

The ongoing worldwide horror of the past year and a half has already inflicted deep, throbbing wounds on the decrepit body of old Europe, and it can only end in utter self-exhaustion. Meanwhile it has undeniably brought about many advances in physics, technology and psychology, solving problems that, in the ordinary course of evolution, would have reached their present stages only after lengthy scientific research. And although civilized humankind has never before revealed itself in such naked brutishness in front of its thinkers, strangely enough never had the thinkers anticipated such a vast measure of moral purification in human nature as now, in the wake of such unmasking.

It is as if the year 1914 had marked the onset of a new period in the evolution of humankind. The coming of a more human Human Being, inaugurating the age of a new moral order.

I believe in the long-established truth that, notwithstanding its enormity, this war, like all wars, is only a horrendous episode in the story of humankind. It will certainly not change the petty practices of some men, nor will it smash all those fangs now exposed in fraternizing grins. But I emphatically deny that this monstrous butchery will slip out of the collective memory of the great masses without leaving an imprint, in the form of self-awakening recollections, on the consciousness of humankind. While today the end of the world war is as yet barely conceivable, still there is hardly a nation whose people, grown more Christlike, has not begun to yearn for social concord in our world. With the ebbing of this sea of blood the world of commerce anticipates a relaxing of stultifying protective tariffs; even while nations fight to the death the world of politics dreams of a United States of Europe, and with good cause, a hope more justified than ever before. In this entire topsy-turvy world it is only art that remains deaf and blind, still indulging in self-adulation, lost in a jungle of sterile catchphrases evoking "national pride" and romantic chivalry. And yet it is precisely art, especially literature, because it possesses the most direct, active means of expression, that faces the greatest task in the molding of the coming generation into a human form. Literature can no longer be content with decadent self-glorification. It must consciously strive, as the most dedicated proponent of progress, to seize for itself a role in the very forums that will lay the foundations and provide directions. Therefore:

1. Although the new literature did not come into being during the war, it still needed the war for its development from the piddling *Weitschmerz* vapors of the previous generation into a lyric representation of the conscious will. The new literature must maintain ever-present contact with all progressive economic and political movements, and its prominent figures, just as those of commerce, industry and politics, must demand a leading role in steering the machinery of the state, revising existing laws and creating new legislation.
2. This new literature, in order to realize its full significance and make its truths and beauties, drawn always from the essentials of actual life, fully effective, must free itself from all conventional "ideal" and technical fetters. For everything that served as creative form or essential content for the artist of yesterday can only be, for today's creative artist, a drainage ditch that channels off the essence.

3. The new literature must not swear allegiance to any one of the "isms." It must not place its faith in the renewed possibilities of Christianity, and likewise must diametrically oppose Futurism. For at the one extreme are ascetics who have

been staring at their navels for millennia and at the other, vain prima donnas singing the apotheosis of war... Every school bears the hallmark of some decadent estheticism, extraneous virtuosity, or sacred mediocrity.

4. The new literature must react to all natural phenomena. It should not recognize any unbridgeable gaps in time or space. It should be the helpmate of the sciences, and vice versa. It should recognize—and use every means to illuminate—spiritual forces, by striving to equally include in its song the mysteries of the soul, the erotic splendor of flesh and blood, the poisons exhaled by the dungheap at springtime, the "Marconigraph" of technology hungering for infinity, the locomotives taking the measure of the globe, the aeroplanes probing the skies, as well as the majestic silences through which the souls of objects address us.
 5. The new literature frees the will by opening the floodgates. The writer must simultaneously be both skeptic and enthusiast, a lover of everything that is unreachable, while impassively stepping over the bodies of dead gods, and moving past the purple haze of obsessions.
 6. The new literature glorifies creative forces. It encourages the free competition of liberated forces, reformations, and revolutions—but opposes all wars, for [contrary to the Futurists' claims] wars are the vilest enslavers of energies.
 7. The new literature cannot serve racial or national ends!
 8. The new literature will not consist of gartanded snobs crooning lullabies to hysterical women!
 9. The new literature must be a pillar of fire arising from the very soul of the age!
 10. The subject of the new literature is the entirety of the cosmos!
 11. The sound of the new literature is the chant of the conscious energies!
 12. The glorified ideal of the new literature is Man, enlightening into infinity! My intention has been, insofar as possible within the limits of available space and the censorship at work today, to provide a program for literature. My recent work has served as its illustration; I have conceived of *A Tett* for its propagation, and for its realization I have found in the vast reaches of the art world a number of companions forging ahead on diverse paths leading to the same goal as mine. Our will is as red as our blood and as fresh as our youth. We believe in reaching our goal. We are certain of the coming realization of our credo. But today, at a time when each day hurls at us a growing number of material and other artificial obstacles, I hold it necessary to spell out in this form our aims for the future. For there will come a time when we shall have to remember these days. For:
- The blood that is being criminally spilled nowadays will be calmly absorbed by the soil, but when the fruit ripens, its taste will be bitter in our mouths for a long time to come, with the taste of the horrors suffered. Mendacious, glorified legends may emanate from today's casefiles, but for a long time to come eyes that are open will still be confronted with the wavering question and exclamation marks of mutilated human bodies.

Translated by John Batek