sun and Light where dreams, hope, and Beauty are founded on a tragic song of happiness and Greatness.

¹ Papini was an old Italian author, apparently known for his cynicism.

Yes! Every snow-covered peak that sings polyphonic symphonies of music and poetry, of love and beauty, on high amidst the ethereal purity of light and the golden caresses of the Sun, still rises from a dark abyss. Thus is Life! Sorrow is our creative abyss, Joy and Happiness our mighty dream!

Even if sorrow does not make us better, “I think”—says Nietzsche—“that it makes us deeper.” And in the mysterious depths of our being the unknowable enigma toils and hides itself. Hour by hour, moment by moment, it transmutes itself from unknown emotion to known thought, luminous and brilliant, that flashes its darting rays on virgin, purple peaks of revelatory knowledge.

And then, just as vast and glittering strings of stars wandering in the clarity of a cloudless night are reflected in the deep blue of a tranquil sea, so the happiness created by and for ourselves is reflected, smiling, in the sad sea of our sorrow; of this our sorrow that gave us Life!

We must never stop bringing our thoughts out of our sorrow and maternally giving them that within us which is of blood, of heart, of fire, of joy, of passion, of anguish, of knowledge, of destiny, of fatality.

“Life for us is to change all that we are and all that touches us into light and flame, because we cannot do otherwise.” This is the circle—perhaps much too limited—of Life where we are perpetually knocked down without being able to escape except through the silent paths of Death! But Death does not frighten or terrorize us. On the contrary! We who proceed out of the Unknown of eternity and go toward the eternity of the Unknown have learned to look upon Death like any moment of our Life. And this is our most beautiful, our most sublime mystery! This is the final word of knowledge. The unknowable!

And it is from this our unknowable singularity that the powerful and diabolical voice of our ravenous desires rises. Desires of youthful flesh eager for pleasure, the cry of the spirit panting for unlimited freedom, mad flights of the mind through the distant, unexplored unknown; howls and ferocious blasphemies of our galloping and vagabond thought colliding with the much too mysterious walls of eternity, triumphant and dionysian songs of a Life seen dimly through the delirium of a dream, a dream composed of a Whole lost and wandering in a Void. And in the void Death waits for us. This Death that is ours as Life is ours. This Death that we love!

But one should not be lowered into the grave with a heart swollen with sadness and weeping. It is necessary first to have lived in intensely as Artists, as Rebels, as Heroes, without ever having bathed in the bitter waters of repentance that flow in christian rivers. The true original and spirited sinner should not die drowning in the slimy whirlpools of a slimier remorse, but rather enveloped in the rosy blaze of the greatest sin. Before dying, we must be consumed to the last quivering spark of our luxuriant thought, having made a feast of the world and an infinite pleasure of action. Before dying, it is necessary—as Emerson said—to feel everything become familiar to us, every event useful, every day holy, every person divine. Then? “Then comes the nausea, the repugnance, the loathing,” says Bruno Filippi, and then one “dares” and daring one goes with a calm and bright spirit toward the silent realm of Death

where the mind is dispersed in the vast stillness of the Void and matter decomposes in order to live another type of unknown life in the atoms. But for us even Death should be a vigorous manifestation of Life, Art, and Beauty!

The Hero of Life goes toward Death accompanied by the tragically triumphal march of dynamite and the head encircled with flowers. Yes, anyone who has desired and been able to live as Rebel and Hero wants the freedom to burn in a beautiful blaze ignited by the greatest sin so that the prelude to death is nothing but a sweet and melancholy poem kissing a red dawn where the voice of Orpheus blends with the sobs of Prometheus and the roaring, bacchic laughter of Dionysus resounds.

I admire Corrado Brando² with iconoclastic enthusiasm and atheistic religiosity even if his creator has not known how to die in time and has allowed the long rain of time to fall on his mind miraculously consuming and withering it; even though it was necessary to get drunk on the virgin and dangerous zarathustrian fountains gushing from the dizzying peaks of the merry and playful nietzschian solitude; even if the shitty little Catos³ of that putrid Thais, of the hateful Circe called Morality, flee in horror before him. Because Corrado Brando did not glorify crime as the fat and skinny idiots claim, but—with appropriate marks of the tragic art—the efficacy and dignity of crime conceived as promethean virtue are manifested. But while I admire this vigorous creature who blossomed luxuriously through the pagan mystery of the homericly tragic art that, as a symbol of sublime heroic beauty, exalts itself above the sky of Shadow and of Night as the fatal announcement of a brilliant dawn of blood, fire, and light, I see “the anarchic individual” standing out from the grey twilight of reality, “he who obeys only his own law” in order to “open the passage with bomb explosions” and live life crying like the god of the rynerian parable: “I love you and freely desire you, oh my Necessity!” It is Bruno Filippi! Spirit has made itself Thought, Thought has made itself Flesh in order to reappear as symbol. The tragic Hero of action has made himself the artist of Life in order to transmute himself into the Poet of the deed, as strong and implacable as the fatality of Destiny. Like the D’Annunzian Hero. He too said with his action: “The proof of my dignity is in the invisible miracle.” And just as in Corrado Brando, the intoxication of the will had accumulated in him as a Dionysian frenzy. Like the protagonist of *More Than Love*, he also teaches us the fury and the whirlwind, because in him as well “the tempest raised all the forces of the soul and, tossing them about, it slammed them against a solid granite wall.” Like all of the few frantic lovers of Life, he was a heroic poet of the deed who in the destruction of himself and of his Misfortunes created a tragic song to the “triumph of the imperishable will”, to the cult of eternal Joy and Beauty. He offered all the corroding and luminous flames of his ardent, sorrowful, and tortured mind. He, Bruno Filippi, in the delirious impulse of his annihilation, wanted to make the most intimate and sublime Sin acknowledge Life. Then he dissolved in the Void, a luminous and wandering voice that remains for us, incessantly whispering: “Dare,

² A character from a novel by Gabrielle D’Annunzio.

³ The Roman orator, Cato, was known for his rigid moralism.

dare!” And at the desperately serene cry of this symbolic twenty year old voice, it seems to us that the romantically scented pagan earth smiles at us with a lyrical and amorous smile, saying to us: “hasten destiny and come to rest in my turgid breast, swollen with fruitful seeds.” Since he was a poet, Bruno Filippi heard this voice. He heard it and he answered: *Oh good earth!...I will come, I will come on the great day and you will welcome me into your arms, good, fragrant earth, and you will make the timid violets blossom on my head.* Now that Bruno Filippi has taken all the roses and thoughts germinated in the vermilion garden of his spring winds into the grave, rejoicing in strength and youth, in will and mystery, “Oh earth, take back this body and recall what was strong for your future labors.” Because I see in Him as well the “necessity of the crime that burdens the resolute man elevating him at last to the titanic condition.”

Who was he? Where was he going?

Fools! And where have you gone? Where are you going?

He was broken while breaking the chains that you, united in a cowardly and hateful way in your manifold quality as dangerous lunatics, riveted logically and morally to his twenty year old rebel wrists in order to crush his Uniqueness, his mystery, because he was incomprehensible to you, precisely as the complicated mind of one who feels complete in himself must be. Bruno Filippi hated. But the forces of Hatred did not crush the powers of Love within Him. He immolated himself in a fruitful embrace with death because he madly loved Life. We have the need and the entitlement to say of him that which was said of the D’Annunzian hero: “That the slaves of the marketplace turn around and remember!”

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