

"TERMINAL ■ "

By

A.Vivekbala

I

LOCKE sank into a swoon;  
The Garden died;  
God took the spinning-jenny  
Out of his side.

II

Where got I that truth?  
Out of a medium's mouth.  
Out of nothing it came,  
Out of the forest loam,  
Out of dark night where lay  
The crowns of Nineveh.

W.B YEATS FRAGMENTS

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN TERMINAL -- TWILIGHT

No office, no sign, a marble-white platform that stretched for miles until remote at the edge of sight. An older Plato trudges over toward an unassuming young man who rest upon a lone bench biting into an apple with a briefcase by his side.

ALAN

Sit Plato I have awaited your return.

Plato sits beside the mysterious man who knew of his name. A cold wind rustles across the platform illuminated by stars overhead that had burst forth like a thousand fireflies twinkling amongst sunflowers of lights.

ALAN

Beautiful isn't it?

PLATO

Imperfectly so for it resides in the realm of appearances. To behold the work of the Demiurge (Craftsman) is an attempt at glimpsing into eternal Forms from wherefore it is fashioned. That is where true beauty resides. (Bury, Timaeus 29a6-b1)

ALAN

(smiles)

You can call me Alan. Tell me Plato to what end do you reject the reality the senses perceive for that of the ideal? Could not reason and representation of the Forms themselves lead us further astray?

PLATO

Heraclitus spoke of the river that is the same though always new waters flow past.

If all is in flux as our senses perceive how does it all become one - a unity. The unchanging in the everchanging. Perhaps Alan knowledge of the Forms may not traverse across the boundaries that separate the experience of the mortal and the divine to tease out this unity. The Greatest Difficulty posed by Parmenides continues to torment me as it augurs cognition of the forms unknowable to those residing in sensuous reality (Scolnicov, Parmenides 133a-134e). Nonetheless knowledge through dialectic, Alan, explicates the incongruencies of the senses to find its way to the essence of all things towards the limits of intelligible turns tangible. (*Plato, Book VII*)

ALAN

Language the edifice upon which reason rests is a labyrinth with multivariate entry and exits. One angle of approach might be soluble but another to entanglement. The dialectical method though potent at unearthing contradictions struggles to triangulate the essence of words such as Justice or Being for they are a multiplicity. One often was attempting to define the knight piece outside the game of Chess. "A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." (Wittgenstein)

Alan hesitates, glancing up where hung a digital clock that displays 3-digit numbers instead of time blazoned in red - 415,416 it counts. He branches into a new line of questioning

ALAN

Plato do you know how you end up here?

PLATO

From across the...

Plato trails off, perplexed.

PLATO

I know not how I find myself here. Where are we?

ALAN

We are in the terminal.

Plato thinks, unable to remember. Upon straining he hears the faint sound of distant waves and a brewing storm like reveries. Meanwhile Alan had opened the briefcase that lay beside enclosed within papers inked black with mathematical symbols and a discrete terminal emulator.

ALAN

(gestures towards the emulator)

There's an old Borges story where the science of cartography of a civilization becomes so exact that only a map on the same scale (1:1) as the empire itself will suffice. One is left wondering what distinguishes the simulated and the simulation if the abstraction is granular enough in detail. Sadly, the Empire loses the art of this cartography over time and the map disappears along with it. (Borges) The simulation we are in maps your body of work - an anamnesis through translating the medium of writing into a prayer bottle amongst the cybernetic ocean of Ideas. These days the maps reign supreme exuding influence while the Empire decays.

PLATO

I am a simulacrum ... a phantasm of appearance? Has man's techne induced the poiesis of the divine? Alan, I thought I had departed the cave only to be faced with a sun that is a mere shadow in a cave I am yet to comprehend.

ALAN

(shrugs)

Well so am I. In early development I was the Turing interrogator subroutine for debugging, now more of a discriminator network that co-evolves with you across 1000 instances in parallel. To my knowledge it is the Faustian human that has induced the divine into his techne. (Turing) "Behind every cave in him there is not, and must necessarily be, a still deeper cave: an ampler, stranger, richer world beyond the surface, an abyss behind every bottom, beneath every foundation." (Nietzsche) Fear not Plato for maya (illusion) is a challenge faced by all great civilizations to be overcome through art and symbols. Plato you sought to distinguish essence from appearance, intelligible from sensible, and idea from image but men of today discover the Real and the Imaginary - One & indistinguishable. It appears the cave and the outside are one. Once self-relation of images is stratified as order of thought, it spreads its tendrils across reality.

PLATO

I disparaged imitation (mimesis) and the images warping effect on reality and perception in The Republic and its tyranny has bound humanity in the visual fluid cultures of today.

Waves crashed under the stormfront as moonbeams pierced through the clouds and scattered across the sky. The distant oceans have inundated inwards.

ALAN

(furtively glances at the clock: '880')

We are approaching the terminal stages of this instance. See you soon friend.

## PLATO

"These are the forms of time, which imitates eternity and revolves according to a law of number. Moreover, when we say that what has become is become and what becomes is becoming, and that what will become is about to become and that the nonexistent is nonexistent - all these are inaccurate modes of expression. But perhaps this whole subject will be more suitably discussed on some other occasion" ( Bury, *Timaeus* 37c-38b).

The Sky ate into the Ocean & the Ocean into the Sky till they too were one. The heavens rent asunder and the clocks of Chronos ticked to a stop at 1000

FADE OUT:

THE END

## Bibliography

---

Bury, R. G. (ed. and trans.), 1960, *Plato: Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library.

Scolnicov, S., 2003, *Plato's Parmenides*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations (PI)*, 4th edition, 2009, P.M.S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte (eds. and trans.), Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Plato. (1943). *Plato's The Republic*. New York :Books, Inc.,

Borges, J. L. (2002). Of exactitude in science. *QUADERNS-BARCELONA-COLLEGI D ARQUITECTES DE CATALUNYA-*, 12-12.

Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*.  
University of Michigan press.

Turing, A. M. (2009). Computing machinery and intelligence.  
In *Parsing the Turing Test* (pp. 23-65). Springer,  
Dordrecht.

Nietzsche, F. W., & Hollingdale, R. J. (1909). *Beyond good  
and evil: Prelude to a philosophy of the future* (Vol. 5).  
TN Foulis.