

[ARCHAEUS]

Mihai Eminescu [1850-1889]

Undoubtedly, there are many things for which is not enough the head of a heavy member of the city council or of a police constable — although these are generally men that get everything. At least when we're speaking about the expropriation of a hen-farm, about instilling respect in the citizen slayer with false weights, men more handy than the two I know not. Tough, it seems us — it is understood we impose our opinion to no one — that, not counting wrong balances and hen-behavior in the open street, there still exist some things, indeed of a secondary importance, as philosophy, poetry, arts, and all the things which escape the eye of the named gentlemen, but whose existence one cannot deny.

We see that the author wants to begin from a to z. Indeed, world as we see exists only in our brain. No one will deny that is difference between a goose and a dog. The look of the dog is intelligent, he understands of this world a better portion than the goose; these considered both beings have eyes and brains. The world is not as it is, but the way we see it; for the goose as it sees it, for all idem, for a member of the council idem — for Kant idem. But, what difference between the eyes of a pig of the above-understood member and the deep look of the wise of Königsberg.

What is the truth? The one clearly seen by a male goose or that seen as through darkness by Kant? Indeed, it's a strange thing. The first clearly differentiates the grains of corn from the yellow earth; it surely swims on water, and measures with its eye the distances it can reach and it is not without tenderness faced with a female goose in the epoch of virginity. The second forgets to eat, wanting to jump over a hole he falls inside it, and the virgin or non-virgin beauties pass him without him raising his eyes.

With all these, we consider that the philosopher is wiser than a goose that in the problems of him is more truth than in the certainties of it.

A sign that for a great mind all is problem. And for 75 grams of brain all is sure.

It is known that the Pythagorean rule of geometry was called the bridge of the mules. The bridge of the mules you have to pass in every deeper thought is: that we cannot understand the world in itself, and that its explanation is explaining some reactions of our brains and nothing further. The world in itself rests a problem inside which wanders a thinly ray, a sparkle which the deep thinker marks on paper, is being born inside the walls of your head that long resonance that makes you believe than indeed world and life are a dream.

But, as we said, all these are worthless for a member of the council. Life has for him meaning only if he takes the tax for registering in the book of civil service, death for he takes a tax for burial and for one adds one to the number of the born or of the dead. The member of the council sees in these people only imposable individuals, the constable — individuals that must be watched for not stealing one another and for keeping in form.

After this class of people follow the learned of the word. These ask always *quid novissimi?* The newest book is for them the best. They read a lot and have inside their head a lot of definitions, formulas and words about whose truth never doubt, for they have no time to doubt. I call them of the word because their wisdom consists in words, in the envelopes of thought that their memory keeps, for thinking is an action, a trembling of nerves. As the nerves shake harder, more freely, the more is the thought clear. To them this action, by which the foreign thought repeats itself in their head, does not happen, for the multitude of reading and the fatigue of the brain does not allow it. The read things pass as dead envelopes into the barn of memory, from where it comes to light in the same form.

And me, from my part, I think as follows: whatever would think a man alone, without reading it or hearing it from others comprises a seed of truth. That's why the old books, which men wrote not for just that, only write them, but also for they thought something which weighs on their heart and they wanted to tell that to the others, the old books I read and find between abstruse things some seeds of light which I remember.

This way I was staying whistling at the open window, it was snowy and nice outside, when I see an old man passing with a long mantle on his back and with the hat of large margins. I see him entering The Ark of Noah. This Ark is a pub where we find good old Hungarian wine. There I had also my sitting tablet for the evening, when I was fed with reading and writing, I went to my tablet in the corner of the ark and it seemed to me that I was child again, that I was in the time of Sam, Ham and Japheth. When, I saw the old man entering I say: "What the heck! This I never saw... let's see, who is he?" I take my hat from the nail; I descend the stairs quickly and, to the Ark.

I enter inside... the old man — at my table. The Ark was a big room, rounded and dark in which even at daytime there was a lamp lit. The old man was interesting. The hair of his head was white, wholly slim his face, gray eyes, big and deep, then he smelled from far away of tobacco and I always liked the men that smell of tobacco.

I said him good evening and I sat before him, for I was in my right to stay at my table. He rose a little, but said nothing. Then he started to knock the table with his long and thin fingers and he was whistling through his teeth... He was impolite... but now I was silent; for however impolite he was, the aria was of a rare beauty... it was acute as the buzzing of a bee, but it seemed in his mouth laid a virtuoso with a violin, at a length of a palm, and, on a violin as the envelope of almond, he sang thin and nice, you were staying in his love... then he was silent and started again to knock with his long fingers, so his hand seem to me a long spider, the plays.

— Forgive me, Doctor, I was saying closing my coat, but it seems to me that the aria you whistled I heard it somewhere... and I would like to ask you...

— The aria you heard in the head of yours, he was telling, when you were licking the boots of Beethoven.

— What do you know if you knew him or not.

— I say unto you: you knew him... I say you were licking his boots, and this is all.

“What the hell! This old man is crazy”, I was thinking.

— What the hell! This old man is crazy, he said winking his eye and perfectly imitating my voice. Then he followed: *Kellner!* Hungarian wine five years old, properly closed... Quick. Eh, nephew, he followed, is that your first thought that came to your mind to my answer was:

— “What the hell! This old man is crazy”. You see, that I wanted to know!... The man is like a violin... if you put the finger in a place on the chord, sounds in a way, in another place in another way, but a violin is as the other violin. Today I feel disposed for philosophy and I like that I found you, nephew, for you seem to me an inoffensive man and one who wonders, and wondering is the mother of wisdom.

I was staring.

The old man looked at me and started to laugh.

— Tell me, nephew — if you are able — an impossible thing and an impossible idea.

— An impossible thing is that I licked the boots of Beethoven, that died so many years ago, and an impossible idea is that something would be and would be not at the same time.

The *kellner* brought the requested wine; the old man filled me a glass and one to him, which he threw up his throat.

Listen, nephew, you are a stupid, he said. Have you ever heard of Archaeus?

— No.

— No? Well, Archaeus is the only reality in the world, all the rest are worthless — Archaeus is everything.

— Heck! Hell with you old man, with all your Archaeus... As I see you're making fun of me. Who is your Archaeus?

— Psst! Silent, kid... All these in due order. I will tell you soon who Archaeus is, only drink at first your wine glass and hear the following words of the old man. Impossible thoughts do not exist for, once a thought exists, it is no longer impossible and, if it would be impossible, it would not exist. What is impossible? I will put you a lot of problems. The conditions of every possibility are in our head. Here are the odd laws to which nature have to conform. Here is the time with its mathematic rules, here is space with the geometric laws, here the causality with its absolute necessity and if you erase these... and a good sleep erases them for a few hours... what feeling rests inside us for this erasing interval? Nothing. And with all these arrive moments in life when these three elements of our mind, these drawers in which we fit a world

disappear for a moment... true, as a flash only, disappear partly or in whole and you sit as for a miracle and you ask yourself... so, as the man that believed all he sees is the way it is... for, what means this. When you look at a strange physiognomy the question comes itself: how the hell is this man thinking? But, the lack of one of the five senses, even coming late, modifies radically the world of thought.

— How this? Just Beethoven composed music when he had lost his hearing.

— I knew you'd object this. Yes, Beethoven composes the opera *Fidelio* after he forgot for a long time the nature of the human voice... he writes music for voices as he thinks these should be and you are confronted with an opera that runs seemingly from your eyes... as looking with the reversed binocular... and you'd see from far, far away, inside the thinking of *a* man, something strange which you seem not fully to understand, till you notice these are the phantasms of a deaf about the human voice, whose normal nature he forgot or he only had a vague reminiscence about it. But figuring that all men would have in their ear only a reminiscence of a memory like that of Beethoven... all the opera clearly approaches, as you would be looking it with the glass normally put on your eyes... even approaches so that all the scene lies on your head and you hear the opera howling in your desert crane, with bushes, jails, actors, actresses, with all. How would be looking the head of a man that with the light of lamps, with painted veils, all in his head... A whole theatre in which his soul, small in a corner of the hall, is the only spectator.

— Well. But why not believe that the normal being of man is the one expressly made to see the truth?

— Why? For even this normal being is not the one and the same — always will be small differences; although, where the differences are big, we have another world. But let me follow. I don't know if someone ever dreamed himself elastic... that he may grow, can inflate, can conflate. If such a man would nobody wake him up from sleep, he would live all his life with a real and touched world, for during the sleep you touch as good as awake... this means he lacks not that control, the safest, of reality... And this man would conflate in a potato that would cry to men on the street not to step on him, or he would thin in a bearded English spike with a tall hat, or he would thicken as a Bavarian pub owner... he would pass himself through thousands of figures, if he would sleep all his life, it would come not to his mind to doubt that this is his nature, that otherwise cannot be and that all things have to be as they are... If he would wake up before dying, he would think, on the contrary, that he is asleep and he dreams. *A world as no-world is possible, uninterrupted by another order of things.* There exist many evil herbs that, bringing a slight modification of the organ of sight create before man another world. A drink prepared of a mushroom magnifies the proportions of things. A big straw as a tree and the man, in reminiscence of the figure he had before, jumps over a straw in the way. A wheat field becomes a golden forest, men become giants and maybe the old story, that before the giants inhabited the earth, belong to the construction of the eyes of then and not on the objective size or, more accurately, by the measure in which our today eye reflects the human beings. Which is the criterion of reality? Let's not speak more of the eyes... Who knows not the reality, the truth present in our dreams familiar faces, gardens, homes, streets; the ear hears pleasant music and the mind remembers it heard this music before... A friend shows up... he got old, he has some white hairs on his head... the mind compares him

with the reminiscence we had on him, and imagination how he was and the real sight how it makes us feel sorry: "How this man changed!"... In a state of madness all ideas have a terrible reality... The man is tortured, put on the cross, beaten, without somebody touching him. The most terrible physical pains tear apart the soul and mark his face... on the contrary, real pains in our sense find him without sensitivity... We have no criteria... We know not if we know something... We believe it, for others believe it, for it is an all-ruling norm and that not because the world would be as we figure it, but for man resembles man more or less... Maybe they say that this odd man has no right when he says something? What do you argue against him?... With the argument that the others say just as you, that it is not so? With what right? The value of his view is the same with the value of our view... only his is isolated, while ours finds another one, molded on the same mold. But he is a dreamer! Well. Who? Him or we? This is the question... Maybe us we do nothing else than dreaming one way or the other...

— But well... we see the world.

— He sees it too.

— But we touch it.

— He touches it too. With what right our mode of seeing be the true one and his the fake one? For what is not the reverse? We are mad or he is mad... this is the question. And only if we think how *different* was the view of men in other centuries, that what to us seems strange to them seemed natural, that in every unknown thing we have only a form under which another man's forehead saw a very high thing, then we come to ask which the criterion of the sound mind is? A mind that today approves what it disapproved yesterday, which disapproves what it approved; a mind we see thriving each century with paradoxes...

— How, of paradoxes?

— Yes! For only tell a man that just got out of the envelope of nature that the Sun sits and Earth revolves... he would find it irrational, paradox, against sane mind... Tell him the stars are that many worlds... he would find it a paradox.

— But this is the truth.

— The truth? As you want... The way they disappear, how they slowly become unsound the theories of movement when we suppose all that imposes through itself... that space is endless!... Where's the movement if the space is endless?... Earth went a bit... Well... Above and under it is still the same space, for it is endless... this means that what it walked, for it walked nothing, for everywhere it sits in the same place, in the same centre, in endlessness, and if it would stay and if it would move, still the same would be... Which is the criterion of its movement? Even our senses, and this visionary sensor, so its movement is unthinkable without putting in it all of our being. The earth wanders as we wander in a dream. We reach far away, but we are still in the same place... Neither after and before, neither grew nor lessened the distance — for it is infinite.

— But time?

— Oh, this cursed time, which is when long, when short, after all being the same; at least the watch says it... When somebody waits in the winter to the gate of a mansion his beloved... and she does not come... what's time? An eternity. And when somebody reads a beautiful book... thousands pictures pass before our eyes... what's time? A minute. Who never had a whole novel in his mind for whose normal reality he would need a lifetime or a whole youth?... In a dream he can have in a night the whole life of a man. And why of *a* man? Why not of all that revolve around him? And in how much time? In seven or eight hours. But is that a tragedy or a comedy something else than that? And, indeed, if such a man interests you, you notice not the time passing. If we take the criterion of normality, we erased all the exclusivism of a conventional possibility and of size and we put instead it one of the same pertinence. They we no longer say: only *this* is possible and only *this way* is possible, but we say: After all our head is worth, it is so... but the devil knows if it could not be a thousand fold otherwise...

— What a strange idea about life!

— Think of an old manuscript, with oily pages, in a corner of a drawer... a comedy, for example. The theatre manager, in trouble, finds it, reads... reads... knocks his fingers... "This is good!"... And this way you notice on stage a living icon of life... the public laughs, actors mimic, and all these like before... of a hundred years. Then you'd want to say that either the public or the theatre is two hundred year apart, or that the script is new. Where's the time? When you turn the binocular, they seem in an abnormal length... A man born with the binocular on his nose would run all his life after his nose, to reach it, and this would be very natural... Where's space? That's why when we hear the trumpet of great truth, which presents them with that amount of self-consciousness, to smile and to say: Words! words! words! Let's listen stories, for they at least make us live the life of other men, mix our dreams and our thoughts with theirs... In them lives Archaeus... Maybe the story is the most beautiful part of human life. With stories the world is enchanting us, with stories it makes us sleep. We wake up and we die with them... Have you ever heard the story of king Tlà?

— Never... But I'd first want to know who Archaeus is?

— Hm! How the hell to tell you if you didn't got it already. Fellow! With all the changes that a man wants in his person, he still would want to rest himself... his person. I knew people that wanted to be more beautiful (how many women!), more decent (how many statesmen!), more genial (how many writers!), I knew some that wished they be Caesars, in whom the glory dreams of the whole world rested... but they wanted to be still themselves. Who and what is that he or I that in all changes of the world would want to still rest him? This is maybe all the mystery, all the enigma of life. Nothing he would want of what he has. Another body, another mind, another physiognomy, other eyes, to be different... only to be just him. He would want to change in thousands other faces, as a chameleon... but still rest himself. Abstaining from the wish of this remembering, each and everyone has his wish fulfilled,... for is indifferent for he who does not want the *memory* of identity, if he is he or is not him a king. *He* is the king, if he does not make the pretense to be himself... It is another

body, another mind, another position, only he is not you. Eh, have you perceived what Archaeus is?

— Not. Less than at any other time.

— It is not easy to perceive — for he is eternal. And eternal is all that is always present..., in this moment. Not what was there, for states of matters were, not what will be, for again there will be states of matters. *What is*. Only if the time would stay put we would clearly see what's eternal... Only in a point in which would be born a moratorium between life and death, for world is only a payback towards life, an eternal cashing on the side of death. And this turn is the mother of time. Without this, the sum of what truly exist would be to be seen everywhere we would know what is a-temporal.

— What is the use of these expositions if I still don't know who Archaeus is?

— Hm! You are heavy headed. When somebody thinks that the unimportant size of human body stays not in a rapport with power, with immensity of will (think of Napoleon), as man is only the occasion, often weak, only a breath, for terrible passions, when you think that the bearer of these passions may at any moment become an envelope, as a vessel which the wine broke, then when you see that one and the same principle of life germs in thousands of flowers of which the most fall down half way, few remain, and these few finally have the same fate, then you see that the being in man is immortal. It is one and the same *punctum saliens* that appears in thousands of people, unveiled of time and space whole and undivided, moves the envelopes, draws them, one towards the other, it quits them, forms some new ones, while the meat of its sketches appears as a matter, as an Ahasveros of forms, that makes a journey that seems eternal.

— And it is indeed eternal.

— In any man the spirit of Universe tries itself again, forces itself, raises as a new ray from the same water, somehow a new assault towards heavens. But it stops in its way, true that very different here as king, there as beggar. But with what helps the envelope the minuscule bug that is stuck in the wood of life? The assault is the youth, staying in the road — deception, fall of experienced animal — oldness and death, the men are problems that the spirit of the universe puts itself again, their lives — trials of answering. The long torture, the eternal rush for unknown does not resemble the avidity to find out the answer of a curious question?

— But to me it seems that where a problem is, there is at the same time its solution.

— Yes, Kant. But men rest questions, sometimes comic, sometimes dumb, and sometimes full of meaning, sometimes barren. When I see a man's nose, I always want to ask what searches this nose in the world?

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