

Dagny or a Love Feast

My English is inadequate to the task – I’m not a native speaker. Besides, I’m not quite sure what makes me write about a mysterious woman coming from Scandinavia to the South Caucasus to be shot dead by one of her admirers in my hometown over a hundred years ago. Moreover – I’m a bad man: I don’t know what love is and, yes, there must be something definitely wrong with my liver, because I drink too much... Actually, maybe I drink because I don’t know, or maybe I don’t know because I drink? Here, here!

St. Paul, the thirteenth of the twelve, who spoke with the tongues of men and angels, knew what love is. A long time ago he wrote to the Corinthians: “...and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” And more importantly: “... Love suffereth long and is kind ... Love doth not rejoice within iniquity, but rejoiceth within the truth.”

Well, what shall I say of this knowledge?! Me personally rejoiceth within al-cohol, which for sure might contain some truth in it, as the Latin saying has it, however mostly it contains some regular stuff distilled from grapes, barley, grain, or berries, or whatever, which bathes and then shrouds my brain and then bur-ies it... And yes, love is also there, but as far as I can savor it within the 40% per volume it amounts to less than one percent, especially if one drinks alone. Thus to highjack that very St. Paul, the way I understand love is almost the same as a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal would understand the sounds they make or, to be more precise, my knowledge of love equals the knowledge of love “experi-enced” by, say, Eric Dolphy’s flute, when the guy played that old jazz classic You Don’t Know What Love Is on the very same flute.

No doubt, the flute as a musical instrument is something extraordinary: it was invented by a theriomorphic creature, a half-goat, half-god, to celebrate the mo-ment when the physical matter went mad, all in one golden afternoon... As some Gaelic bards suggest, the best flute is made of bone taken from the thigh of a heron crazing by the moon. Maybe this is why nearly all flute players are slightly nuts, like the most obvious of them, Jethro Tull’s Ian Anderson. And yet, the maddest of them was a Russian, Vladimir Mayakovski: once, he even ventured to play his spinal column like a flute... Just imagine him standing on one leg, the other one up, and with his eyes wide shut blowing into the vertebrae – flying so high, trying to remember...

May I suggest here a music-orthopedic definition of love? Love is when her/ his breath is filling up your spinal column with sounds... and the gentle wind moving silently, invisibly... Love that never told can be... Here, here!

O yes, Dagny Juel Przybyszewska must have been such a kind: she would play the spine-flute of the men around her, stirring jealousy with excitement, mix-ing orgasm with dying, and transforming their sexual fears into the destructive aesthetics of the fin de siecle. The Nordic Sphinx, as they called her, she would strangle them with her illuminating riddles, like a fetus strangled inside the spec-tacular belly of Our Lady of the Life-in-Death-and-Death-in-Life-as-Art. The High Priestess of Berlin

bohemia, the midwife of the Terrible Beauty that was being born; she was their Androgyny and the absolute source of ecstasy, madness and inspiration. And they all desired her, desired this Botticellian-Rembrandtian-Rosettian vampire of the soul: curly, silken, fine, convoluting, airy, overpower-ing, aristocratic, atmospheric, bloody, murky, shady, tall, lean, supple, dry, stiff, bristling, rejecting the innocence for the real selfhood reflected in the dark mir-rors... and she was shot dead by a neurotic young admirer, who shot himself af-terwards... Screeeeam!

“You had to experience her to be able to describe her,” Edward Munch, her fellow Norwegian and painter of that very *Scream* said of her; Munch was alleg-edly the first to experience Dagny, as one experiences the odor of a freshly picked flower... Actually, the smell of deflowering is more intricate by far – like the smell of Lebanon?!.. I don’t remember; it was many and many a year ago... Either way, as Dagny Juel was killed in a hotel room in Tiflis, Russia (read: Tbilisi, Georgia), as long ago as June of 1901, my chances of experiencing her and respectively – of “describing” her, are rather slim. What brought this mythical woman with her roaring past in the major artistic centers of Europe, to the town of Tiflis – “near the Black Sea”, as she wrote in a post-card?! Come on, Tiflis has never been “near the Black Sea”, it’s hundreds of kilometers to get there from the city. Sure, some tens of million years ago Tiflis was the bottom of the sea covering the whole Transcaucasia and inhabited by the relevant paleontological creatures. But the same is true for many other cities, like, say London, as some have proved recently.¹ Actually, Tiflis, or Tbilisi, will always be a Winedark Sea, as people drink here a lot, and I am one of the surviving species, truly a fossil²...

Was it poverty or despair that pushed this woman to come to this place ulti-mately... What is the force that makes animals wander, that they shall not cease from exploration, and leopards then end up on snowy hills?... Hey, more than thirty years after Dagny’s murder a tiger was shot in Georgia near Gori, the birth place of Joseph Stalin, by the way (yes, the “gory” guy was supposed to have been born in a town named Gori). The matter is that tigers had been extinct in this country for centuries – this particular one obviously came from Persia, thus hav-ing covered a huge distance. A la Salman Rushdie, one may presume that the tiger was Dagny Juel’s reincarnation – she came back for revenge. If so, she hit the wrong place; she should have gone to Poland: some feminist biographers hold that her destruction began there; it was her husband, the demonic Polish writer Stanislaw (Stach) Przybyszewski, who shattered the poor thing psychologically³... Oh, that male chauvinist piggyszewski!..

¹ See Peter Ackroyd, *London: a Biography*.

² Cf. Zurab Karumidze, *The Winedark Sea (a novel)*:

³ See Mary Kay Norseng, *Dagny Juel Przybyszewska, the Woman and the Myth*.

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Hope you remember that rhyme by Lewis Carroll: “The Lion and the Unicorn were fighting for a crown...” He got it from a far more ancient original, which reads as follows:

“The Lion and the Leopard were fighting for a Cow.” Now, let me tell you a true story:

Like genes for biological organisms, the so-called memes are for human ideas and values (as suggested by geneticist Richard Dawkins). On the other hand, as Hegel had it, History is the dialectical juxtaposition and development of ideas and values. So here is my suggestion: human History is a dialectical play, a juxtaposition, a competition of two memes: the Lion Meme vs. the Leopard Meme. These memes originate as far back in human history as the Upper Paleolithic period, and were brought to earth by some celestial body. Actually, both memes come from the same origin, the Ur-Leopard Meme, as the leopard comprises both a lion or leo and a panther or a tiger (from *prd/pars/pardis* – panther/tiger/leopard). To put it in abstract terms – Difference is given, Identity is made up from it; Difference comes before Identity, as Love comes before everything else. Here! Here!

The rupture within the Ur-Leopard Meme and the break-up into two genii happened when fire was stolen. Until then, fire was regarded by humans as a Holy Tongue, the arduous state of a numinous intercourse between mortals and the immortal gods, the nexus of Supreme Fusion¹, uniting the earth and the sky where the speckled angel called Poesis brings the beings forth from non-being. But as it was stolen, there came a man named Dhemi-Urgush, and he started using fire as a tool to make other tools. And he became the first Forger of Identity and the Lion Meme came through him, and it had power from the golden angel called Techne.

From then on, through millennia of development, the Lion Meme would materialize amongst generations of men who rejected Affection and dedicated themselves to Power and Reason. The Leopard Meme, on its own, would incarnate in those generations of men which rejected Power and dedicated themselves to the Art of the Sublime in all its varieties.

I shall be referring to the descendants of the two generation branches as the Pardimemes and the Leomemes.

Well, the Leomemes would come in groups, brotherhoods, or organisations, such as the architects and high-priests of Dynastic Egypt, the patriarchs and kings of Israel (except King David), then – the Knights Templar, the Rosicrucian, the Freemasons, the Multinational Corporations, etc. Contrary to these, the Pardimemes would never make up a group or any other form of congregation, they stayed scattered and roamed on their own as the speckledness of the leopard skin suggests; come such types as, say, C.G. Jung (the best apprentice of the “Shaman of Vienna”) and James Joyce; or people as removed as Bakunin,

¹ *Supreme Fusion was later rendered as Meta-Fusion and eventually misinterpreted as the Metaphysics.*

and the people of their race can be designated as Shamanic Individuals. Such individuals show up throughout History from time to time, everywhere in the West as well as in the East. Just to suggest some names: the ancient Greek shamans like Heraclitus, Sophocles, Socrates; plus various Gnostics and heresiarchs, like Mani, Nestorius, etc.; then come Meister Eckhart and Dante Alighieri in medieval Europe; Jalal Addin Rumi, or Omar Khayyam in the medieval Orient, etc. etc. Later in modern times Sikorsky, and John Coltrane; or Charles Chaplin, Gilles Deleuze and Jimi Hendrix. There are also those known as the so-called false shamans, who misappropriated the shamanic art in their lust

for power and for this sort of treason were cursed by the Angel Poesis: Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, etc. Akin to them are the so-called “debilitated shamans”, suicide bombers and various charismatic idiots. Some marginal cases have been identified; these were due to some obvioustragic misconceptions. Take the case of Mozart: a natural born shaman, a man of amazing genius, however, driven by his flamboyant character he “defected” to the leomeme modeled freemasonry. His last piece, the Magic Flute, is symptomatic for this defection: there is the supporting character Papageno, the bird-man, a clear-cut shamanic person, who in this opera is manipulated by King Zarastro (a pure leomemic representative of Wisdom and of the brotherhood of the Great Architects of the World). Papageno is represented as an ignorant, crude, short-tempered simpleton, whose mind is limited to copulation and drinking. Such a parody of shamanism in favor of freemasonry must have been the sole factor causing Mozart’s death and disappearance – he must have been punished for this by an anonymous shaman, who poisoned the composer and then took his body away (nobody has seen Mozart’s burial place). Definitely, the killer could not have been Salieri, who was a typical leomemic person and obviously a freemason himself.

Or take Goethe, who ended up as the Secret Counselor and the Minister in the Cabinet of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar and Eisenach; or Yukio Mishima, who misappropriated the shamanic Art of Dying and committed merely a traditional suicide with the Emperor on his mind. Amongst those who dealt with the Leomemes it was only Richard Wagner who succeeded in sustaining his shamanic nature and ravished the self of Ludwig, King of Bavaria¹.

Now, as suggested by the rhyme above, the two lines of memes are supported by the third one – an ungulate, or a Cow Meme, which historically materialized in the huge, but passive masses of people, today identified as Consumers and their happy families to be sure, who are happy in the same way as all happy families are happy... The young in one another’s arms... Though, let’s get back to our predators.

¹ *I would render Che Guevara as a modern example of misguided shamanism – the guy fought against Power whole his life, but he politicised Affection too much, and thus embezzled its force. The same could be said of Bill Gates, a man of pretty decent shamanic knowledge, which he ex-hausted in his leomemic adventures, though. There is also an extreme, deranged wing of misguided shamanism, which comprises the so-called “shamaniacs”, the serial killers and the rapists [like Jack the Ripper, Charley Manson, etc.].*

It is well known that lions and leopards shun each other; leopards especially try to avoid the hunting areas of a lion pride. However, occasionally they may become deadly rivals for the same prey. The same goes for the Pardimemes and the Leomemes – they usually “hunt” in different places. However, when it comes to sharing the Cowmeme people, the Leomemes would always banish the Pardimemes, as a lion pride would oust a leopard, with the she-lions being the most aggressive. (Compare also the King-Queen-Knave triangle of the card game.) Besides, the Leomemes are preoccupied with subsuming as many people under the scope of their Reason as possible, while the Pardimemes are staunch individualists. To an extent, this is an indirect competition and the above-mentioned case with Mozart should be ascribed to the craze of a deranged shaman.

And yet, there comes a time when the Pardimemes are driven towards each other and towards the Leomemes, too, as if by the relict energy of the Ur-Leopard Meme or by some outward threat. They seek a rapprochement, an intercourse, a sort of a reunion. However, they usually fail to achieve this as happens in nature – lions and leopards can breed, but only in captivity and yielding morbid offspring.

There is no way homeward, i.e. – the Ur-Leopard – and thus a couple of separate meetings of shamanic individuals held throughout History with intent to develop into something bigger, comprising also the Leomemes, were disrupted by various minor or big disasters¹. Such failures totally discouraged the Pardimeme men and there were almost no attempts made for hundreds of years, no movements or de-velopments, towards another possible meeting. And this went on until 1901.

By the beginning of that year quite a few of the shamanic individuals, though scattered around the world, had a so-called pardimeme premonition of a very big threat: “A Cow will fly to the Moon!” – said the prophecy. The cry was heard from the shamanic underground, dark cells and coppices; it was a mixture of weaning, lamentation, and sarcastic laughter.

With the benefit of hindsight, one hundred years after, we can easily decipher this weird, almost nursery rhyme type of statement. As a matter of fact, those chosen Pardimemes had a premonition of upcoming disaster that would plague the Earth in the new century: masses of people would go mad! Led by false sha-mans they would rebel and rejoice in massacres! No room and no sense here for re-reading the tragic facts of the 20th century. However, the picture which the shamanic individuals divined that time was horrible, even for those who had travelled to infernal spheres and lands of the dead, or attended wars and calamities of the past. Some of them could not recover from this visionary ecstasy and got lost; some were hit by lightning and burnt to ashes; some jumped into their most abysmal thoughts and were destroyed. One of them, over-intoxicated with this revaluation of all values, died of madness: his name was Friedrich Nietzsche.

¹ *The meeting in Telgte during the Thirty Years' War can also be considered a shamanic-pardimeme venture. Regrettably, it was disrupted by fire. See: Gunter Grass, Meeting In Telgte.*