

## 1st CHAPTER: WHERE MIND OVERCOMES FLESH

I am at a gallery (Lord, help me narrate). I went for the exhibition but also for the girls. I ran into some acquaintances, too. I noticed that the best painting was next to the worst one and a pretty girl in front of them. I gathered my strength and approached.

- Which one do you prefer?

- I... I don't know..

She looked ignoramus. So I take a deep breath and begin to analyze. I was explaining for some five minutes when I heard a voice whisper next to my ear:

- Yeah, but you haven't told us which one you like.

I thought he was her boyfriend and concealed my anger.

- Look, I said, objectively speaking...

- No, not objectively, try subjectively.

I didn't like his tone of familiarity and his face was common.

- Are you together? I ask.

- No, says she.

Then I turn to him:

- Could you leave us? We were having a discussion...

He turns to the girl:

- Do I bother you?

- Nope. says she in an apathetic tone.

- Well, my friend? he says.

I was now angry with both of them.

- Farewell, I murmured and turned to leave.

His hand boldly touched my shoulder.

- Please don't leave.

His effusiveness aggravated me, yet he touched me like my brother would. I stayed.

- Well, guys, he said, the most serious reason why we are standing here talking is the girl's beauty, isn't it? I suggest we bring the reason to the surface and turn it into a game.

- What do you mean? I asked. I was stuck with my anger by momentum and didn't know what to do with it. Finally, I was angry with myself, too, and tried to change my expression, which only resulted in a mask-like smile.

- I will explain... I suggest we set our lovely... (what's your name, dear? Lina? Perfect) we set Lina here as our prize.

- Are we to duel?

- We are to compete with arguments and the winner shall be decided by Lina and rewarded by a peck on the chick.

- ... and what shall be the topic of our duel?

- This is also for Lina to decide... Lina, what shall be the topic?

- Er... the topic is... which of the two paintings is better

I secretly rejoiced, as art is my field.

- OK my friend, said he, choose which painting you appreciate more and convince us. I'll support the other.

As I said, the two paintings had an obvious difference in quality and I chose the better one.

- The one on the right is better, because the forms...

- What's a form?

- Objection! No interruptions.

- Touché. Pray, continue.

I talked for four minutes. The girl's expression was calm and undefined. The expression of what's-his-name was lively and full of enthusiastic curiosity, which grew dark from time to time. With his expression he controlled the course of my speech. Whenever he looked displeased, I felt the need to explain further. I finally messed up and got into a contradiction, hoping they wouldn't notice. The contradiction was that I initially presented the criteria by which I compare the two paintings, while in the end I stressed the fact that we cannot discuss the aesthetic approach, i.e. the criteria.

- You came to a contradiction, sir... he said.

The sudden tone of courtesy surprised me.

- Yes...

The girl: "What contradiction?"

The stranger "Never mind, let's overlook it, I don't want to win by guerilla war, I want an open battle... My turn now! I believe that the other painting is better because it glows with ambition. I appreciate the conception rather than its poor technique. In every painting the ambition and its result is evident."

- I appreciate the first painting precisely for the same reason. By setting low standards in his ambition, the artist managed to meet them easily.

- Ha! My friend, these are the things I'd say if I had to support your painting. But it's my turn to talk. Ask me.

- What's a form, my friend?

- Well, well, ha, ha, ha... You remembered my question... A form, in simple words, is a piece of shade or colour that relates to others in a harmonious way.

- I am covered.

- I thought so. I answered more or less the way YOU would have answered, that is, dryly. But I have a different opinion.

The girl laughed. She came out with a "hih!", anyway.

- Meaning? I asked.

- Meaning that there is no form in nature. It is an intellectual construction as the artists tries to put chaos in order. Form means unity. A unity that contains other subunities and thus enables the artist to comment on the subject's objects... for art is a comment on reality, much more substantial than reality itself (Heimonas)

- Art is non-conventional communication.

- Such a dry approach! Are you a communist or something? Art is chiseling silence with words and emptiness with colours.

- We cannot talk like that. I speak rationally and you speak poetically.

- And that's precisely your mistake. You speak rationally about something that contains a mystical, a hidden element. About something that appears to be impossible to express!

Some were listening discreetly. I was losing, hands down. I could see it in her eyes. She was charmed by what she understood and more so by what she didn't understand but could feel its value.

- See? You have lost. Your biggest mistake was not manipulating non-verbal signs. It is important when claiming a woman. You gave off a kind of frigidity.

The girl reached out to kiss him. I was suffering.

- Now you kiss me.

- I beg your pardon?

- I'll give you a good reason... Despite all your eloquence, you ignore what art really is about, and I shall tell you...will you give me that chance? I shall speak "rationally".

- Be my guest.

- Okaaaaay, art is... there, see that table? In reality we ignore what that table is, both as a concept and as matter and that is probably because we don't know who we are ourselves. All we know is that the table is one meter away from us. That is, we only know our relationship with objects. A work of art is the crystallization of our relationship with the world, which speaks of the world and of us. Kiss?

- No, because...

- Because in reality you're not interested in art but in philosophy. Well, art helps us search for the truth not in objects but in facts, that is in the relationships between objects. There, did I convince you? Kissy kiss?

For a few seconds I just stood there staring at him pointing at his cheek with his finger. He had an open smile and a kind of glow. The girl clapped her hands.

- Got to run, he said, here's my phone number.

Suddenly, he turns to the girl. "Lina is short for... what?"

- For Tsevetelina. My mother is Bulgarian. My father is Greek.

- If you are not from one country, you are from none.

- What do you mean?

- Farewell. Call me, my friend.

I was alone with the girl and was surprised to find that I would rather follow him than stay with her. "The mind overcomes the flesh?" I wondered. Lina appeared angry that he hadn't given his phone number to her.

- He's a fag, she said.

## CHAPTER TWO: WHERE A MADMAN RAVES

I was quite busy the following days. I had just graduated from the university of fine arts and was looking for a job as a teacher of freehand drawing. I'm better at teaching art than at actually practicing it, painting that is. I started off in the workshop "Morphs" which prepares students for the examinations for the University of Fine Arts. I was explaining to students the handling of forms, and I suddenly felt my words devoid of meaning. As he had said the other day, there is no such thing as a form. It is an intellectual construction. But how was I supposed to explain that? I always mean what I say and I now

felt scotched. I sent him an SMS about the whole thing. I wrote "Good morning. Our little conversation the other day is hindering my teaching. What do you suggest?"

And then my phone rings. "Make clear to your students that everything you say relates to traditional painting, prior to Cézanne. Introduce them to classical painting and then work your way to the rest."

- I thank you... what is your name?

- I don't have a name yet. You may call me as you please.

- You're driving me crazy man... May I call you Teacher? I said jokingly.

- What kind of a teacher?

- A teacher in painting

- Oh...

In the evening I went to my grandmother who is always happy to see me and I myself consider her simply the most remarkable person I have ever met. She speaks with a soft voice and sings like an angel. Lately she's been writing songs, too. She uses quite commonplace expressions in her lyrics but I see in her the soul's ambition to express itself in all its divine grandeur. I suddenly came up with an idea.

- Grandma, can I say the Lord's Prayer to you?

I started, paying heed to the intonation, the tone and the articulation.

- Liked that grandma? You wanna say it too?

And she did... and I was astounded. The timbre of her voice had such contrition, such a deep demission and invocation, that my articulation suddenly sounded like Donald Duck stuttering. "It's not what you say but how you say it" they say. My grandmother didn't care about style. She recited with plain awe and respect to the power of the words, even though she didn't seem to understand every single one of them. So her oration came out solid in an unconstrained manner.

The next day I was thinking of the stranger. I was feeling that he was expecting my call, without calling me himself. That made me stubborn and I didn't call him either. Two days passed. I taught in the day and painted at night. I painted on the computer my mediocre, unambitious images and enjoyed applying none of the things I taught. The phone rang. It was him.

- Can we meet at Kamara? he asked.

- I can't, I'm busy.

- Please, I need you.

- What do you need me for? Don't you have any friends?

- I need an intellectual.

He was sitting at café "Alpha".

- So, what did you need me for?

- Have a seat my friend, have a seat. What I needed you for? You want a rational or a metaphysical answer? You want a one-minute or a one-hour answer?

- Quit bugging me. Let's hear it.

- Here's the thing... I feel inspired today and I was wondering what kind of an impression I am giving.

- I beg your pardon?

- ... Let's start a conversation and you'll understand.

- A conversation? On what?

- Anything. Say... god. What is your relationship with god? Do you believe?

- I'm an agnostic, meaning that I don't know if god exists and I don't know if he doesn't... and I do not believe that we will ever know. We cannot know.

- Do you believe that YOU exist?

- Er... yeah, of course.

- And do you believe that your conscience is improving over time? That you understand more than you used to as a baby?

- At times yes...

- So if we improve, where are we heading? We cannot reach our ideals but they show us the way. Staying on the correct path is what's important. Let us assume that your conscious state as a baby is a point and your conscious state now that you understand more is another point, then through the two points a line passes and stretches to infinity and there, at the end of infinity, God awaits. So God, in the crudest sense, is your ideal self, your ideal image, which talks to you and calls for you. What's your name? Giorgos? God is the Super Giorgos inside you who is striving to express himself. God is your core, the Giorgiest you can become.

- I don't know if I understand fully, but...

- And you know what's funny? Your ideal self is very much like the others'. The needs and ambitions are basically the same. And from this point of view, god is whatever brings us together.

- And what are those ambitions?

- Why, becoming gods, of course! You're an intellectual and I need you. Women feel more than they understand. You think more than you feel. If I felt as much as I understand I would go crazy and you know what? That's exactly where I'm heading. Now tell me, am I conceited or am I modest?

- I can't really tell, you speak incomprehensibly and jump from one thought to another.

- You can't really tell because up there, contradictions (like proud-modest) are in harmony and perhaps in the end they coincide, too. The air is very thin up here, but the view is spectacular. If you were a doctor, you would think I'm a maniac. Every event has at least two interpretations. The rational one, i.e. that I am a sick man and the post-rational, the metaphysical, i.e. that I am in ecstasy. What do you think of me now?

- I think that you have been in great pain and that your imagination is engulfing your rational, objective view of the world. You're falling apart.

- Ha. Freud might have said that my superego is engulfing my ego... You called me a teacher. You know what kind of a teacher I am? I am a teacher of teachers. And the first thing I am teaching you is that truth lies not in books but in glances. I myself am a collector of glances and of experiences. There, I see it now. You look at me with suspicion. This is the kind of look I put up with all day. I talk and scare people away.

I need your help. I strive for a metaphysical life. I begin from remembering death, from the memory of death and will arrive at the abolition of death, but this I will explain to you some other time. I constantly go up and down the levels of conscience. From being asleep I become awake and from being an urchin I become a Christ... but this is where the problem lies. The more I distance myself from the shade of mediocre grey, aiming for white, the more I am in danger of becoming black. I want to speak the truth but if I mix one tiny little lie in my words, I become satan, for satan says 99 truths and one lie. I use the Christian model of describing the divine for you to understand, but I could use others. The promethean, the Buddhist...

- You said you're becoming a Christ but you have neither his serenity nor his simplicity. You bring out a kind of tension and confusion. Have you seen a doctor?

- My father is a psychiatrist and an atheist. He diagnosed a bipolar disorder and gave me pills... Perhaps god needs man's help to come to terms with the devil.

- Do you take your pills?

- Am I losing my head? And yet I try to harmonize with you. For us to fly towards the ultimate conscience. Because heaven is communication. I am trying here to build with you a heaven for two. And I am here as a whole. Absence from the present is a sin... Absence from the present is a sin! (Pentzakis) This is all I remember from everything I have read, as well as "being afraid of death is a sign of having had a bad life" (Wittgenstein). Those two sentences are doors leading from logic to meta-logic, to metaphysics. This is something a teacher should know, for he is bound to encounter the 4 foes. This is not the time to explain, but think of Adam and Eve. When they were driven away from heaven, where did the animals go? The animals are still there, in heaven, and you can see it in their eyes. All creatures are in heaven except us. Now I am teaching you. I am trying to harmonize with your wavelength, with the colour of the ray you are emitting. Remember that when you talk to many people you have to emit white, which contains all colours. I talk, I talk, I work to bring silence. When a simple

look will make everything make sense and I'll be in the middle of this path and follow the melody that the scream was clad, because I have eaten abyss-pie!...

The lightning missed because it was aimed at someone else, someone initiated and it hit me, the ignorant, the unprepared, the parrot. And so the parrot understood what he was parroting and lost its speech and found it again on the other side and everything upside down phosphoresces and strives to be called as it deserves. I am the path that leads to you.

I am not grief but its study.

I am the reading lamp's aura when you accept it.

I am anything and its opposite.

I! The ultimate Adam, the chaos' lucky one, the burned one. With the condemnation to leave eternally and breathe eternity into every mouth that opens like that initial explosion, where nothingness, darkness produces the worldaaaaaaaaa...

His limbs stretched and he had spasms as if he was electrocuted. I didn't know what to do. Did he have a seizure (epilepsy?) I later learned that it was called an extrapyramidal syndrome, a side-effect of the drug. I slapped him to bring him round. He calmed down, hanging from the chair like an empty bag and his eyelids grew heavy. He began to weep.

- What's wrong? What's wrong? You wanna go to a hospital?

- No... I'm fine, he whispered.

- Why are you crying?

- Nothing, it's nothing. Forgive me. You don't deserve going through all this. I must go, I must get some sleep.

- You want me to take you home? Where do you live?

- You don't have to... Can you spare five euro?

- Yeah, here.

- Farewell. I'll see you again. Forgive me.

I send him a message at night. "Are you OK?" I was thinking of him the next days. That man was carrying a heavy burden... maybe he was sick, but what kind of a divine mania seized him? The hours spent with him were heavy and time passed slowly. I felt he was in pain, he plunged into the abyss or into subconscious or god knows what... even his mistakes were supreme.

### CHAPTER THREE. WHERE THE HERO IS AFRAID TO ASK

The next day I went to the primary school where I taught art to small children.

- Sir, are you married?

- No.

- Careful. You might end up a desolate old fart.

I began writing this diary. Who am I addressing? People? My ideal self? Something he would have said. At night I met with some friends and later they took me to a place I detest. A bar with consummation hookers. They pushed me and I finally went along. A drunk woman, a real wreck, sat next to me and started soliloquizing. "Generally speaking, fucking is what it's all about... Fuck man, I 'm looking for whiskey and all the glasses seem to be filled with fucking water. Wanna buy me a drink?" God, I think, customers come to enjoy themselves with women in this condition? And they actually do enjoy themselves? Suddenly she got up, sat on my lap and started grinding herself against me. That took me by surprise and I stayed frozen and rigid. In the end she got up saying "You're never getting married, man".

- That's the second time I hear this today.

I suddenly remembered the love of my life, Melina. I never thought of her in a sexual kind of way, I just wanted to be next to her. When I first told her "I 'm in love with you" I am certain she felt the whole weight of my love. I had sex many times in my life and yet the most erotic moment I can remember was when, on our first date, she would let me hold her hand, her precious little hand. I was in a lot of pain at the time, meaning I was living intensely but in the end I never had her. She went and got married.

Then came the period during which I devilishly wanted each girl I became involved with to be prettier than the previous one. I wanted to watch my status rise. I heard a voice "Scumbag!"

Days went by and I missed him. I missed his pompous speech, his holy mania. Then a message came. "Good evening darling, I don't exist"

Wow, I thought, he's still in a bad phase. The following night a message comes. "Your last thought before you sleep will be of me." I didn't answer so as not to get into trouble. I couldn't sleep, though. I was in a trap. I tried to think of something else and yet this phrase was stuck in my brain. Finally I sent him a message.

- Which are the fighter's four foes, teacher? First of all, are you OK?

- What kind of a teacher am I?

- You are a teacher of teachers, a teacher of life?

- Are you being ironic?

- I half-believe it.

- So be it, let's stick to that. We'll talk tomorrow.

We made an appointment in church Panagia Dexia. He was calm. We stayed silent for a while.

- Do you feel the vibrations? God no longer dwells here. Shall we?

A beggar was just entering and started panhandling from the seated congregation. Two priests tried to drive him away. He suddenly started screaming "Sacrilege! You turned the house of God into a bank! Pharisees!"

- We'll call the police, said them.

- Call them then! Thieves!

Then my friend stepped in. He touched them on the shoulder and went calmly outside, in front of the gate. There, the beggar suddenly knelt before him. My friend was embarrassed. He ran away towards Kamara. I followed him. As I rushed by, a guy shouted "Don't worry, it's me, Paul."

I found him near Kamara, in the café "Elpidoforos" ("auspicious")

- What did you tell him and he knelt before you?

- Nothing. We didn't talk.

- Yeah, but you embraced him on the shoulder.

- That's my little magic, you should watch and learn from these little things, you only care about words. You intellectual!

- Words are the little wagons that carry meaning.

- ... and meaning is always more and it overflows. Let's show what we cannot tell and imply the unsaid over the expressed.

- Here you go again, man, can't you speak like a normal person?

- You want the one-minute or the one-hour answer?

- No, it's more than I can handle. What do you do for a living?

- I am a beggar... I like living exclusively off people's kindness.

- Ha! You're gonna starve to death.

- Actually I beg from my mother.

- Have you been to the university?

- I studied the art of the devil. Advertising... You mentioned words and meaning. We now look at each other as if we are different. But the truth is that the one is entering the other with the meaning of his words. And then the other one carries him inside him. Now that I'm talking to you I am entering inside you and then you'll talk and enter inside me. This, so to speak, sexual process is like a dance. We are dancing... let's clear our senses. If you listen as eloquently as you speak, you'll finally be able to see.

There are so many people inside me. Socrates, Christ... there are thirty people talking to you from in here.

- You're scaring me. Where are you ?

- I almost don't exist. My friend, we are cocktails of other people. My only personal intervention was that after I was 17 I began to decide who I will be influenced by. Let us not forget though that until puberty we were parroting others without judging them. Our parents, the environment... If we don't strive for good education we are bound to put up with the bad one, the kitsch that surrounds us. I prefer being the conduit of Plato than of my aunt Kitsa. The only thing we can do is become pure conduits of the meaning, of the spirit that endeavors to be expressed in the three-dimensional world, to be earthed in time and space... Tell me something you consider a downside of yours.

- I get easily bored.

- Boredom is the mind's hunger. I'll have to feed you.

The girl came for the order. I ordered a rare type of tea, which they didn't have. I ordered another one which they also didn't have and then another... until I finally settled for a camomel. He said:

- If your sensitivity was appeased in your art, it wouldn't come out in your choice of tea. You're becoming a hypochondriac.

- You have an answer for everything, dontcha?

- Ha! I'm an answering machine!

- Then I'll give you a hard one. An uncle of mine has got cancer. How do I comfort him? I am very distressed.

- If you wanna be distressed over someone, do so for yourself, because you also gonna die. The only way to lift his spirits would probably be to commit suicide in front of him saying "See? It's nothing." If you cannot do that, you better stay away from him, because he envies your health and hates your pity.

- You are unbelievable! I'm scared to ask you anything, I am afraid of the answer. Is there such a thing as immortality?

- After death I'm not sure. But there is immortality during our lives. You can be immortal for 10 minutes. It all has to do with handling time. We'll get into this later.

- You did it again. How does this all come to you, man?

- I do not think anymore, I flow. You want to confess?

- To you?

- Yes.

- Maybe later.

- OK... we were talking about immortality.

- You were talking.

- And you were listening, filtering my ideas, giving them your own meaning and actually carrying out an internal monologue. That's solipsism.

- I didn't catch that, carry on.

- It's OK, I'll explain some other time.

- First of all, how is your health?

- Fine. Why do you have a pony-tail? To show off your intellectual independence? Each one with his uniform. I used to have long hair and a beard but now I try to simplify myself. I am thus indefinable and not standardized. I want to express the mood of every moment that changes and not a constant, superficial signal of appearance. Even Mona Liza was not always smiling.

- Huh?

- By having a simple, neutral appearance I can feel standardization more clearly, the signals of others. The varieties of their egotisms.

- Oof! Let's take a break. I'll go buy some cigarettes.

In the shop, I was influenced by the discussion and feeling more aperceptive. In the nude pictures of the covers I discerned the merchant's hysteria, like the hiss in Munch's Scream. A guy ordered cigarettes with a whistle. They obviously knew each other but I saw the insult in the owner's eyes. On my return, I paused and began to observe my friend (should I say "Teacher"?) from behind and to his side. He was standing perfectly still, a fly was taking a stroll across his forehead but his face remained expressionless. I approached.

- Please, let's talk about something lighter, I've had such a difficult day today...

- Let's talk about how art is taught.

We sat for two and a half hours and what we said was like a revelation to me. He explained that I am the analytical type, not the synthetic one. That's why I can easily talk about a painting but not produce one. These are different centers in the brain, he said. I don't remember our discussion word for word but when I went to school next morning and at "Morphes" in the evening, I was rejuvenated. I felt I retained his light inside me even when I was away from him.

#### CHAPTER FOUR. WHERE CONFESSION IS A START

In the morning I enter the primary school class and I draw a "tangled" line on the board.

- What's this, class?

- A scribble.

I then draw a free line that is extended all across the board, flips over, spins around, makes circles, triangles, like the flight of a bee.

- And what's this now, class?

- Another scribble.

- And which scribble is better? Tell us, Yiannis.

- The second one.

- Why?

- Because it's... richer.

- It's more interesting, isn't it? It's a line that is not obliged to depict something (a house, a tree) and so it is free to flip over and take various shapes. It is a nice scribble with confidence. You make nice scribbles now, class, and remember that a nice scribble is no longer a scribble but art. Abstract art.

In the evening I went to "Morphes". Students there are older, 18 and older, who draw heads (busts). I take a bust and I start.

- For the audience this is a beautiful head. But for you that want to become artists you must know the simple truth that the sculptor who made it also knew. This is not a head but a sculpted piece of rock. In your drawing you must show that you are aware of that and convey with a pure eye the forms that come up in these niches and protrusions as the rock is lit by the specific light in the specific moment. In essence, the subject matter is not the bust but the flow of light on it. Do not draw an eye if it is hidden in the shade. Keep your eye innocent. You must only convey what you see and not what you believe exists. It sounds simple when I say it but your course all these months is the effort to cement this knowledge so that your work glows with consciousness. In a way, you are not here to learn but to forget, to become an innocent eye that handles illusion, because a work of art is an assemblage of lines before becoming a portrait,

At night I had an appointment with the weirdo at café "Alpha".

- You wanna confess? he asks.

- Not yet... talk to me about handling time.

- As we are talking now, you and I, we are in a different time frame than others. If we fill our moment with meaning, then time will flow much slower. Will you pay for my coffee? I am broke.

- Ok. You were saying...

- Time may flow more and more slowly until it stands still and then one lives in timelessness, which is the other side of immortality. This is why perseverance with the present is so important. Get it?

- Nope.

- Let try a different approach. If I am right in what I'm saying, how old am I? How many years does it take to understand all this?

- At least one hundred.

- I am 36. If at 36 I am 100, (me, evolving in a geometric progress) how old will I be at 70?

- 500, maybe more. Maybe 2000.

- Isn't this a way of consciousness to eternity? To immortality?

- Sounds like a sophism to me.

- You are right. I'm not that sure about this thought. But believe me, when the time comes for me to die, I'll be joyful, because I'll have quenched my thirst for life and will want to rest, to sleep. But what does "life" mean? Living means thinking and feeling. But you don't have to go bungee jumping to feel alive, but to sharpen your senses. There are people who take a stroll in the park and are filled with a week's experiences. Our little talk can become a pretty tense experience.

- It is for me.

- I am trying to live in the eternal present and I am being a little self-centered, meaning that now you are my world and I love you a little more than a stranger and a little less than my mother. Do I sound snobbish? I am proud not so much for what I am but for what I want to be. I think highly of myself but of others, too. I elevate us all. You have to talk to the other person as if he were a saint and thus you bring out his saintly side. To love someone is to set him apart. Well, I imitate god and love without setting apart, because a human is a god who doesn't know it. I talk like that because I'm in a hurry. I talk as if I were to die in an hour. Do you play chess?

- I'm not very good, I used to play in the past.

- I'm not very good either. I usually play alone now.

- You practice?

- I practice in justice.

- In justice?

- Yeah, see I have to help the white as much as the black.

- But that's... You'll go crazy, man.

- I don't trust common sense that much anyway. You want the white?

We began. It wasn't long before I was against the ropes. My army couldn't deploy. Then he made a serious mistake which I took advantage of. He soon abandoned.

- There, he said, you are better than me.
- You played better than me but you made a very serious mistake.

Then I had a suspicion.

- You didn't do it on purpose, did you?
- You got me there! I was studying your expressions, as despair was followed by triumph. Let's play another one. I'll play...
- You play your best.

We began and he was playing conservatively at first. But I knew now that my opponent was tough and I played along. He was playing fast. In the center our forces came face to face. I thought my next move for quite a while and advanced a pawn.

- Mistake. You leave your horse exposed.
- Oh, yes!...
- That's OK, take it back.

Then I noticed the music in the café. A Spanish song with a plaintive timbre was perfectly expressing my condition.

- Oh, no, I said, that ain't right.
- That's OK, take it back, it would be a shame to spoil the game.

After a while he made a mistake.

- Wrong move. Take it back.
- No, it's OK, play.
- No, since I took back a move, I have to forgive one for you, too.
- Anyways, I don't regret my move, I don't want to take it back, I have a plan.
- Generosity is not only about granting but also about accepting favours.
- Ha! You talk in an absolute way. That's my favorite style. Your words are a moral preposition and thus difficult to discuss. Anyway, I insist on my move.
- If you insist... then I take the unprotected pawn. But I was getting worked up and this led me to another mistake.

- Take it back, he said.

- No, I won't. You can take it.

- No I won't! and he plays something irrelevant.

- And I bring my castle in front of your pawns so you take it. Or I give you a check mate in two moves.

- And I bring my queen here and if you don't take it, I give you a check mate in one move.

For the first time I hated someone's courtesy. I looked at him angrily and he looked at me in the same way. I got even angrier and then I noticed his lips trembling as if he was trying to keep from laughing. We both burst into laughter.

- I guess you're someone I could confess a sin to.

- Swell, let's hear it.

- I was 10 years old and it was mid-summer in a popular resort. The days passed in monotony. Swimming, eating, sleeping, swimming again...

- And...

- And suddenly there was a storm. We could see a small boat in trouble, 40 meters from the shore. On the boat, there was a guy with his nephews. The children were finally all rescued, but the uncle was drowned. The whole village was upset in a way that stroke me as joyful. They took the body out and I saw it. A lady was standing beside me. I turned and told her "It's a good thing things like that happen and we are not bored all the time." Man, the expression she took! She called on others and would ask me to repeat what I had just said. I kept quiet. I remember nothing after that.

- The fun within the fuss. The child discovered a tremendous truth, a truth untold. Carry on. I'll swallow your pain and I'll burp incense.

- Two years ago I had the hots for a girl...but she wouldn't answer my messages. I knew that her father had died and I took advantage of it. To poke her, I said "Your father sees you and forgives you".

- That's bad.

- I can't continue. Maybe some other time. How about you? It's your turn to confess.

- Not yet. I don't want to scare you.

- OK, I'll wait.

We remained silent for a while.

- Then tell me about the fighter's four foes.

- Castaneda talks about the four foes. The first is confusion. It is the first phase when a young man is confused between many contradicting options. Christ or Nietzsche? Commissar or Yogi? Rationalism or Mysticism? West or East? If you figure this out, the second foe comes along, and that's arrogance. If you defeat the second foe as well, a strange thing happens (the third foe). You become blind from seeing the truth that you are just now begin to discern. The funny thing is that it is possible for all foes to come to you at once. This is what Socrates had to put up with, when he said "I know nothing", and yet he wouldn't stop talking. By talking he was fighting the third foe. To understand his words, we must add one more. "I know nothing PRECISELY". In other words he only vaguely saw the truth. If we were to ask him "What do you see?" he could answer "I see something like a square. The width and size are undefined but it's definitely a square". Get it?

- What's the fourth foe?

- It's the last one, it's old age. It's when life has no more secrets, when you feel full like in the end of an exciting day and you want to rest and wait for death with joy. That's the enemy I want to be defeated by.

- You have defeated the other three?

- More or less. I am still plagued by arrogance and sometimes I am blinded by seeing the truth, for truth is not plausible at all and I am in danger of not being understood by the herd. I am in danger of going crazy, like someone dancing to the rhythm of a music others can't hear.

- You talk like you hold the meaning of life.

- Whoever tries to talk about the meaning of life is usually full of crap. And yet you are right. I keep digging.

- I'll confess one more thing. A few months ago my girlfriend left me because I was being aloof... she went and found someone else, hurting my ego. It hurt so much that I thought maybe I was in love. I started practicing guerilla warfare. I told her we could remain friends and she accepted, which infuriated her new boyfriend. Every time I sent her a message they would fight because he was in love and being jealous. He finally told her they should split and she came to me and confessed everything. It was my chance. I had the chance to win her back. Then I realized that I didn't really want her now that my ego had been satisfied. I suggested she tried to make up with him and I promised not to bother her again. I am a good guy, generally speaking, but if I get nasty I can become a real prick.

- I can understand her boyfriend, but in another level he should want to meet you. What was her attitude?

- She was undecided. She couldn't reach a decision on her own. She wanted to keep our friendship but things didn't work out the way she imagined.

- They never do...

- How much do you believe in what you're saying?

- I used to believe in them a little, now more. My aim to believe one hundred percent, but then you wouldn't understand me.

His face took an expression of great wonder, as if he beheld me for the first time, or more like he beheld a human for the first time.

- What are you thinking?

- I let this thought flow and studied it from another level. Consciousness is the thought's thought.

- But then you could also observe this other level from a distance.

- That's right.

- But this is infinite.

- I have managed to observe three levels of thought flowing in parallel. This is what can happen to you if you smoke pot.

- Have you tried it?

- I don't need it. I get drunk on reality all day, activating the proper brain centers on my own, keeping my consciousness limpid. Why do people get drunk? Some to forget, others to artificially experience divinity. It's when you love yourself and everyone else. A happy man lives in a happy world.

- Look at that woman. She's dressed lightly, unusual for the time of year. When a woman is "searching" she exposes her flesh.

- When a woman is being provocative, this doesn't necessarily mean she's "searching". Perhaps she wants to be wanted and takes strength in that. She distills men's lust and turns it into self-confidence. I barf opinions so as to transcend them. Listen to the café's music. Most love songs are addressed to the male lover. These songs are very appropriate when you imagine that they are addressed to god or sometimes from god to human.

As he was talking I noticed a guy wanting to pick his nose. He noticed me looking at him and stopped. His hand went to the side and he scratched his cheek.

I went to the toilette with my cigarette. I finished it and threw it down. I could imagine the cleaning lady picking it up in anger. I imagined her checking the brand and then looking at the customers' packets to find who threw it. I returned to the table but he had gone. I called him on the cell phone. No answer.

#### 14. CHAPTER FIVE. WHERE KAMARA BECOMES A FOOTSTALL

Two days passed and I missed him. I wanted my dose. I called him and found him.

- Teacher?

- Come to Kamara.(a monument)

- I must finish something first...

- No, come now!

- Why? What's the rush?

- Come!

And he hangs up. God, what is it this time?

I went and found him and he was...naked! He only wore a sheet, that is. The weird thing about it was that people hardly noticed.

- Well? How about that?

- Please get dressed! What's all this? They'll lock you in and throw away the key, man!

- Until then I have time to live my fairy tale. Besides, what difference is there between the psychiatry and the other green or red houses?

- What fairy tale?

- That I'm an ancient philosopher. See the white sheet, how it glows in the sun! We'll have a cool summer...

- Great God!

Just then a tourist tried to take a picture of Kamara but he got in the way. She then aimed high at the top and he started jumping to get in the picture. She laughed and finally took a picture of him.

- What's your name? he asked in English.

- Nicole.

- You know what Nicole? If you want to conquer the world, never be the first to withdraw your eye.

- Give me your parents' phone number, I must talk to them.

- Here's the number. I never resist destiny.

Then a speaker started screaming slogans against the government and the establishment. Young members of some communistic party were gathering. He approached them.

- Is the revolution coming? What say you?

-It's coming! It's coming all right! They answered with a touch of irony, noticing his sheet and bare legs.

- Would you kill to establish the revolution?

- Only the guilty and the indivertible.

- Listen, let us assume that you are the leader of the revolution. Well, the first murder you commit will transform all these who until now were following you with loyalty and love. It will transform them into a frightened herd and they will begin to betray each other so that you like them.

- Says who?

- Says history my friend. The history of the French and of the Russian Revolution. You are ready for the absurd.

- Murder is sometimes necessary.

- I'll tell you a parable I came up with. Imagine...

- Why are you wearing a sheet?

- To establish my own revolution against my one and only enemy. Well, as I was saying...

{The Parable of the Revolutionary} Imagine yourself leader of the Revolution. Imagine that many people follow you and you finally infiltrate the office of the corrupt capitalist.

-Are you coming with us or do I kill you? you ask.

And he goes: "Go cut your hair you punk!"

- You asked for it!

And you shoot him in the head. You would, wouldn't you?

- More or less.

- So you justly kill him. But... just then his mother enters the room, bringing him his favorite pie. Think... his mother. An innocent old lady who knows nothing of trusts and of exploitation. A mother who only understands the love she feels for her only child.

- I brought you a snack... she says and then sees her son in a pool of blood. The tray drops. She screams, hugs her child and looks at you with an agonizing wonder. You start saying "You know, lady, it was necessary, the revolution and all...". Just then another old lady enters with a pie, your mother.

- I brought you a snack...

- Not now, mother.

The exploiter's mother looks at your mother. She addresses her out of instinct, as only a mother would understand. With a scream she falls into your mother's arms. She looks at you with an inquiring horror and whispers "Why?"...

- Did you draw any conclusions? Asks the teacher.

- Nope.

- Leftist thought is an ideology. A product of the western man's confidence that he can put an order to things single-handedly. The western civilization is an effort to create a society without a god. I don't think it will succeed. (Eliot).

- Please, I said. Let me take you somewhere to change. I may understand but what about the others? You are making a fool of yourself... and distressing me.

- If I am crazy, I am last in the eyes of people and therefore first in the eyes of god. For god is unpredictable... Oh! And here are my relatives you called. Give us some privacy will ya?

He was briskly discussing with his folks, who were trying to convince him to follow them. A little further away, two male nurses from the psychiatry were waiting by the ambulance. The relatives realized that they had no chance of convincing him and nodded to the sturdy assistants. As they approached, he ran to Kamara and began climbing the scaffold, carrying a speaker trumpet he had grabbed from the demonstrators. He started yelling through it from above.

- Brothers! Madness blew like wind through my brain and carried away all the garbage! Self-absorption, vanity, narcissism. Now I see clearly! Don't buy the advertised products. We are made for immortality. Let us crash the illusion of time. Time is the evil! (Pentzikis). Brothers! You will see god when you don't feel cool anymore. The myth is the truth! (Pentzikis). And I shall give you a myth, you hear? We are god's brain cells and if we all manage to see eye to eye and agree, god will say "I exist" down here on earth. Revolution is a conscious process and it will start in Greece. Because we were the first to turn the fear for death into an inspiration for life! (Empeirikos) Brothers! Leave the beautiful women to those that have no imagination... and I am the first free man. Behold!

... And he throws away the sheet. He stands up there naked with his arms stretched while the "audience" was watching from below with a calm horror... Then the unexpected happened. He calmly got down from the scaffold and gave himself up.

## CHAPTER SIX. WHERE THE SUBCONSCIOUS COMES TO THE SURFACE. THE SHIT TO THE SURFACE.

I visited him in the hospital. The doctors told me that he had shifted from mania and went to the disease's other extreme, depression. I saw him. He was silent, dazed by the drugs and the electroshocks, still as a rock. I said "I saw a movie at the cinema but it wasn't any good..." His desolation was haunting me. A minute of silence passed. I was desperately seeking a topic of conversation. In the end I said "I saw a movie, it wasn't any good..." I touched him and he didn't respond. I lifted his arm and it just stayed there, suspended. Tears filled my eyes. I asked the doctors "Is he gonna be all right?"

- Sure he will. Today drugs make wonders.

- How does the drug affect the psyche?

- No one knows. These drugs were the result of multiple experiments on animals.

I observed my behavior during the next days. I noticed that in my obscure position as an elementary school teacher I was being corrupted by the derisory power I held. The power over the kids. I disliked

some and I granted special favors to others. If that is happening to me, what happens to rulers and politicians who practice real power?

I visited him again at the hospital. He looked tense, but other than that quite well.

- Welcome.

- I brought you some of my work, here.

He studied them and declared:

- Your work is very sincere but I can understand why gallery owners don't appreciate it. In front of their worthy structure there is a veil of off-handedness that is annoying. Today it's not important what you say but how you say it... and your style has a childish character. But I find it charming because I am also like that. I talk with naivety about grandeur. Some women find that appealing. They don't understand me and that's why they find me appealing. Because they want to admire. Those who understood me became my friends, those who didn't became my lovers. Ha, ha, a witticism! There, my parents are coming with the priest. My mother is a believer and really sets her hopes quite high on things like that."

The whole thing turned into an exorcism and I can commit to paper only what my pen can withstand, for I heard things better left untold.

In the beginning, the teacher was rather calm and quiet. Suddenly, while the priest was talking, he started laughing with a muffled and almost womanly laughter. He said:

"Your merciful God! You want to be God's servant, priest, and bend over out of humility. The hypocrisy! When you are humiliated you feel the arrogance multiplied, for managing to become agreeable to your Lord."

The priest continued reading and their voices intermingled.

- You want to be god's servant, dontcha? Well, I am His Lord! And I am His lord because he begged me to. Because the god and the devil is the same person. He is an old whore looking for a pimp. And He wants man to be the pimp, me, so as to get along with the devil, himself that is. Because the devil is the egoism of God! Hear that? Of God! And the egoism was split apart and now wants to return. The devil inside me asks for forgiveness and god accepts him and so god finally gets along with himself and appears in all his might and without shame... and I shine with his power inside me, you vile excuse of a priest! I'll make you gargle my sperm and tickle with a cool knife Mother Mary's clitoris and eat your shit and kiss my mother and.....

He fell down, but with no froth in his mouth. His mother was close to fainting. He rose to his knees and pulling the priest's cloth murmured "save me". The priest, obviously used to similar situations, continued to calmly pray. He touched the teacher's head with his hand and he appeared exultated when he suddenly buried his head underneath the cloth. The priest jerked abruptly and the teacher let out a wild, womanly cackle and started swaying erotically in a grotesque belly dance. "Who's gonna fuck meeeee?"

They gave him an injection and I left.

## CHAPTER 7. WHERE THE STRING IS STRETCHED

Ten days passed. He was considered cured by the doctors and we met.

- Are you Ok? I asked.

- More or less. I will be taking medication for at least three years. For my whole life, I suspect. Only when I am crazy do I feel joyful.

- How do you feel now? Sane or insane? Ha!

- Somewhere in the middle.

Two girls were walking in front of us, talking briskly. When he approached them he said with a clarion voice: "GIRLS!". They were startled and split apart. Then he passed between them whispering "I just wanna pass, thank you". As they pulled their act together they shouted from afar "Who d'ya think you are, asshole?" and stuff like that. I asked him: "Are you a homosexual? That's what I thought in the exorcism."

- We all are a little homosexual. There is no manly man or womanly woman. These are symbols. In essence, we all waver in between. I made a bore into my subconscious and cleansed it.

Further down, a couple was fighting. The man was haling the woman who was trying to escape. They were calling each other names. The teacher approached, held his face very near the man's face and said: "Be careful". The man had two choices. Either calm down or become furious. He chose the latter. He was quite bulky. He grabbed the teacher from the shoulders and shoved him against a car. "Get lost! Or I'll rearrange that face of yours!"

- So rearrange it.

They beheld each other for a few moments. Suddenly the man left him and turned to the girl. He was calm. We left them.

- Did you suck his rage?

- You're beginning to trust the invisible, good for you.

We stopped by a shop window. It was a gallery. The lady inside invited us in. "Come in, come in..." The teacher commented on the paintings and impressed her. Suddenly the lady changed the topic of the conversation. Perhaps affected by the teacher's simplicity, she said: "I try to teach my son to be simple. Today, everyone prostitutes themselves."

- Did you ever prostitute yourself? he asked boldly.

- Well... At a time I tutored a little boy, the parents of which I disliked.

- That's not selling off your soul. You only sold your work. Do you hide big sins behind little ones?

I expected her to be angry. But she felt more at ease. "It's something that... I used to live in Athens. I organized a TV show. At one time we needed five musicians.

- And?

- I found them and booked them but... I found out, too late... by the hostess... that they had to appear dressed as clowns. They were good and respectable musicians. The two refused but the other three needed the money, they had families and accepted. They prostituted themselves.

- And you are more guilty because it didn't cost you anything.

- Yes... she mumbled and her face twitched with sorrow. She leaned forward.

- It's OK... now that you confessed, you are absolved.

- What kind of a man are you? she said.

- A man trying to be human... and if he makes it he will no longer be called a human but an angel.

We left.

- You know how to unlock people.

- To unlock people, you have to be unlocked yourself. Take dogs, for example. Perhaps the only species that doesn't need to hunt in order to survive. It lives exclusively off the love of humans, a love which it elicits, almost by blackmail. How? Why, by loving us in advance and unconditionally. Dogs, not humans are the example.

Now I shall teach you and then I'll ask you what you think of me. I want to know what impression I give to the sane. You are initiated enough so I don't need to explain much. God has created the world in a pool of blood. All creatures devour each other. Even Christ ate animals that had been slaughtered. There cannot be in this world something truly perfect. The fact that we move proves that we are not happy. The fact that we are visible proves that we are sinners. You are the square that meets a cube. What will it understand? Only its base. But I dare you. Look towards the third dimension. Once you see me, you shall become a cube yourself. God tells me "You jerk! How dare you speak in my name? You can't even quit smoking." I say: "I will quit it." Then I hear a chuckle. It was the devil. The fact that I smoke makes me more guilty than some other guy who may commit a murder. Guilt is measured by the size of the consciousness. God tells me... god never speaks. Maybe he doesn't even think, he only...feels. My consciousness talks to me near him, perhaps inspired by him. The more I obey her, the stricter she becomes. Animals are happy in heaven; heaven underneath us, heaven above, only we are in hell. The modern hell is solitude and boredom. Boredom is the spirit's hunger. We live in a cultural Ethiopia. Animals are happy in the heaven of ignorance. In the sunny valley. Man leaves the valley and enters the tunnel as he grows older. Where consciousness and happiness no longer coincide. If he makes it, he comes out on the other side of the tunnel. In a valley again. Where consciousness and happiness coincide once again. After a lot of distance, effort and danger. Become a cube. To be exact, become four-dimensional. Control time and do away with it completely, sticking to the eternal present. I talk to you about the other world, the world of meaning and I invite you. There is no time or space there. On earth, the centers of power prepare a worldwide economic dictatorship. I talked to you about the mundane. Now I shall talk about the extramundane risking you misunderstanding me. The dreams

you have, your hopes and aspirations...all these may be more real than reality. The myth is the truth (Pentzikis). The myth gives meaning. Maybe god allows our sins so that when we come before him we are less cocky. This world is the world of matter, visible and meaningless. The other world is the world of spirit, invisible and meaningful. God... nobody really knows why He's gone and is no longer in fashion. He took the summer with him. Time, in His absence, has become smaller and colorless. Now god is returning. The time of harvest. The good times. The apocalypse is not the direct revelation of god. It is the revelation of man. Man shall comprehend his divine nature and bring it to the surface. Thus, god shall jump out of man's brain, like Athena out of Zeus' head. Mayhem shall precede. We are god's brain cells. If we harmonize, if we manage to see eye to eye on just one thing, on what god is, for example, then He shall come down as a spirit. A spirit of reconciliation and of love. Let us accept that there is only one sun but appears differently from each part of the globe. If we have six billion people, we could have six billion different religions and each one respecting the others. We all have a different viewpoint of the truth. Through time, god always followed, unseen, the caravans of hope. In every attempt. Now he dares whatever light dares. He becomes larger in his orbit. He ascends at night's highest bedrooms. Until now, either consciously or unconsciously, we dug for Him. Hopes and realism were caught in the hooks of our soul. Our ego is not a part of the world but its limit. A window through which the spirit strives to enter in search of new conduits. We shall always be puppets. Our only freedom is to choose whose puppets we shall be. Of our passions, of our arrogance, of satan? Satan occasionally presents himself as a moralistic prig. If we hadn't chained women with our ethics they wouldn't allow us to breathe, even on the pavement. I choose to be god's puppet. And I do not know what is good. Something is good because god wants it. Someone on the table next to me coughs. He coughs because I am smoking. You believe me? No? You are right not to. You don't believe me because I don't believe enough myself. The scientific progress has elevated man into the tunnels of specialization. We have lost the world as a whole. The ancient people, barbarians and spiritual. In contact with nature, with the eternal and the divine. In the ugly, urban landscape I recognize the crystallization of our selfishness. People don't enjoy themselves, they merely satisfy themselves. They trust their lives to the scientific thought and sleep-walk, while the rite is an awakening. I bring back to the world the meaning of the whole. As we speak, gases move at the corners of the universe. Do you believe me? Do you think God sent Christ to other animals? Can you imagine thousands of ants crucifying one single ant? Ha! Did Christ have a sense of humor? Of course he did. "Let the dead bury their dead." Black humor. I don't live. I AM. Animals and children ARE. My eternal core addresses yours and invites it... Well, did you form an opinion? Give me the realistic version.

- You look like an educated and sensitive man, with an inability to dedicate himself to one person. You strike me as demented at times but this would only justify the fact that your words are special.
- My words are not that original. Their originality lies in the fact that I mean them.
- You wanna hear the crazy version?
- Yes! Yes!
- Your soul has received a strong boost and oscillated in the extremes of joy and sorrow. Of sanctity and of possession. If you manage to strike a balance between these two extremes, you shall be...
- Say it and let the mountains tear apart!
- ... you shall be Christ, bearer of the apocalypse. Of the Last Judgment.

- Yeah! Now you see me. Now you are becoming a cube! Now you are going "crazy". Now the spirit is earthed, now I have a name... it all begins now.

## CHAPTER 8. WHERE THE ARROW FLIES

If that's Him, then I am writing a gospel!

Suddenly he disappeared. He wouldn't answer the phone. Days later he sent me a message, "You've got to figure out a way to teach yourself.. If you keep quiet for three days, you'll understand a lot". Two more weeks passed. I was trying to watch the Annita Pania show on TV. Loons and retards were on display, offering to the public their blunders and making them laugh. Trash TV they call it...and Pania says. "And now, the moment you've been all waiting for. In the flesh, exclusively from the world beyond, I bring you...Christ!" Two walls split apart and I see the teacher. Tied on a cross. With a paper halo, fake gold flour and two rays from behind. He was practically naked, as was Jesus himself. An image of wild kitsch.

Pania says "Christ... teach us"

- God got tired of Jews and is now working on Greeks (audience laughs).

- Why do you say that? Are you a racist? asks Pania.

- Every nation carries its culture. And Jews consider themselves God's chosen people. And they are partly right, as god was revealed to them. But darkness saw light and didn't recognize it. I have come just like then but for the whole world.

- Really, why did you come back?

- I have come for the harvest, I have come in all my glory. I have come to bring you heaven. (audience laughs).

- But how are we to believe you? You wanna make a little miracle or something?

- Perhaps later. Miracles blackmail souls. I generally avoid them. (laughs) Our words must be the real miracle. I am the door that leads from the meaningful to the meaningless. This I what we are made for... to become metaphysical creatures.

- Why do we live?

- To enjoy our metamorphosis.

- Why, how can he give so simple answers to such ancient questions? Jesus Christy, you're a little nuts, aren't you? Are you in contact with reality?

- What is reality? Is not reality the phantasies and dreams of others that resist our will? If I am a lie, if there is no objective truth, if I live in a fairy tale then...my fairy tale is mighty and beautiful. I reveal my mythology to you and invite you... to fly where bizarre birds nest in the sun's stairs, to the sun's millions flashes.

- Jesus, you are also a little poet, aren't you?
- You are being sarcastic and disaster shall come upon you.
- Oh! You spoiled it now! I am making you a star and you talk like that!
- I really, truly tell you that...forget it...it's not time yet (laughs)
- No, say it!
- Should I?
- Yes! Yes!
- I am the lottery of your consciousness. (laughs) We must slaughter whatever adorns us and ascend the sky's stairway naked.
- And what do you do for a living, Christy? Or are you only theory?
- What's a teacher's action? His words.
- Christ's answers are really squashing us today.
- I came as a god to make you gods. If we can't be gods, let us at least become angels, or at least saints or at least good guys. But how does a god behave? A god by grace?
- Don't tell us yet. Because before we become gods we must see these messages from our sponsors. We have no time.
- I wasn't born a Christ...I became a Christ. Therefore, you can also... (commercials)

The show continued with paradoxologies. The teacher would speak and the others would laugh. The ratings went up. There were reactions. The Jewish community accused the teacher of being a dangerous and demented fascist. The church also reacted. "This is a new low for TV!" "Sacrilege!" and many other derisive comments. Another nut that the audience will chew and spit out. And yet the ratings went through the roof.