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“MAN” and his Judge

Federico Arcos

1960

HE loved to feel great, triumphant and to convince himself of his majestic omnipotence. HE had a mirador built on the highest mountain with a pedestal on the center of which, as a symbol of his (triumph, stood a column which was crowned by a huge spherical glass dome. Conceited, proud, breathing deeply, satisfaction swelling HIS chest, MAN, contemplated the vast horizon all around him.

Then, thinking, said to himself: “How small is all this when compared to my greatness! Here, from my throne I realize who I am. If this height is not enough, I will climb higher into the air, strolling, placid and sovereign, over my kingdom.

“In the beginning I was inferior to other beings. I was at the mercy of animals much stronger than me. Continuous danger threatened my existence. How I had to fight to find a cave to be safe! However, from the moment I brandished a tree branch or hurled a stone to defend Myself, I began to understand the power of Nature and slowly began to grasp its secrets. I discovered fire and its flame became for me a blaze of power. That’s how I began the extension of my domain.

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“Today I have conquered oceans and continents, built expressways, I bored through mountains, crossed canals, linked oceans, crossed clouds; embraced the sky, explored space... My voice is heard simultaneously in all corners of the globe. My message has reached other planets. Whenever I so wish, I will go to the Moon, Venus, Mars. I have planned everything and interplanetary trips will soon be considered simple routine. “I am mastering the great secrets of science. I have penetrated the microscopic world. Thus, I vanquish with ease illnesses that the world did not know and that were destroying it.

“I have divided what was considered indivisible. From the compact to the ethereal, from micro to macrocosms, from the small to the tremendously large, from the indivisible to the immeasurable. My brain embraces it all. The power of the planet is at my command. I plunge into the depths of oceans and rise to the immensity of the atmosphere. I am the master of the oceans, of the earth and of the skies. I have succeeded in stopping time by shrinking distances.” Suddenly, a thundering laughter at his back made him lose the thread of his arrogant thoughts. HE turned around and saw an Old man with a long beard wearing a frayed tunic and holding a sandglass. In the Old man shining eyes HE could distinguish a look of pity and mockery. His laughter had become a tenuous ha, ha! While he was moving his head.

“Who are you who so insolently dares to mock me”, asked MAN. The Old man replied, “I am Time” and, despite your words, invincible. I am also your judge. I’ve come to remind you of your actions. To tell you what I see and which you refuse to acknowledge.

“You have forgotten names which should make you cringe with shame: Troy, Rome and its circuses, Carthage and Numance belong to that infinite list which reaches its summit with Nagasaki... Crematoriums. Temples full of riches... Filthy rich individuals... sordid dwellings... starving children.

“That explosion rising towards the clouds, do you see it? With it comes desolate extermination; it is the work of your ‘genius’.

“Over there, in that mine, a multitude of human beings are extracting from the bowels of the earth a mineral which serves to inflame your pride. What happens next? There is a rock slide in a mine shaft. A large crowd buried alive is trying to breathe. Sad agony, sad death. Sobbing desperately, whole families irrigate the ground with tears of sorrow. Meanwhile in luxurious palaces, enjoying boundless riches, insensitive to suffering and indifferent to the misery they have brought about, other human beings delight in refined pleasures. Those wars, endless and ever present, those endless massacres, that insecurity and fear in which people on your planet live, all of these, to mention just a few, are all your work.

An invisible line across the world separates human beings and hinders mutual understanding.

“Conquer. Conquer yourself, ambitious one, you who considers himself the supreme being on earth, but control your wicked insatiable thirst and minimize your pride, for the danger and complications is within yourself. You have managed to solve cosmic problems but you don’t know your own being. You’ve not yet learned to live nor to respect yourself and if you don’t learn it, soon you will perish.

“Let the echo of my loud laughter resonate intermittently in every ear and do control your steps, otherwise

“Hah! Hah! Hah!”

Then the Old man, accompanied by the echo of his laughter disappeared in the distance. Still, every so often, the echo of that “Hah! Hah! Hah!” reaches MAN’s ears.