

_suomeksi s. 80

>> DEAR MARITA,

It is a beautiful day! A new state was just born! Blessed be the sacred land in the northeast corner of my shoe. It is a topologically deformed state, I know, but it is built on a beautiful idea. It recognizes as its citizens all citizens who have been able to recognize the refugee that he or she is. Yours, Tomas Ivan

<< CONGRATULATIONS, TOMAS!

It's a beautiful idea! And ideas do have the power to mould our world. I believe we are all refugees, once we stop defining the Other in us and our fellow human beings, so the population base of your state seems quite solid. Using the same logic, I might as well admit that refugees, immigrants and the Other do not exist. If we stop defining our fellow human beings via the Other, we could destroy the basis for defining identity based on it. There would be no Other, no refugees, or we'd all be refugees. Is my point solid enough to earn me citizenship? Critically, though, the sublime is never far from the ridiculous. The strength of thoughts often lies in their absurdity. This is why I would like to know: how did you recognize the refugee in yourself? Meanwhile I wonder is my identity just an illusion or is it anchored in my hand, in the left side of my brain, in my thoughts, or perhaps in your shoe where you founded your state? Or maybe it is in the movement between thoughts and action. At least I move; I live and I write.

Yours, Marita

>> DEAR MARITA,

"The refugee in myself"? Ok, I guess I earned this pseudo-psychoanalytic session with myself. "The refugee in myself" ... the hunt starts.

>> MARITA!

I found it! Sorry for the delay, I found the answer in the Manifesto of Surrealism, André (Breton) was of great help. I just had to turn him up-

side down in order to get it! To be a refugee is to beeeeeee ...sorry, my language got somewhat infected on the way. To be a refugee is to be someone with the ability to see in the real that, that is defined as surreal. Somewhat like the NSK-state which defines itself as an "extra territorial State", capable of temporarily materialising within the space of any pre-existing state, in peaceful co-existence. Do I make any sense, because if I do not? Well, then I am a refugee? So, you would be willing to be a citizen in my state?

Yours, Tomas Ivan

<< TOMAS IVAN,

Idea. Viewpoint on reality. Freedom of the spirit as the ultimate justice. Fantasy, chance, dream, delirium, laughter, anti-establishment... And reality could well be a lie. An idea is not like a hat that you can put on or a shoe that you can wear. Tomas Ivan, I would like to know what the relationship of thinking and acting is in your state? Do you want to expand the viewpoint of your state into the reality outside your miniature world, to the social world? And will you take sides, like Jean-Paul Sartre and the 121 movement did during the Algerian war? Could we seek innovative creative visions in your state, unconventional and previously untried procedures and solutions? Throw ourselves into unknown and unpredictable worlds. Take risks and fail. And form the assumption of a "common good", which is necessary for political debate. The "common good" cannot be based only on rapidity and continuous movement, travelling lightly. Tomas, is there time in your state for reflection, meditation and dialogue?

>> DEAR MARITA,

"Life is passing by" is the only motto we have in the state. So I do not know if there is any time to seize the moment in what you call dialogue and reflection. Life in the state has somehow gone beyond that. Life doesn't seem to be something you own, now does it, it just passes by while you sit on the shore and observe. When

asking about the ambitions of my state you put the finger on a nerve. First: there is no "we" yet. Because of a certain odour, no one wants to become a citizen in my state. Is this a problem? Second: openness can as well be indifference. How should belonging and love be communicated? According to Dostojevskij, who was a wise man, only the persons we love count, and those who love us are as if they did not exist. Well, I don't seem to know who the state really loves or who loves the state. Maybe I should make a survey or create a ministry of statistics? Yours, Tomas

<< DEAR TOMAS,

So, your state has a specific territory in your shoe. Defined borders, what a relief! Simple and permanent. Or can you go on walking without getting lost? New states can emerge, new borders drawn. Tomas, I suggest you throw that smelly shoe of yours over your shoulder! Give it up at one go. I advise you to give your citizens some freedom and responsibility. If the emotional content of the place is negative and alienating – smelly, for instance – how can you identify it and make it yours in a meaningful way? Remember, anger begins when you give me something I don't want. Your problem is that you can't share your thoughts, your bread or your wine with other citizens. Perhaps herein lies an opportunity. Can you see things as everything except what they really are? Forget that you are the only citizen. Then you will be yourself with everyone else, and perhaps a bit closer to what we might call 'us'. If we are too much present, we will frighten everyone else away, because we will be unable to hear and see anything else. You talk of life passing by as the motto of your state, the importance of doing nothing. Thus, you are trying to see your state as something that it is not. Maybe this will take you nearer to truth. Think about 4'33" by John Cage. A pianist solemnly sits at a piano with the lid closed, and the audience hears everything except the piano... How do you see your own role in your state?

>> DEAR MARITA,

In the state, surreal thinking can be a way of acting. Life is also a circus in which we are all clowns, and tolerance means also extempore performance, respecting the improvisations of others as well as one's own, and accepting that whoever is acting with us may unexpectedly change his lines and reply, for example, to a declaration of love with a kitchen recipe. Acting means also this freedom of expression in matters apparently small or trivial, this sense of the world as a puppet theatre where all do as they can, comic and clumsy as is each one of us in his mortal existence, grounded like Baudelaire's albatross. On the question of my role in the state could I just be a stray dog wandering around like the stray dog in Tati's Mon Oncle? I am starting to imagine us living together in our little state of aterritoriality. But it's hard, I must say. What are you talking about Marita? In Tiananmen the state found itself facing something that could not and did not want to be represented, but that presented itself nonetheless as a community and as common life. Is this the kind of life you are referring to? A singularity that wants to take possession of belonging itself?

<< DEAR TOMAS,

How we define our community is more important than area or space. "Only the imagination can show us what can be." said Bréton the poet. So let your imagination fly. Use it to fly beyond borders, territoriality and a stationary existence as well as mobility and aterritoriality... imagine something else. I mean neither mobility nor being tied to a certain area automatically lead to self-identification or to freedom. Not freedom of the mind, nor freedom from national awareness. What is the meaning of social awareness in your state? My friend, who is the state? Perhaps in our community moral choices would not be transferred from individuals only to social institutions: the state and the authorities. Moral questions would not be neutral facts and necessities, beyond good and bad, right and wrong.

Nothing would happen in the passive form. You'd have to think about them yourself. Trying to figure what this or that means would be a necessity. If something bad happened, someone would be responsible for it. We would not have blind faith in institutions or in automatic ethical causalities. A community cannot exist without shared values, but sharing values is more of a commitment to change and openness. A community is not made up of people who agree with each other on everything, and the value-base can't be static and immutable, or the lifespan of the community is compromised and it can't be a community to the multitudes. Tomas, when there is a gap between knowledge and action, you must take the responsibility for inventing a new rule. One that does not exist yet. In other words, you must intervene, interrupt, interpose yourself. Thus you can break the conventional formula and do something contrary and surprising. Your ethics would then be based on your not knowing what you should do.

>> DEAR MARITA,

How are we to organize the political and social life of our state? Well, let me put it like this: we build a state (that is more like a ship, since it moves all the time) that is unknown and goes out to look for itself. Is this not what you are proposing by introducing the beautiful concept of unknown worlds into our state? Let the muscles of our state (or the sails if it were a ship) be an infinite process of rewriting. The unwritten laws of the gods are to be rewritten again and again to become more just human laws, even if they are to be rewritten a zillion times and even if consciousness, for every written law, demands a higher law. The tragedy is not that this process is infinite; this eternal capacity to renew itself is its strength. Is this not what we are doing right now, Marita? We are already part of something bigger.

<< DEAR TOMAS,

You have just founded your state. It is a continuous process, like life or democracy, and therein lies its strength. There is no end to history, like a

nightmare... because if it were so, there would be nothing new to say, nothing would change our perception, there would be nothing to gain, no aesthetic ambition... Perhaps life is a text that we rewrite again and again. Often we live differently from the way we write. But that does not mean we do not believe what we write or what we show. We are all interdependent, and due to this interdependence none of us can only be his own master. We are part of something bigger, but this does not necessarily mean that life is a whole. Life and division go together, as Jacques Derrida has pointed out.

>> DEAR MARITA,

Are we not being arrogant in forgetting about the earth? There was this song in Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Sonnets to Orpheus* that reminded me of something. Here it is:

XIV

We are caught up in flower, fruit and vine.
They speak to us more than the cant of the year.
From the darkness, bright manifestations rear,
shining, it may be, with a jealous shine
of the buried dead who fortify the soil.
Of their hand in this, what can we know?
It has ever been their task to make earth grow
more virile through their marrow's passive toil.

Do they do this freely? we ask...
Or does anger swell in these fruitful shoots,
begrudging us, the masters of their task?

Or are they, who slumber deep beneath the roots,
our masters, yielding an overflow none misses
of their hybrid of mute power and kisses?

When reading these lines I come upon a perception of the earth that does not live that strong in us, Marita. The dead, the living and earth, where are they in our state? The earth reveals little to us. It is not revealed and manifested as beautifully as in Rilke, now is it? It is not manifested, that is common and shareable – as it once was. And I start to wonder: are they, “who slumber deep beneath the roots” our masters, that is, are we leaving earthboundness or is it leaving us?

<< TOMAS,

By “earthboundness”, do you mean traditions and roots, the intertwining of generations? Community or belonging to a particular territory? I only hope that social awareness would triumph

over national awareness, and it does not mean rejecting the local. And I hope that neither being bound to a particular territory nor the national will become a haven against the nightmare scenarios of de-regionalization. But the earth is both yours and mine, wherever we may be. “In our deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations”, says the law of a North American Indian tribe. The living and the dead. Life and death. I'd like to say that life is inextricably entwined with death. This is a throwback to Freud, of course. The dangers of total life are obvious: Nazi Germany invaded eastern Europe because of Hitler's theory of living space (Lebensraum), and the rest is history... Roots and memory are important, but one must also learn to forget. For you must sometimes forget in order to perform, or to experience a new event. I'd also like to say that poetry can be bread and wine, tactile enough to eat and drink, an integral part of life. A poet who is not realistic will wither. And a poet who is nothing but realistic will also wither... I must inquire what the role of poetry in your state is. Plato banned poets from his Republic. He felt that poetry and poets were a threat, because they appealed to the emotions and set up the soul as a counterweight to reason. But the existence of poetry is a promise whose meaning is derived from other poems. The sanctity of poetry was shattered by Harald Bloom just like Friedrich Nietzsche shattered the sanctity of truth and Sigmund Freud the sanctity of consciousness.

>> DEAR MARITA,

My concern was a lack I felt, the lack of translation – and the “presence” of the romantic process of “Aufhebung” I sensed in for example the project of the Transnational Republic. Together, the lack and the presence aroused – angst. I was afraid the “New Man” was standing behind the curtain ready to enter the stage. The new man, he who replaces “ordinary man”: he, who is at first nothing but an empty place to be filled up with positive content. Violence – the destruction of ordinary man – was entering our state. And I realized our state is to be legitimized by positive

determination, and not on the ‘cartesian process’ of destructive purification. This leads me to your question on the role of poetry and art in our state. I start as I usually do: through a detour. When Rilke whom I cited above died in 1927, Marina Tsvetaeva wrote him a letter. Officially it is called a poem, but it was really more of a letter. Which – taking into consideration that he was dead – was and is still quite extraordinary. It starts like this: S Novym godom – svetom – krajem – krovom! *Happy New Year – world/light – boundary/country – home!* In one line she starts and ends a journey. In the process she recognizes the refugee Rilke and another refugee who has just jumped in the vehicle constructed by the words: herself. And then she ends the whole journey where else than, at home: krovom. She has come to understand a way of being in the world that is wholly “indefinite”, wholly embedded in the world, wholly open to what shows up. She is together with Rilke again. Poetic language is eventful: it has the power to make what did not exist in nature or thought, the power of setting up a world. A world within which the poets, us, live human, that is, social lives. So maybe this is in the end what our state/home is built on, simply: it is a refuge. It is not a lonely place.

<< TOMAS,

No simplifications and platitudes, but profundity and plurality of meaning. I hope that there will be a world where people still dream, and have senses to see, hear, smell, taste, feel, think, want, act and love. Which also could reunite people with places and the inner world with outer worlds. That would also mean that the gap between one person and other people could be bridged. The ‘deep song’ sensibility which Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca hailed as luminously creative and a luminous creation. For if we do not use all our senses, we amputate ourselves from each other and from the world. And there is no identity. There is only identification or self-identification as a process...

Yours, Marita

Marita Muukkonen & Tomas Träskman