

# The prelude of the fools

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The big theater of reason had announced its new play in a massive advertising campaign. All critics were quite enthusiastic, even though few of them gave hints on the contents, or maybe even fewer would have been able to give such hints. The theater was fully booked, and the audience, an enormous audience, was awaiting the play in restive silence. Most had overlooked that the management had scheduled a prelude, a side show before the main act. Such side shows were an opportunity for younger and less experienced actors and actresses to show their performing skills to a mature audience. When the audience realized that they had been tricked into watching a warm-up, some drew faces and looked at their neighbors. The more experienced theatergoers smiled condescendingly as the actors showed on the stage. The play was to be 'The prelude of the fools' and thus, even in its very title, indicated its transitory nature. The mood of the audience changed, however, when they became fully aware of the human scenery. There was a parade of fantastic costumes, glittering and colorful attire beyond the media-trained scope of imagination. The fools came with checkered tights and fancy headgear that sounded bells or birdsong or trumpets and flutes. Medieval jesters paraded side by side with circus clowns. And suddenly their parading stopped, and they took to dancing. The choreography was perfect, the actors' and actresses' bodies reminded of young muscular animals of prey, as they turned from enacting movement to becoming movement itself. The audience was enthused and developed storms of acclaim at unexpected moments, with only the most mature and sober snobs holding back in order to save their energy for the main show. Let us shut the chapter of the age of reason, let us welcome the age of the fools. As the dancing went on, with new fools entering the scene every now and then, many a blonde with perm curls nudged their neighbors, as only the girls with perm curls can, with an infallible instinct for the worst occasion to nudge. Look, the minstrels, look, the bear on the bicycle. Look, the colored dragons. And indeed, three dragons entered the scene, the green dragon, the red dragon, and the turquoise dragon who had been

black when he was younger. And the three staged a rough-and-tumble fight, exhaling their colored toxic fumes and shooting rockets of fire into the air. Hardly anyone noticed that they carefully avoided hitting each other with their fiery breath. Minstrels, jesters, clowns kept their distance as the fight continued, as the stage kept widening as it were to absorb the outer world. When the Eastern princesses entered the scene, with their crowns of colored glass stones, the audience held their breath. Their marble legs and their ebony hair sufficed to seduce many a dreaming bachelor in the theater stalls. They waltzed around and around, with more and more men hopping onto the stage, touching and being touched, fused into pairs of revolving bodies. The audience did not notice that the dancing pairs one by one disappeared behind the scene. The waltz with the princesses was a dance of death. If death is so beautiful, then give us death. Long live death. At this point, an emcee got hold of the microphone and sounded a warning. Do not provoke the dragons, always remain seated, all of this is meant to be fun, please keep it that way. The audience had learned their Timothy Leary lesson well. Always go with the flow, otherwise you develop a bad trip. And all went with the flow and enjoyed. There was just this little boy who wanted to get a better view of the princesses and the dragons. He did not want to resist. The dragons spew their fiery fumes at him and burned him to death. The toxicity did not anesthetize the boy, it rather heightened his awareness and added to his pain. His cry of agony echoed in distant glaciers and seashores. The colorful haze, however, that engulfed the theater made this cry sound like a nightingale's song. Or was it the lark. We had enough of freedom, please take this burden off our shoulders. All freedom is serfdom.

The audience was still enormous, and it may even have grown during the performance. Look, whispered a nudging girl with perm curls, the medicine men. And indeed, the medicine men entered the scene in white clouds that burst through the colored haze. Spinning around their axes like wild, they purged the sins from the scene. They were all clad in the purest white, from their shoes to their caps, the color of cleansing. And the color of death. Health is the safest journey to the beyond. They are gods, are they not, commented the beatnik hypochondriacs and tapped the rhythm with their heels of rain-forest wood. O brave new world that has such people in it. Entered the magicians with their complex pin-pointed hats and stretched out their hands in a chain like free-floating DNA. Whoever was touched by them added to the chain. Yes, please, take us with you and cure us of our petty happiness. There is no sustainable happiness without a computer screen. Lock us into your circle, everyday everywhere, midnight to midnight, never leave us unprotected.

In order to grant their eyes a moment of relief, some spectators occa-

sionally withdrew their gaze from the stage and scanned the audience. Such scans encountered a surprise. Vacant seats were spreading between people, while rows of seats kept expanding to all horizons. Most people wore masks over their mouths, their eyes, their brains and their genitals. Keep us out of amusement parks. Only suffering can bring true amusement. Keep us out of museums. The only true exhibit is emptiness. Burn our bridges, seal our paths back to where we came from. We are all in this together, are we not.

Alas, warned the emcee, we are not ready yet. I can only baptize with fire, the main act will baptize with power. Do not leave now, or you will miss the best of the show. And the audience applauded and staid on. We do not want serfdom any more, we want slavery. Only slavery can bring true freedom. Only death can bring back true lives. In fact, nothing ever has changed. Orgasms always have happened on-line. Borders have never been open. People have always been tied to the ground. Same as it ever was. Public space has never existed, as space was never meant to be public. Space will henceforth be private to the select few with special passes. Our brains are clean, just as they always have been. This world has never existed. The magicians and medicine men would never have allowed it to exist. The world was always virtual. Truth was always a fake. And the fools referred to in the title of the play were never meant to be the actors and actresses.

Of course, at this point nobody could have left the show. The ground around the theater had been spiked with landmines. Night had fallen in the meantime, a grand black night with twinkling stars. The fields had been plowed and were well prepared for a new seasonal cycle. The sowing season had arrived. The main actors were already waiting in the wings. Their sub-machine guns were freshly charged, and their skulls freshly shaved. Some blank spots on their helmets reflected the limelight. And the earth was thirsty for human blood.