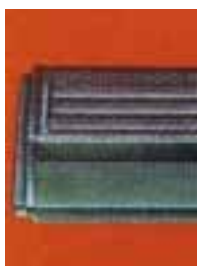


THE CHILDHOOD OF A LEADER





For Jenny-Johnny
& Naked horse (Rusty-James)

The Childhood of a Leader

By Felicia von Zweigbergk, Fine Art, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam 2011, the Netherlands.

Background

In my thesis I share some thoughts concerning the disabilities of His majesty, King of Sweden. His pathetic incompleteness and his lack of noble qualities make him an almost beautiful subject for my thinking about forms of art. In *Second Theme* the form is still the subject but abstracted in the shape of music; how the main theme conquers the instability of its second theme for the sake of climax and a narrative closure.

I wanted the long-breathed voice of late Artaud or to be as lovely as a Persian carpet [and as unreal] but there is too much, too little and a lot of other difficulties in me. I promised myself the style would be agreeable and easy though my favourite *cursus* often makes my sentences end with ellipses replacing weary thoughts, aggression, joyless contradictions (or just great uncertainties in general). The structure of this thesis and the form for my thoughts will be based on footnotes in an attempt to undress my words from the collar of servitude and to freely associate around the text, regardless any possible point being made. Except for this abstract the thesis will show little resemblance with the traditional academic prose as I use other people's texts as my own and my own as if written by others.

The same year I started writing my thesis a book about the king of Sweden was published whose title could be translated as: *King Carl XVI Gustaf - The Reluctant Monarch*, revealing facts like; He really didn't want to become king, He has had numerous women on the side while married, He attended a brothel during one Olympics and He isn't too intelligent and has trouble learning. The book was of little, or no importance for my study. At this time a movie with the similar theme called *The King's Speech* was released, telling the story of the stammer of King George VI. This has no relevance for this text but hints at a general interest in the subject. *Long Life Cool White* by Myra Davey, *Beckombergalandet* by Anders K. Johansson, plays by Euripides and the novels of Richard Yates was of great importance and help. Susan McClary's study of the song *Live to Tell* by Madonna is another important text for this thesis.

Result

The King of Sweden is incapable of doing what is expected of him and regardless of his royal title he is little or at least very different when left to himself. It has not been possible for anyone to make him easily likeable, no training or school has been able to stop him from being shy, drunk or dyslectic. Representation is between fiction and fact, with the desire of putting its emphasis on the latter. In the spelling disability of His majesty I find a hopeful possibility of form, the representation as liberation from aura. A slip where I believe art should pay painful attention, and to stay a bit too long in the harsh and unflattering light of our own presence.

Conclusion

His majesty is somehow on my mind as a referent for fine art because his failure is my proof of an absolute outside myself; a representation of the real that we need to free ourselves from, to fluctuate and sing about; the endeavour for illumination in the vagueness of night.

It begins, as a good story should, with a man lost in a forest:

His majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden is not a man of letters, one could actually say he truly *suffers* from his learning disabilities. Being a king with obvious faults he is of course the perfect fool on the hill. When signing documents he often misspells his own name to the disillusionment of his own institution. 1973 he signs a rock wall outside a copper mine in Falun “Cal Gustf”. Not only was he the first one to sign this rock incognito but he was also the first one to include the date by the day and month like the out-dated love affair carved into the local park bench. A painful but solid way of making his dyslexia public and a horrible moment for His majesty, painted in gold.

Queen Silvia made a pronouncement about the king’s misspelling, saying he never got the treatment needed, that their kids have “a bit” of Carl’s disabilities as well and she will see to it that they get all the support one should have when being troubled with these sorts of difficulties. The son H.R.H. Prince Carl Philip filled in a questionnaire in school, inquiring about the future plans of its students. When asked what he wanted to become, Carl Philip answered without hesitation; “Knug”, (kung; king). Ever since the misspelling Carl Philip’s father has been called “Knugen” which in Swedish sounds like some sort of root vegetable, like knob celery or a potato, drowning the exclusiveness of kingdom into the starchy part of staple food. By the Act of Succession being the youngest of the royal family growing up to be a king is unlikely to ever happen and so, for the coming years Carl Philip had a military education and a two-year course of graphic design. The moral of the average joker states it is okay to make fun of a grown man’s dyslexia but not his kids, they are safe for now.

On top of the somewhat anarchistic writing His Majesty tends to give in to a compulsive and uncontrolled consumption of alcohol.¹ The drive to drink is not as easily joked about as the inability to write one’s own name, maybe because it is slightly too dark and too common.²

The year was 1984 and for the first time in Swedish history his majesty was to choose himself an artist he wanted to paint the official family portrait. The choice fell on the painter John E Franzén, best known for his large and brutal painting of a Hells Angels party where a naked woman is stretched out like a piece of flayed meat with her vagina in the lower centre of the canvas, a second woman is running away in her panties with the Angels in the background poking in the dirt. Franzén is himself a Sofia Hogs member (Run to the Fun), a Swedish Hells Angels club in Stockholm. The choice is somewhat strange of course but the brutal work; *Hellsangels* had at this point yet not been made, apparently the king made his decision due to because of the choice makes perfect sense somehow.

1 Around the 1950’s there was a working class boy who got a medical degree while working on the railroads. For a time in his life he was even to be the royal family’s private doctor. Forty years later he had grandchildren who were ungrateful of his social rise. They were vegans, punks and attended art academies.

2 The water of life is easily misused, enabling people to have either life, friends or family. Before 17th century alcohol was the dominating drink because it gave you less of a diarrhea then, for example, water. To the want and the need to feel happy. “I ask you: is dullness a gift? Intelligence a curse? I’m forty-seven years old and live alone.. “

Franzén on himself:

“I do everything with heart and stomach, I never do anything ironic or distanced. Everything is in earnest. There is no intellectual superstructure.”³

Most of his paintings are either of a car, if not a car then a motorcycle and if not a motorcycle then a landscape. The painter has an enormous interest in motor vehicles, as does His majesty; one could say they share certain sensitivity and admiration for the clean, precise shapes of machinery. His majesty, unlike Franzén, feels the strongest about the slow, but effective, force of a tractor and more so than the sensual feeling and power of a boulevard cruiser, “Under the perfect surface the alarm is pumping”, as Franzén puts it.

He started the painting by putting a grey-blueish layer and finished it a year later with the family members placed around a sofa, still in the colour of the underlying base paint. Queen Silvia was unhappy with the result, there was something she did not like about her ankles. It is unknown what the king thought of the work and his official statement is purely about the size of the painting; “It is large”. The sexual politics of viewing might tell us something concerning the male gaze here; I imagine that thesis to be called something like; *Her Ugly Ankles and His Large Size*.

I once read this poem making fun of his majesty saying how he likes to ramble and be wild, drink and go crazy, but how he likes to do most things in life secretly. The words were printed on an image depicting the king smiling a Duchenne type of smile.⁴ The image reminds me of something in myself; the vulnerable but incorruptible little light in the king is shared.⁵ It will forget everything if needed, it can start from scratch over and over again by the strength of its own desire, or better call it the Want. A noble barbarism in post paradise where you never asked the stupid question if one should want what one wants. There are plenty of reasons to be silly.⁶

I cannot speak for his majesty of course, or his wanting for that matter, but it seems to me he manages to be his own buddy with a choir accompaniment singing wherever he goes and it is all thanks to the inner man and it is despite the kingdom he inherits by birth.

Necessity lends him speed to escape from the prison of his own imperfection to the kingdom within.⁷ In there he may be a fallen man if he so pleases, there is no cruel demand for charm and his name could well be Cal Gustf.

3 I want to know what you are doing on this road. You scare all the buffalo away. I want to hunt in this place. I want you to turn back from here. If you don't I will fight you again. I want you to leave what you have got here, and turn back from here. I am your friend. –Sitting Bull

4 A true genuine smile is the one type of smile you cannot fake as it involves the muscles of the eye, a discovery made by Guillaume-Benjamin Duchenne (another working class hero). Duchenne worked in the field of neurology during the scary times of dark history. He was sure the contractions of a face was linked via the muscles to the soul. He experimented with electricity on his patients whom according to Duchenne himself couldn't feel a thing due to some condition of mute sensations.

5 I'm with stupid

6 We can plant a house, we can built a tree, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said, she said. Nirvana (1991): *Nevermind*, North Hollywood, California, DGC.

7 Necessity: true in every possible world that have certain characteristics in common with the real world.

La condition humaine is not, or shouldn't necessarily be, about sorrow and grief. The freedom of choice is not anguish but euphoria. Still there is clearly something sad about this view of the free will, as sad as realities of a junkie, the flashy lights of her high in stark contrast to the concrete jungle of her home (a sadness similar to the harsh and pathetic beauty of youth).⁸ Somewhere in the dead-land of metaphysical freedom the liberty hits a border as absolute as a reality attack or the most horrid ringing of an alarm clock while dreaming. I could blame the stiffness of shape thinking if only we wouldn't be stuck in our bodies we would be able to float around freely in glorious light of pure ideas, free from pain. I would look at things suffering from the ulterior threat of form being no more than dead crust and if truly looked upon, dissipated in nothingness. But the prison is not so obviously the flesh or the bone, the totalitarian ruler is more likely thoughts or concepts, the shimmer within (soul or spirit) is no different or more perfect than my yellow teeth (from my first cigarette to my last dying day).

Who could say where the fleshy impulses cease, or the physical impulses begin, there is animalism in the soul and reason in matter. The senses can refine, and the intellect can degrade. The separation of spirit from matter is a mystery, and the union of spirit and matter is a mystery also.⁹ Trying to help myself by setting the impossible best possible (the freedom from form), is probably no more than a cheap way out of failure.

In 1914 Selma Lagerlöf wrote a novel called *Kejsaren av Portugalien* [the emperor of Portugal] telling the story of a tenant farmer called Jan. His seventeen-year-old daughter Klara moves to Stockholm in order to make some money to pay off a debt to her family's master. Soon enough there are rumours about Klara working as a prostitute and Jan falls into a deep depression. He immigrates to an inner world of dreams and fantasy where he is the emperor and Klara; a noble empress. He walks the woods in his imperial regalia made out of paper stars, sits in the place of honour and tries to socialize with landowners as if they were his fellow men. Fifteen years later Klara returns and the suffering of her father leaves her with a bitter feeling of disgust and fatigue. Klara decides to bring her mother with her on the boat going back to the city and Jan drowns in a desperate attempt to come with them. I was very young when I saw the film adaption of the book on TV and the following day I had to stay home from school feeling sick to the gut because of it. I thought it was almost perverted to watch the distance between Jan's wishes and his reality, It made me dizzy. His intentions were good but his ways were unbelievable, the form of his sorrow took ridiculous shapes. A poor man is escaping his misery trying to imagine himself as a king by acting like one, Cal Gustf is a king seeking joy as a poor man since he cannot act like the king he is supposed to be, neither one of them having any real self-control. Klara is, like all prostitutes, someone's daughter.

Well, as soon as you are dry, you shall be varnished, and framed, and sent home, a pattern of design and arrangement. Then you can do what you like with yourself, however in order to have the

8 Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Intimacy - the Brilliant Study of the Corruption of Love*

9 Lord Henry in: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oscar Wilde).

power (saying the dyslexia is Dadaism) we need to ritualize the everyday into another dimension, we need to convince people.¹⁰ Charles Manson said: the *real world* is the world I have to deal with everyday. What Manson calls real world is violating the social norms of what people want to be real, the one thing he thinks of as untrue about himself is the only thing we call true about him: the killing.¹¹

The other day I heard a female music director talking about the hardship of being a woman in man's world. She had no interest in political resistance, she was solely interested in music, but being a woman in the lead of musical groups was, whether she liked it or not, rebellious. She said she had the feeling it was hard to "survive when your role was not given to you". The misspelling of his majesty is another form of the same type of rebellion; him and her both hit a frame surrounding them. The female conductor is unwillingly sort of an ambassador for female musicians all over the world and might win some grounds stretching the sphere for us all. She is on top of things in a way his majesty is not; he withdraws into the sphere of his home, his *lebensraum* where he can finally "be", sometimes with a little help from intoxication. The somewhat secret life of a dreamer is groundless and out of time for reasons I do not understand but its secrecy could sometimes be necessary not to put itself into the wrong hands, not to be called fiction. The unworthy who persevere are no longer unworthy when there, "one for the one" as we say in alchemy. The spectator should understand it is in her own interest to show some charity to what is before her, to feed her eunoia.

This is where I imagine the choice of my thesis to be explained. The mysticism of secrecy, the unheard music, hidden art, the ugly, the bad, the shit, the horror, the impossible [...]; all have a strong appeal to me but they are not enough in themselves.¹²

His majesty is my escape from the romantic escapism; he is blocks of colour in a nostalgic room of old wood. There are no indispensable halves that compose the whole; it is for all things to be watery around the edges.

The art I am looking for would operate like his majesty if he would hail himself; it would stretch the lebensraum of the inner man for whomever, making new space where we can move around inside ourselves with a certain royal immunity. This "living room" would not come in the shape of manipulation of secret mythic meanings but from the representation of passionate thinking. In the best of worlds thought can also turn into action, fantasies being your mental backdrop.¹³

The public representation as a King leaps with the substance of Cal-Gustf in private, he is just as wild and uncooperative as a dog under a veil. I know his shape by what surrounds him. It is not pretty, or even likeable and therefore tells on us all in our higher sense of existence, however, it

10 A society's culture consist of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture is public because meaning is.

11 Manson said he didn't murder anyone because if he did there wouldn't be any people left on this earth.

12 As well as the traditional themes of the aphorist: the hypokrisis of society, the vanity of human wishes, the sham of love, the ironies of death, the pleasure and necessity of solitude. Sontag Susan: *Under the sign of Saturn*.

13 You know, John Donne couldn't have said it better himself.

needs the truth of detail and the ridiculous coincidence of a form. When the man who holds the highest public office is unable to step out of the unflattering light of his own presence I believe in art as a real possibility to survive, both as king and person.

Hippolytus slave puts it another way: "Gods ought to be wiser than men" – the tragedy is that they are not. They are amoral, impersonal, unfeeling, as Hippolytus in the end finds out for himself. In other words, man, in the full range of his capacity for goodness, for suffering and sympathy, is a creature on a higher spiritual level than the universe in which he is set to live. The compensations nature offers us for the affront of her blind and tyrannical power are the tenderness of human love, and the illimitable and ever-inspiring beauty of earth, sea and sky. So with death and loneliness the birds sing (scream?), the grass is green and all the stars are full of glitter. The swan on the round lake where slow pools turn, the lost waters of Eridanus flowing down to an unknown sea; yeah, all that is still around when cruelty is king. Even when Klara is walking the streets for money.

As a child the king had a piece of oilcloth ripped from the underlay of his bed which he kept like a security blanket when sad or offended. His mother Sibylla was furious by its appearance and told him the time had come for the king to get rid of this comfort object, both cloth and king were too old for each other.

The oilcloth was then to be exchanged for an imaginary friend called "the Nigger" a reckless brute.¹⁴ His majesty grew up to be something of a brute himself, not raw but insensitive and slightly nihilistic in his search for joy. Some say he showed a sadistic disregard for the emotions of others. He left his dog in the freezing cold of some luxurious ski resort and had erotic parties with teenage girls from the suburbs. Sibylla might have been able to help him with his separate-ness, letting him have his oilcloth while learning to separate the "me" from the "not-me".¹⁵

14 Before the time of his majesty there was something of a "nigger" in the swedish art scene, called "the Nigger Petterson" or "Black Pete". His real name was Jean Louis Alexandre, he lived all his grown life in Stockholm where he worked at the docks and from time to time as a model posing at the Royal Art Academy. Some say he was born in Tangier, a city in the north of Morocco, others that he was a slave from the french part of Guyana who fled through America and by accident was shipped to Sweden. He married a woman from Öland who sold dumplings at the docks where he worked, she was then to be called "the niggerwoman" [negerkärningen]. Paintings of Alexandre's body started to show up on auctions and today his image is a collectors' item. More than once dressed up like a pirate.

15 I know all about your secret life,/your feminine mystique,/your falsity./Your innocent promiscuity,/and you hypocritical cruelty/hold no mystery/to me.

The Second Theme



Music is one of the most perishable of arts (together with dance). Before the invention of the phonograph we know little of how the sounds sounded. We can interpret what has been written, more or less fragmented historical data; instructions, forms of symbols, hooks and banners and neumes, or musical notations. As females were never published the history of music is a history of silent women.¹

One of the most commonly used musical forms in concert music is the sonata form, consisting of three main sections: an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. Even works that do not adhere to the standard description of a sonata form often present analogous structures or are meant to be elaborations or expansions on the standard description of the sonata form. The main theme, the exposition, is described as masculine. This is the foundation for the musical work; active, independent and extroverted and presumably manly of character. The second theme, the development, takes its material from the main theme and is therefore thought of as less self-reliant or autonomous, it alters what is there from the beginning. The second theme is, therefore, often described as feminine. Tonal music is narratively conceived and its theme of “something else” or “the other” has to be conquered by the recapitulation where the work returns to the original key area, the tonic that serves as the final goal. One does not have to be a traditional musical scholar to recognize the climax and the feeling of home as the finale nears.²

1 The word “genius” is per definition a man and the main idea for “her” was to help “him”, her knowledge should be superficial, charming talents like playing the piano should stay charming and were never to be art. In the latter half of the 19th century with the bourgeoisie focus on the sitting-room culture having your daughter at the piano was a sign of wealth, it looked good having her there. The pre-Socratic philosopher Pythagoras discovered an almost magical numerical system within sound. The phenomenon of musical consonance was evidence of a rhyme and reason within the physical world and so to make something out of a history so numb I imagine the silent women as unheard melodies similar to the ones of light waves, mathematical laws and falling bodies. *Heard melodies are sweet/ but those unheard/ Are sweeter*, (John Keats: *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, 1818).

2 The harmony has its tipsy melodies under control, the tempted finally kills his temptress; Lulu, Salome, Carmen or whatever her name was, and by doing so reinstate a type of musical [social] order. Is it love that makes you

Tonal structures are organized teleologically with the illusion of unitary identity promised at the end of each piece. However, in order for the pieces to have any narrative content, they must depart from the tonic and enact an adventure in which other key areas are visited and in which the certainty of tonal identity, is at least temporarily, suspended. Otherwise, there is no plot. The more seductive or traumatic the encounter with *the Other*, the more violent the “necessary” heroic reaction.³

The category of the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of duality – that of the self and the other.⁴ The construction of this musical form (the self and the Other), its function and the reason for the polarization have been under discussion in the discourse of musicology since the 18th century, interpreted and criticized by some theorists as reinforcing misogyny and imperialism. One of those problematizing the principles of the sonata form is the Professor of musicology, Susan McClary. In the book *Feminine Endings* (a musical term once used to denote a weak phrase ending or a cadence) McClary analyses the song *Live to Tell* by songwriter Patrick Leonard and the artist Madonna, who, no matter how much music she produces, is usually seen from the point of view of a film critic.⁵

The tonal material of *Live to Tell* is in constant battle between D versus F (its relative major), in a manner which does not consolidate the tonic. The timbres are murky and dark. There are heavy synthesized bass pedals followed by funky guitar licks and staccato strikes. In fact, it sounds like all the instruments could be generated from the same synthesizer. I get an overall sense of nostalgia, but with a constant underlying threat, like homesickness without ever having had a home. It is a slow tempo song similar to a power ballad but without the traditional “building up” or the emotional boost, commonly used in the chorus. The song follows the normal format of a pop-song with verse–chorus alteration.⁶ When the verse begins for a third time the tempo slows down, the sound dissolves into silence, and one gets a sense of closure. That is when, as if from within, a completely new theme opens up, the threat is gone and Madonna is singing;

^f hurt me or make me cry. Is it LOVE you feel at all? Or is it the fear that makes you so mean to me BABY. Or is it the hate that gets you off. Well they say you play romantic baby but I know where you got that style, you sucked upon my magic. Is it LOVE you feel at all? Or is it the fear makes you so mean to me baby, or is it the hate that gets you off. Isn't love a great excuse, the vampire thinks before he sucks the juice. You know it well, they never tell.

3 Susan McClary: *Feminine Endings*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1991

4 [...] this duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts. It is revealed in such works as the Ganet on Chinese thought and those of Dumézil on the East Indies and Rome. The feminine element was at first no more involved in such pairs as Varuna-Mitra, Uranus-Zeus, Sun-Moon and Day-Night than it was in the contrasts between Good and Evil, Lucky and unlucky auspices, right and left, God and Lucifer. Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought.

5 Lucy O'Brien (*She Bop II: The definitive history of woman in rock, pop, and soul*) said Madonna is looked at as a phenomenon rather than a person, and became a “metatextual girl”, an example of “female spectatorship and agency”, “the staging of the body” and the “heat of surface desire”. Personally I think Madonna is a phenomenon [and not a very interesting one from a musical point of view], while Madonna Louise Ciccone is a person. Not only Madonna, but popular music in general, is ignored in the studies of music as for not being concert music but music for the people who have no musical knowledge: the masses.

6 Pattern: A1AABA1AABBA1C[!]ABB

If I ran away/ I never have the strength/ to go very far

Those are her words but the music has gone somewhere completely different, the tonal development moving fast forward with ease unknown to earlier motion. I get the feeling it moves by the speed of thought, as sudden as a mood shift of a passionate mind, her inactive bitterness turning to the possibility of a change. To settle for an alternative—any alternative—is to accept a lie. For it is flexibility in identity rather than unitary definition that permits her to “live to tell” -And so there never will be any recapitulation. The piece ends not with definitive closure but with a fade. As long as we can hear her, she continues to fluctuate, resisting closure wherever it lies in wait.⁷ I shall not write about women, the subject is irritating, especially for women and it is not new. I must not ask: what is a woman? (And receive the answer; woman is womb). Even more so, gender issues are not about females but cultural meanings and here I try to deal with meanings as formal structures. This is not in fear of subjectivity but in order to look at the complexity of tone without responding to its call.⁸

Sound without any visuals can easily baffle and misguide us, the sound of water reminds us of applause and a more convincing source for water-sound is actually a gift wrap, metal balls or even the sound of car wheels on a dirt road. A good example of the same phenomenon would be the pigeons on my balcony that I misheard as noisy neighbours. Interpretation of experience, grandiloquent melodies, quoted decorations, simple structures, no inner parts, driven by ideal love in an imaginary world, repetition, entertaining maintenance, light, fast, dull and profane.⁹ I seem to arrive at an triangle: truth – meaning – application, where it is more than difficult to know what is really intrinsic, and so, in a pro forma way of being, I just decide that the shape of things are just as esoteric as the idea of them. The structure and the worldly standards are a dream-work similar to the larger terms.¹⁰ The solids and the voids hold equal importance and in the end there really is no triangle.

In the age of enlightenment people started to imitate the bird in an attempt to fly. They strapped themselves to wings, sometimes decorated with feathers, but these artificial birds were nevertheless unable to fly. They constituted the idea of flying, trying to take the shape of a flying thing.

7 *The truth is never far behind/ You kept it hidden well/ If I live to tell the secret I knew then/ Will I ever have the chance again.*

8 Now I run the embarrassing danger of (now I risk) writing a dogmatic speech for a page or two; the three disaffections are as following: woman, wine and humanity, there you have it. I am in love with authority and backstab the new musicologists by returning to structuralism from before. As if music was absolute, outside worldly standards or tainted patterns of time and place (or politics). I resist the fact that the most cerebral, nonmaterial of media is at the same time the medium most capable of engaging the body, hand claps, shaking ass, lighters and screams. With the body being decisively and aggressively female, out of anxiety and in fear of its power, I trivialize it and return to notation. If I ran away I wouldn't have the strength to go very far.

9 The dominance of form is an ideal butler, if we get an interest of his person it might be impossible to enjoy his services, we ring the bell with a heavy heart and his function is no longer functional. For form's sake we ought to look with more than our eyes.

10 The Digger Papers: Standing on a street corner waiting for no one is power.

The early aeronauts and their sailing in the air contributed nothing to the later technologies of flying. It was the thought of gases lighter than common air that rose people to the skies. 1783 a balloon was liberated in the presence of a great crowd in Paris to rapidly disappear into the clouds. Three quarters of an hour later it landed in the main street of Bonesse, a small village some 20 km from Paris, whose frightened population attacked the strange monster with pitchforks.

Time has taught us that most of what is commonly taken for truth is, a posteriori, false, like the once so sound academy jargon: "the world is flat". Perhaps humankind does best at being in love with its questions, at suspending judgement, and at willingly agreeing to the forces making us stay on earth.¹¹ The form can be *The Other*, something to free ourselves from, to fluctuate and to sing about.

Chuck: Sorry you're not going away anymore, I know it was important to you.

Don't take this wrong but I've been there and they don't have so much there that we don't have here.

April: It didn't have to be Paris.

Chuck: You just wanted to get out huh?

April: I wanted in.

THE CHILDHOOD OF A DREAMER

Emil Cioran was a philosopher with a sleeping problem, he called it “to float on the melody of white nights” and made it a passion play where the insomnia was his form of heroism; “because it transforms each new day into a combat lost in advance”. With a feverish, almost embarrassing lyricism, he found a certain joy in walking the streets at night, like a ghost. Naturally his essays bear the titles of darkest misfortune: *The Trouble with being Born*, *A Short History of Decay*, *The Poor* or *On the Summits of Despair*. My own nocturnal awakenings first appeared in my early teens and have ever since become a problematic part of my person, maybe for the rest of my life. I walked out of the darkness into the light of the TV-room where my mum was watching a movie. She said I had to go back to bed, I had to “give sleep a chance”. The world turns into a dead universe when all is sleeping but yourself. This universe taught me the art of killing time (to interest oneself while waiting) and, sometimes, to dream with eyes open, however most of those times I just felt so painfully bored with the hours slowly exchanging each other.

“Feel how all your toes are sleeping, then the whole front foot, the talus bone, the heel, the ankle bone, both middle foot and hind foot are deep asleep, the fibula, the tibia, the knee joint”

... And so my mother would go on until she would reach the hair on my head, using her most zombie-fying voice, slowly going through the bones inside of me. It never worked, instead this spell made my entire corpus itch and, after some time, I had to run around to escape the claustrophobia of being closed inside this so-called sleeping body. I simply was manufactured with less need for sleep, I thought. There was too much to do to be able to lie down [and die] -I was not mature enough to go under. As a teenager the sleeplessness made me feel chosen, the insomniacs called the restless to join them in solitary togetherness for a walk at the end of night. We were the one type of animal that could not sleep, -We were the wakers. Cioran too felt chosen, freeing himself from daytime logic, writing in such a tired state that he was another man, or not even a man. A more mature Cioran said insomnia liberates us from our facility and our fictions but only to comfort us with a blocked horizon: it illuminates our impasses. It is release and a doom. As he grew older the insomnia lost all its charm and more so; he did not find any reason to put words to his pessimism anymore and stopped writing books. Cioran died after an unfortunate meeting with a largevw dog who was over-excited with joy.

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