

EDITORIAL

Bells and the Beast

In the editorial from September I wrote something about tastes and I thought that maybe I was not clear enough. Just in case. Do you remember the taste of your first Cola? Do you remember the taste of the first cigarette? Do you remember the taste of the first beer? Do you remember the taste of your first kiss?... This is what I meant.

But now we have arrived to the December issue and December is by excellence the month when the bells' sounds bring the winter's joy in our souls. This is one of the reasons I decided to collect in the restoration-conservation part of this issue a few papers dealing with bells' life: birth/acquiring [1], bells' activity/sounds [2] and bells' death/corrosion [3].

Bells were always used for one main reason – communication – either by sounds or by symbol. Please, imagine or even listen, if possible, the sounds of the winter bells together with my invitation to participate at the 4th European Symposium on Religious Art Restoration & Conservation that will be held between 3 and 5 May 2012 in Iasi, at the Romanian Academy's Institute 'Petru Poni'. By its nice location, professional organizing team, large area of topics and small participation fee (!), ESRARC 2012 will generously grant a meeting opportunity for everyone interested in art restoration and conservation. At the end of the present issue you may find the first circular with further details about this event, which grows with every new edition.

As I said the bells also communicate by symbol. In the Holy Bible the bells are mentioned only a few times: when is described the priest's robe for ceremony (e.g. Exodus 28.33, 39.25) "that as he went there might be a sound, and a noise made that might be heard in the temple, for a memorial to the children of his people" (Ecclesiasticus 45.9), and in Zechariah 14.20 prophesising the day when "Holy to the LORD" will be inscribed on the bells of the horses.

On the other hand, if one misspells the word bell by loosing a letter, on the searching way one will find in the Bible the Babylonian idol named Bel (Isaiah 46.1 and Jeremiah 50.2, 51.44) and even a book 'Bel and the Dragon'. The title of this book brought me unexpectedly, by the associative manner of thinking, back to the winter with a fairy tale told in front of the fire place – 'Belle & the Beast'. Obviously, in this case the feminine name comes from French (bella in Latin) meaning, as you know, beautiful.

There is no 'Belle' in the Bible but just Jezebel (1 Kings 16-21, 2 Kings 9 and Revelation 2.20). The story from 1 and 2 Kings concerns an intense religious-political struggle — the most detailed such account of any period in the

history of the Kingdom of Israel. Jezebel is introduced as a Phoenician princess married with King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom from Israel. She succeeds convert Ahab from worship of God to worship of the Phoenician god Baal. After she has many Jewish prophets killed, Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to a competition (1 Kings 18), exposes the rival god as powerless, and has the prophets of Baal slaughtered. And so, the *queen* Jezebel becomes his enemy [4].

Jezebel is the Anglicized transliteration of the Hebrew אִיזָבֵל (Izebel/Izabel). The biblical Hebrew Izabel may be rooted in a Hebrew word for 'prince/nobility' or 'husband' (bul/ba'al) combined with the word for 'naught/none' ('iy), "there is no prince/nobility/husband" suggesting a lack of character (i.e. implying lack of royal sensibilities) or of morality (i.e. divorced, implying adultery or fornication). It may also find its root in a Hebrew word for '*dung*' (note here Ba'al-zebul/Ba'al-zebus, 'Lord of dung') combined with the word 'island' ('iyz), thus the 'island of dung'.

The *queen* Jezebel also plotted to kill Naboth, *the owner of a small vineyard*, and then told Ahab to take possession of it. As punishment for this action, the prophet Elijah pronounced doom on her that "dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel" (1 Kings 21.23). The prophecy indeed happened, according to 2 Kings 9.33-37, and Jezebel's body was "like *dung* on the ground in the plot at Jezreel".

I think that all these have remained for a long time in the memory of the Jewish people if we consider that some nine hundred years later Saint John the Apostle writes to the angel of Thyatira: "You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways." (Revelation 2.20-22)

There are theologians considering that this Jezebel was in fact the wife of the local bishop [5]. Therefore, for the early Christians, a comparison to Jezebel suggested that a person was a false prophet or an apostate *masquerading* as a servant of God. Later on, beginning with the 20th century, the name Jezebel came to be associated with fallen women, in particular with promiscuity and sometimes controlling women [6].

Among many others, a well known variant of Jezebel name is Isobel. When I thought at this variant my chemist vocabulary (isomer, isotope, etc.) suggested new 'valences'. The prefix 'iso' is taken from Ancient Greek and means 'equal'. Therefore, it might be fortuitous but the meaning of Isobel in this case is that one 'equal with Bel'.

Maybe you remember from the high school classes that the isomers are compounds with the same chemical formula but with different structures and obviously with different properties. However, depending on isomerism in some cases the properties of two such compounds are similar and very difficult to distinguish, and even more difficult to separate. Examples are the optical isomers which look like the image in a mirror (levogyric and dextrogyric), but

despite to their resemblance one must keep in mind that on Earth the living organisms contain in their proteins only levogyric amino acids. The isotopes are atoms with the same position in the Periodic System but with a different number of neutrons. Accordingly, the chemical properties are almost the same but if one isotope is indispensable to support life, others are extremely noxious (e.g. iodine and nuclear plant accidents). Isobel suggests in this case a double face person, something like Stevenson's *Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide*.

But how can someone be equal with a god? One must to know making some magic tricks for this and invisibility is one of them [7]. The subject was always attractive if we remember Richard Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*, Wells' novel *The Invisible Man*, Tolkien's classic *Lord of the Rings* or the more recent book of Rowling's series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. On the other hand, as expected, scientists have also shown a growing interest during the last decade, Physics World publishing even a special issue this July on 'Tricks and techniques for making things vanish from view'. According to it, most already existing invisibility cloaks are designed to hide from view by making the radiation (visible included) to go around the respective object. Furthermore, Martin McCall and Paul Kinsler, from Imperial College of London, explained how could be possible to have cloaks that can hide objects not just in space but in time as well – 'event cloaks' [8]. They imagined, near some specified time, splitting all the light approaching the object not in space but into two parts: 'before' and 'after', with the 'before' part sped up, and the 'after' part slowed down. This would create a brief period of darkness in the stream of illuminating photons. So by manipulating how light travels in time around a region of space, we can, at least in principle, make a space–time cloak that can conceal events. With other words, such a device can stop the time for the user. It's like stopping a 3D movie, entering in the scene, and walking between the characters. Such a user would feel like being alive in a fictional world where you can do almost anything you want. Let me put it with the words of Glaucon from Plato's *Republic*, written in around 380 BC. If people could turn invisible, says Glaucon, "no man would keep his hands off what was not his own...[a man could] go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill...whom he would, and in all respects **be like a god among men**." And I am sure that if the idea works, the technology is on the way or in fact already exists.

A more important evidence of being a god is the immortality. The cloning technology could be a solution and I gave you some hints on it in my previous editorial [9]. Another possibility is the personality transfer. Would this be at least theoretically feasible? In a computer network possessing artificial intelligence this is already functioning. What about the living beings? In order to deal with this case we have to talk about the extended mind issue.

The extended mind subject is already of interest for the Science & Theology domain, Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science dedicating an entire issue to it already two years ago. First of all we have to differentiate a collective mind from a social manifestation. Social manifestation is the fact that individuals have properties that are manifest only when those individuals form

part of a group of a certain type and is specific to the evolved beings. On the contrary, a collective mind implies that a group has properties, including mental states, which are not reducible to the individual states of the individuals [10].

This problem of individual identity finally turns into a case of individual life or multiple life, interacting. Due to their behaviour, the ants and bees are the most studied from this point of view. A general accepted opinion considers that ants' behaviour is based on the use of pheromones for marking maps that could be used by all the members of the nest [11]. However, the pheromones can not totally explain the bees' behaviour, which fly for long distances and can't draw odorous maps in the air, or their perfect engineering of the honeycombs. I think that a 'wireless' contact of the members with a *queen* which is ruling the resulting virtual network server is an interesting hypothesis. This system works when you don't have enough brain/hardware for too large or secret applications and the hackers know what I am talking about. A similar example for mammals could be given by wolves. Only the alpha female is mating (by controlling the reproductive activity of the other females) and the group hunts very well synchronised. The same behaviour was observed to other species too, and has the aim to increase their survival chances. However, the differences between individuals are by far very large when compared with the ants/bees due to the different size and organisation of the nervous systems. In fact, this proves the passing from a collective mind to an individual mind and obviously, a wolf can survive alone, even if with difficulty, but an ant will never succeed it.

The humans are on the top of living beings on the Earth. Their behaviour is on the other extreme comparing with the collective insects. They are independents and possess an elaborated external language allowing them to associate each other for certain activities according to their free will and not only to their instincts. In order to make some light on this subject let's analyse a limit case: the Siamese twins. We are ready to contemplate the possibility that an ant colony, might be one single, widely distributed, physically disjoint organism, yet we are not ready to consider that Siamese twins, no matter how tightly fused they are physically, one single organism. The example illustrates how tightly interconnected and fused the questions of distributed life and distributed cognition really are. The reason we would never say that Siamese twins are one single distributed organism is that *they have two different minds* [12]. Siamese twins could share every last body part yet could still have two distinct minds.

The counterexample is the case of multiple personality disorder, where the different minds come and go, like masks, to a single human body. There are several explanations for such a situation but I remain here on only two of them. The first one considers that this behaviour might be an accidental reminiscence of the above presented instincts, the respective person acting like a receptor getting signals from different 'radio stations', which is pathologic. The second one supposes the existence of a well organised human network, similar with that of the collective insects, where the administrator (*queen*) is a powerful 'god', whose wishes are fulfilled by the joint action of its members.

Traditionally, the vehicles of thoughts are brain states. There are proposals to extend the vehicles to include not only brain states but also bionic implants that are integrated with the brains or with other bodily parts [13]. So, a person's mental processes may be constituted not wholly by brain states, but by fusions of brain and bionic states. Furthermore, if the mechanism that generates mental states and bodily performance capacity could be more widely distributed in space (beyond the head), and still be integrated so as to generate coordinated mental states and bodily function, then that would be widely distributed cognition but that would also be a *widely distributed body* [12]. Therefore, such a network could be considered as one body and implicitly one shared long life, the administrator and its members being practically immortals as long as they have enough 'hardware' where to run their 'software'. Now I see with other eyes the words of Saint Apostle Paul: "Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For '*the two*', He says, '*shall become one flesh*'" (1 Corinthians 6.16) or Medusa's head legendary image.

How would feel and behave a person member of such a network? Quite normal most of the time and deeply integrated in the human society, while its leaders tend to occupy higher positions too in order *to be like gods among men*. What about the rest of the time? Rather, is like they have the strong feeling to do something and they don't know why, they know things and they don't know where from, and even worse they don't know what they do *but they dream later* whatever they have done.

One of the great Romanian confessors of our days, who just has passed away, Father Arsenie Papacioc, describes extremely plastic such a case in a letter sent to a nun [14]. Unfortunately, I do not have the space to reproduce it in extenso, but some fragments will enlighten you.

"Who among those with the healthy mind – as said somewhere – will reach out for the glass with poison, thing that she knows." [...] "You was called by Jesus, and wounded by this love, child without oldies ability, crucified yourself together with Him and He gave you great name. Honour it. You will surely resurrect together with Him and full of Taboric light [note: *the Transfiguration feast is on the 6th of August*] your face will enjoy very much and you will not be afraid of *the shame prepared in secret* by the enemy of your Lord." And afterwards, ex abrupto: "A world cries in the time's hustle and it hurts and you cry, and Jesus cries with blood after his fallen brides, and He says: Why do you answer with pleasure to questions and shameful proposals and to Me you don't show at least a whisper?" [...] "Why do you leave me, throwing My words, but the venom full whispers, you taste them with pleasure, without worry and fear, by which the enemy of your soul is preparing *the most accomplished shame and misery to you*?" [...] "That's why he is my enemy, because he possess you, otherwise why should I care about him? You are My construction, My daughter, the bride and My *queen*..." "Also, is known that the son who parties in the world, God covers him for the prayers of the confessor, in order to avoid blaspheming God's name and disturbing humans' faith. It is, however, a hidden fight to conquer us, but the more numerous the fights the

more numerous the crowns, because the hard working soul chases away and wounds hard the evils.” And “*the honour and the crowns behove to the winners*, according to the great apostle.” [...] “But beware much not to hear the admonishing voice: ‘*Where are you when you are not inside you?*’ And, God forbid, walking bad and not making yourself sword and shaming yourself of Christ not to hear with horror: ‘Little girl, my child... why do you persecute Me?’”

Some of the well known medieval literature also gives some hints. I am not an exegete of Michele de Nostradamus but I was surprised to find that he considers the members of such a network double command machines having **hybrid tissues and souls** which use to change the body. It seems that he suggests genetically re-engineered organisms in order to become such ‘vehicles’. Dante Alighieri in his *Divine Comedy* uses as symbol the image of a chariot (*Purgatory, Chant XXXII*). In his allegory, an evil from the hell stings the chariot leaving like a bee the needle on it. As result the chariot comes to present different monstrous faces profiling from its parts and beside all rules a prostitute guarded by a beast. Could this be the description of a ‘vaccine’ from an experiment made on humans in order to produce a ‘machine nation’ (the expression belongs again to Nostradamus) – the dream of any totalitarian/communist regime? [9] Would this be the ‘new man’ mentioned by Nicolae Ceausescu his speeches? It might be, since the quite recent unveiled documents prove that terrible experiments have already been performed on humans not only by the Nazis but also in the so called ‘democratic’ countries [15]. “Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.” (Psalm 49.20)

Let’s turn now to the Bible. Do we find any evidence on the subject here? Oh yes! Please read the epistle of Saint Apostle Jude. “For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness” “**and gone after strange flesh**” (Jude 1.4, 7). They enter without decree to the temple, as Dante would say (*Purgatory, Chant XX*), because don’t “you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (Corinthians 3.16)

“Likewise also these **dreamers** defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.” (Jude 1.8) The original Greek text uses the participle ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι (enupniazomenoi, “dreaming”), which is adverbial to the pronoun οὗτοι (outoi, “these”), though the particular relationship is not clear. It could mean “while dreaming”, “by dreaming”, or “because of dreaming”. The participle ἐνυπνιαζόμενοι was also used sometimes for the visions of false prophets and this brings us back to Jezebel from Revelation 2.20. Therefore, the expression could refer both to the administrator and to the members of the network. Regarding the sexual practices mentioned in Jude 1.7, I do suspect that one of their aims was to prevent unwanted pregnancies we discussed before.

“But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.” (Jude 1.10) Because “if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.” (Corinthians 3.16, 17)

What about the free will if all these persons(?)/souls are linked together and *were marked long ago out for this condemnation*, as Saint Jude says? They are “the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling”. “These He has kept *in darkness*, bound with everlasting *chains* for judgment on the great Day” (Jude 1.6). The Greek for everlasting αἰδίοις (aidiois) can also be translated as unperceived/imperceptible or unseen (Concordant Literal Version and Jonathan Mitchell New Testament), while judgment could mean a separation, making of a distinction (Jonathan Mitchell New Testament). Accordingly, the chains represent their net and they have to wait for the Judgment Day in order to be separated and to hope for a possible individual salvation.

Trying *to be like gods among men* they just continue trying to substitute the only real God. Father Ioan Mircea develops very well this idea in his *First Romanian Orthodox commentary to the Revelation* [5, p. 194]. According to him and to the theologian sources quoted in his book we speak here about the “enormous *red dragon with seven heads and ten horns* and seven crowns on its heads” whose “ail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the Earth” (Revelation 12.3, 4). The heads and horns suggest a multiple mind structure whose members are linked together since they fall together. And Saint John’s Revelation (12. 7-10) gives further details about them and their leader who *accuses day and night, before God and the people, our brothers and sisters*. “**WOE TO THEM!** They have taken *the way of Cain*” (Jude 1.11) and “*these are the people who divide you.*” (Jude 1.19)

Obviously, Dante Alighieri also presents the situation in Inferno, Chant III. He refers to those “angels, who have not rebellious been, nor faithful were to God, but were for self”. “The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair; nor them the nethermore abyss receives, for glory none the damned would have from them. *These have no longer any hope of death*; and *this blind life* of theirs is so debased, they envious are of every other fate.” This envious attitude is one of their chains’ keys that lock any individual escaping attempt. Dante also says that they follow a banner with no marks, which is in fact the parody of the true peace makers’ white flag.

Four years ago, during a visit to the Basilica of Saint Anthony in Padua, Italy, I picked up a laminated card with the Saint’s words. “It is not the judgment of men that manifests *who we are*; men deceive and let themselves be deceived... *Everyone is valued as he is worth before God* and not more... There is nothing in this world more precious than *liberty*, but you can not attain it if you do not dominate your instincts. Every man is ‘*king*’ in as much as he knows how to dominate himself.” And when one can’t dominate his/her instincts, one must return with *sincerity* toward God because “what is impossible with man is possible with God” (Luke 18.27) and “I will punish Bel in Babylon and make him spew out what he has swallowed” says God (Jeremiah 51.44). But you must keep in your mind that no one can be **SINCERE** with God that he has not seen, as long as he is a liar with his neighbour that he knows.

This editorial was not written to offend in anyway anyone who was baptised with the name Jezebel or any of its variants, but it aimed to identify some the evil's expressions, just to quote from Cristina Gavriluță's article published in this issue of EJST [16], while personally speaking, Belle is the beast of my life.

Finally, as usual, I take this opportunity to wish you, for all the support I felt and received, from the bottom of my true heart, in the chronological order of the coming events: a blessed Advent time, a Happy New Islamic Year, a Happy Hanukkah feast and a Merry Christmas along with peace and prosperity in 2012.

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