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Freedom and Slavery

by

David Sparenberg

In such a place as this; with hell all about and the air deadly with swirling demons; two fallen philosophers sit at a ruined table playing chess on a makeshift board. Because of this, or perhaps because of them, possibility once more enters the universe and the human, for the duration of a game of intelligence, is allowed to exist.

Now what would not be if the process was meaningless, the outcome controlled by absolutes, the endgame forever guaranteed? That would be the triumph of the inhuman, and our philosophers would have long since been submerged in silence and fallen prey to anonymous replacement.

Contrarily, what yet might open up if the walls fell and the demons of isolation dissolved in sunlight? And should the sterile board of poverty grow ivy in the interplay of black and white? Much like that ship in mythic time that bore the mystery of Dionysus and made dolphins out of men! And should the game pieces themselves lose the armor of their hereditary features in favor of more ancient archetypes—one sprouting the wings of an eagle, one growing the head of a lion, another that of a wolf, and another still capturing in carved majesty the hunting, sun-worshipping leap of the mighty orca?

That would be the advent of the transhuman, of which we do not yet have an adequate vocabulary to dialogue with the poetry of liberated earth or liberating angel. But of this much we can at least speculate with certainty—the certainty of something ageless thundering inside the heartbeat of something new: our philosophers might well be seduced to abandon the logic of conquest in favor of an instinctual imagination that would finally define the difference between freedom and slavery.

Human beings thought they would escape the terrors and the sublimity of nature—and the terror of nature's greater than human beauty—so they built, in their generations, cities and became intoxicated with arrogance and greed.

Human beings thought that they would escape the ego-shattering love and body threatening fear of God. But no sooner did the death of God reach their ears than they were enslaved in the terror and the tyranny of their own. And the knowledge of human violence was global and the threat of annihilation—not so much wrath of God or judgment, but only the extravagance and folly of men—even as it appeared initially as a small storm on a distant horizon, has long since closed intimately into nightmare and is constantly covering the land.

Those who linger, as many of us do, in such a place as this; the addiction of nicotine smoke invading the lungs, the noises of madness subduing the soul; have surrendered everything to bondage and under anguished burdens come and go. Everything that is but one thing: the priceless, irascible dream of freedom. And rebellion is but an interpretation of a symbolizing language in which all is risked for the recover of all.

Beyond this, greenness is a medicine.