

Thou shalt not love thy neighbour

Gustavo Ariel Schwartz

For Martín Caparrós

God couldn't get to sleep that morning and she wasn't even aware of it. It wasn't that she was nervous; it was just that she wasn't aware of it. If she had known about that moderate form of non-being that the little beasts, a few centuries, a few hours later, would start to call dreaming, the story of her day would have been quite different. God's ignorance always had appalling consequences. [A day in the life of God – Martín Caparrós – Seix Barral, 2001]

Although God formed part of a well-to-do family, her whims, her restless character, and especially, her impertinence towards the “architects” of the world order had condemned her to the appallingly dull task of creating possible worlds. This was a monotonous, almost humiliating job, that promised little or nothing. However, she slowly began to notice that the fact that her job was irrelevant allowed her to experiment freely. Hardly anyone asked her for explanations about what she was doing. God had the curious ability, considering her extraordinary ignorance, to find pleasure where others only saw tedium and boredom.

She then began to experiment with regard to what was to be her masterpiece. She would show all these old codgers once and for all what she was capable of. Her early attempts were clearly crude and showed very little knowledge of the subject. Cold stars, flat planets that drifted around lost in space and black holes didn't seem to point in the right direction. But little by little she would gradually find her own style. And when we say “her own”, this is in the strict sense of the expression. The fact that she worked on her own in total isolation and lacked a suitable intellectual environment

would inevitably mark the fate of her work. However, utterly oblivious to these considerations, she stubbornly tried to hone her style.

Those balls of rock that now rotated around red-hot stars seemed to have more future than her prior attempts. It was then, a few hours afterwards on her long day, when chance, one of the many things that God knew nothing about, made its appearance and life emerged on one of those balls of rock. God, in surprise, observed the phenomenon with great interest. She was thrilled with the result of her experiments, as if she herself had had something to do with it, and she carefully followed how these creatures evolved. Although God wasn't particularly perceptive, she didn't take long to realise the turn that events were taking. Although these creatures were primitive, they wandered about as they pleased and hadn't the slightest idea that God existed. As insecure and vain as she was, God couldn't allow herself to be snubbed like that and decided to intervene personally.

After several fruitless attempts she managed to create a little beast that she thought was pleasant enough and basically fulfilled her wishes. She then decided to live with him for a while and indoctrinate him into worshipping her before she finally allowed him not to be. Everything was going according to plan until God began to become curious about the little beast's fifth limb. Something about it attracted her and she didn't know exactly what it was, but she couldn't stop thinking about it either. The little beast, who for the first time felt rather proud of himself and realised that he had a certain degree of power over her, wandered about flaunting what she most desired and wagging that obscure object of desire around all over the place. It was obscure, because the little beast, just like God herself, was black. This story inevitably ended up with the little beast in an ecstatic climax, and God with a pleasurable sensation that she never ever managed to repeat or explain. The little beast got carried away and hoped to repeat

the experience with every God he came across, but there was no God but her, and the little beast no longer had any interest in her. God, for her part, felt an indescribable urge to repeat that experience, but he always refused. Jealous and about to go crazy, God decided to get rid of the little beast; however, in a fit that reflected a perverse mind, God decided instead that rather than killing him it was better to condemn him to suffer eternally. So she conjured up a companion for the little beast in her own image and likeness, so that he could never forget her, and condemned them to experience unrequited passion for ever. Then God expelled them both from her abode and tried rather unsuccessfully to forget about the subject. The little beasts continue their lives, loving and suffering just as God had arranged. However, God's curse did have an unexpected side effect: thanks to this the little beasts nowadays enjoy poetry, literature, art, and of course, psychoanalysis.

Göteborg, 30th of August 2003

San Sebastián, 5th of January 2007

*This short story is part of the book "The other side" published by Amazon.
Non-commercial reproduction is allowed by citing the author and the source.*

gustavo.schwartz@csic.es
<http://cfm.ehu.es/schwartz/english/>
<http://gustavoarielschwartz.org>