

The beauty of the unpredicted... Hidden Third

Hélène Fau

“Every cloud has a silver lining”. This combination of words, in that very order, was given to me by a Welsh teacher called Mrs Gammon. A middle-aged lady I happened to know when I worked as a French assistant at a comprehensive school in Bridgend (Wales) more than 30 years ago. A dark haired middle-aged lady with sparkling blue eyes who used to give me a lift back to Porthcawl where I then lived. On one afternoon, while looking at fast moving clouds, pierced by magnificent sunbeams, Mrs Gammon suddenly said: “Every cloud has a silver lining, you should never forget it, young lady”. I never did. This set of words has always accompanied me so far. And will always do. No doubt. I wonder whether Mrs Gammon knows it, wherever she is now. She might well do, for somehow she had the aura of an oracle. A very cosmic aura reaching beyond binary.

In the last weeks, or even months, where heavy clouds seemed to weigh down on us, I dwelled even longer on the silver linings Mrs Gammon had once pointed out to me. I imagined myself sitting on a luminous edge with my feet dangling down into a benevolent void, happily drifting away from too much knownness, happily heading towards the unknown, the unpredicted, the Hidden Third.

The flight to beautiful Romania at the end of February and the teaching at the Universitatea de Vest in Timisoara had been planned. But what followed had not. And although it was embedded in the context of this pandemic disease we have all lived with for a while now, it kept revealing silver linings to all the eyes I had been given and I was now consciously looking through.

The emptiness of the streets in Sibiu and Brasov intensifying my perception of the stunning architecture and culture history had implanted there. The clear-cut snowy mountains floating upon the halo of a less polluted air at an almost reachable distance. The hike into the forest at Paltinis in the vicinity of invisible but fathomable bears. The walk to the hard-to-find grave of Constantin Noica. The surreal drive back to Timisoara, from Brasov, in only four hours in order to arrive before curfew and, above all, before the enactment of the new proclaimed measures. The cancellation of the flight back to Francfort and the unexpected time allotment it gave me.

Silver linings shining to me. Glimpses of the Hidden Third.

The way back to Germany, two weeks later, was as unpredicted as all the happenings listed above. From Timisoara it led me to Cluj, from Cluj to Malmö, from Malmö to Stockholm, from Stockholm to Francfort, from Francfort to Saarbrücken. Three more encounters magically honed the beauty of this unpaved way back and guided me through. The radiant cleaning lady at Malmö Central Station who generously offered her help with the complexity of the train-ticket selling machine ; the friendly customer at a grocery shop who kindly paid for my errands in Swedish crowns; the joyful Wasa and her daughter, Juline (and their in-box turtles!), who directed me to the right train at Stockholm Södra Station.

But the most wonderful companion of all is Reghina, my unique and dearest friend in Timisoara, and her inexhaustible, heart-warming, hospitality in all these unexpected situations we went through. And, of course, all her friends, who crossed my way.

Whatever happens next, this was. This is.

A myriad of unprecedented, unexpected, unpredicted beauties.

Cosmic bonds. Simply unforgettable. Truly immortal.