

## Impaired Vision of Who

A similar action it was. Here she was, pulling the skin of my cheek in an oh so delicate way with her finger tips...nails. She enjoyed the feeling she told me. "Really?" I wondered, "you like the texture too? Funny"... It was, it was indeed! A few nights before, in a different world, atmosphere, dimension, zone, perception, I recalled doing that to any soul I encountered on my way to wherever I was going. The stretch of that path of life was only three or four hours, but the indelible memories of that period of time, of schizophrenic reality is... well... indelible!

A train ride back to home, back to where everything *should* be normal, is an experience that many people live daily, but only a few people *experience*. Any daily action can become an experience. The immobility of everything in the train, while the environment outside of it is passing by at rapid speed.

"Yo Jerome... Jerome!... Jeroooooome!" My name needed to be repeated to be caught by my untrained ear. In front of me, someone I supposedly knew (well, the person knew my name!) was calling me, was asking me to stop tripping in my metaphysical and tautological world and respond to his request.

"What?" I cried, many brain cells still bottom deep in contemplation of something blurry.

"Your phone has been vibrating ever since we left the party!"

The bump in my left trouser pocket was illuminated, a firefly extremely agitated. The numerous phone calls, I discovered once I looked at the screen, had been perpetuated by David Galrid. Now Galrid isn't your average phone caller. He is a man who dials when he wants to talk to **who** he wants. He has the power to dial like Moishe Pipik has the power to sign "Roth". The missed calls had been at an interval of one every six minutes. The woken-up brain cells tried finding symbolism in the number, but the known stranger in front of me demanded that they concentrate on his words.

"No way dude! David Galrid called you? Wow..."

The truth is I don't *know* David Galrid. He is what one (well OK, what *I*) would call a name without a face, a smile without a mouth, blood without veins. He is something in nothing. Is he a creation of my paranoiac-mind or a paranoid man not worth inventing? In any case, his name is Davild Galrid and he called me, many times as a matter of fact. The fact of the matter is, David Galrid called, and that's all there is to it.

The vibrations, having kindly paused while all these thoughts made their way in hazy Jerome-reflection, resumed. I don't know why, but I was literally surprised that it was... David Galrid calling.

"Hello?" I meekly helloed.

"Dude?" An urgent voice belched out, due probably to a cheesburger digestion.

"Among other things, yes" I mumbled, too out of it to defend my position of being *the* dude.

"Oh... well, sorry, wrong number. I was looking for *the* dude".

The bastard hung up. Galrid hung up on me! He was famous for his dialing, not for his hanging up! It needed more oomph! Why did Galrid need to speak to *the* dude? Wasn't *any* dude satisfactory? The loss of total objectivity due to being me was irritating. How I'd crave for an outsider's look on what's going around me and in me. But all I can

perceive is through my own fucked-up eyes – a reality distorted by eyeglasses and selfless narcissism in a world of selfish idolatry of *thy neighbor*.

The stranger in front of me was smiling. Maybe he had had recently such an experience. I wanted to explain the situation to this person, to explain how everything was going terribly wrong. I wanted to shout out the injustices of this place, the acrid smell of booze and piss in the train, and all the other materialistic and bourgeois criticism one would be *expected* to scream out on a first of January. That smile of this seventeen-year-old kid was just too scary. It seemed to contain so much wisdom, so much pain and memories and failures and heartbreaks and deceits – and he's seventeen! It must be a theatrically-trained smile, a Mossad-trained smile, a vacant smile whose intentions are purely malevolent. Damn the stranger who knows my name! Damn the world who doesn't!

“When the cries of a man are more powerful than a woman's, trust the child's. A wise man once told me that”, began the estranged stranger.

“Who was this wise man and how was he wise?”

“Experience!” heroically proclaimed the spy.

“Based purely on empiricism” I heard myself say. Wow... I didn't even stammer on that word. “No my dear ol' chap... You cannot be wise only from experience. If that were the case, I'd have concluded that life is like a fountain, but that actually it isn't really *like* a fountain”. The incoherency of my propos did not seem to disturb the smiler.

“Feel life and life will tell you how to feel. That's another thing the man said”.

“How idiotic! Who would say such a thing? Who would say such a thing?”

“You” sighed the sorrowed man.

“Me?” (what a useless question I thought). The slowness of the closing of his eyes had such dramatic emphasis written all over it that I was tempted to cry.

Yes, it was me who had said such things, and others, some fateful night... no one can recall when, or where, or why. It was just “some fateful night”. Words such as “cohesive” and “demoralization” and “determinism” had been pronounced. Others such as “God” and “You” and “I” had been whispered, as not to start up verbal confrontation with anyone who would (who would?) maybe be listening to us (who's us?)

Massive amounts of alcohol had been consumed and thrown up on that fateful night. Massive amounts of illicit drugs had been inhaled and sometimes exhaled. Massive amounts of people had been there too... that element was the most dangerous one of them all. There was a flow of people running, walking, sitting down, crouching, dancing, jumping and limping. Initially I wanted to write “a flow of people running, walking, sitting down, crouching, dancing, jumping and limping were...” but I had no idea what they were doing besides what I had just said.

In the living room, on top of a painting, someone had installed a digital camera programmed to take a picture of the scene every five minutes. Supposedly, it was someone's art project to show youth decadence by time-lapse photography. When smoke did not obscure the frame, what one would see is me. Yes... that's it. A man on a mission, or so he thinks. A man spreading gospel that he invents while talking. A man who yells and screams and preaches that “numbers are letters deformed” and who tries to prove so by comparing the first sentence of *Portnoy's Complaint* with “2+2=4”. This man who will not allow any couple to kiss longer than three seconds because he believes

that the Hays Code is still in use. And finally, a man who twists his ankle because while trying to remove his shoe which is already off, almost removes his foot.

Sad facts are these. The human heat in the living room would fog the lens up and so a *flou artistique* would ensue. The art project was a huge failure – and so was the party. The party had been an intellectual orgy. Verbal harmony and nominal pandemonium, riddles and anagrams and puns and tongue twisters. “This is life” thought some, “this is hell” thought others; no one thought “this is heaven”, besides Jerome, the wanabee Fred Astaire, dancing cheek to cheek to Floriane.

A wishful thinking is a thinking nonetheless. And wishes do sometimes come true. Or is it only the wishful thinker who wishes and thinks that? Once again, the subjective question can only be answered subjectively, and yet the frustration is quite objective. Who else but oneself can we trust to decide if paranoia is the next step. Who else but oneself can we trust to decide if intuition is better than paranoia. A step into darkness equals 1+2.