

A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION

We are in one of the main hotels of Daruvar, where a conference of the commercial representatives of the European country-members is taking place, aiming at the promotion of their local products.

After an exhausting meeting the delegates are resting at the hotel lounge. They 're discussing, reading, drinking coffee, watching TV.

The Czech representative of porcelain and Bohemian crystals **Mrs Helena Koubova** is thoughtfully watching the international news report and she addresses herself to the rest of the delegates:

"-My friends, I can't stand watching the news any more. All of the world is in constant turbulence. Wars, conflicts, demonstrations and riots everywhere. Human rights are suppressed all around the world. When will we live peacefully on this planet?"

The Greek delegate of olive oil and edible olives, **Mrs. Alexandra Philippides** answered:

"-I 'm not pessimistic, but this situation will not change as long as human nature remains the same. This is not just my own viewpoint. It was outlined by our ancient historian, Thucydides who believed that humans always remain the same with their passions and flaws. In time of war these passions are so intense that they can degrade them to brutality where personal interest and the right of the mightier prevails and every moral value is set aside.

At that point the Croatian delegate **Mrs. Jana Gaspar**, vice mayor of Daruvar ,responsible for the touristic development and promotion of the thermal springs of her town cut in:

-“ You are right my dear. Others’ exploitation, inequality and greed always lead to conflicts, so let me tell you an old story of my country: a long time ago in the town of Motovun people used the last giant, called Joze, as a surf. Joze carried wood stones cut trees pulled people’s barges on the river and his reward was an ox per week. However, the citizens of Motovun instead of thanking him for his services, made fun of him and threw balls of muddy hay in his mouth. So, when the Venetian governor Barbabianka, who had met Joze in the Istrian mountains, asked from the Motovun authorities to take him back to Venice, they accepted and wished Joze a safe trip”

JOJE:

-“I’m Joze the serf. I never managed to go to Venice. During our voyage a terrible storm broke out , I jumped into the sea and I was washed ashore at cave Raska. To my surprise, while I thought I was the only giant left I found twenty more and we built a wooden town, Dogheaded.

We cultivated our land and we were free and happy. On the contrary, hunger and poverty struck Motovun because they had no serfs to work for them. They came to our town begging us to go back but we refused and sent them away giving them gold. As they were greedy and predatory they attacked us for our gold but they failed. They were so possessive that some of them became our own serfs. Civetta did not like it at all and he did everything within his power to contaminate me with human passions.

I became so greedy and cruel that I wanted to have everything for myself. The rest of the giants opposed me and during one of our conflicts I killed my companion Liberat. How ashamed I am of myself. How did I end up like this? Right then all of the giants realized that we could not

handle our own freedom so we agreed to become serfs again. I am so miserable. I messed up. Now I'm waiting for sly Civetta to lead me back to slavery.

Jana Gaspar goes on:

- Civetta went back to Motovun dragging Joze like a dog. On discerning the sea in front of him the defeated giant remembered that he had sworn to the giant slave Ilija not to lose his freedom and vanished into thin air!!

Right then Helena Koubova noticed:

- "Handling one's liberty is really difficult. The French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre was right when he wrote : "We are doomed to be free." Luckily there are laws which regulate people's disagreements.

- "Yes, but laws are not enough in a society. They have to be obeyed by everyone" Ahmet Oglou stated, the Turkish representative of handmade carpets, who was listening to the discussion and wanted to take part".

The discussion becomes more spirited. More and more delegates are watching and want to participate. Among them is the Romanian representative of the traditional drink palinka Michael Ioneskou, who intervenes:

- "I totally agree with you because a long time ago a Dracula ruled our country who had imposed very strict laws upon his subjects. These laws were just but very hard because the only punishment for any kind of misdeed was death penalty. No one dared to break the Dracula's laws.....

DRACULA:

-“ I am so proud and contented. In my kingdom honesty prevails. My subjects are so lawful that nobody is thinking of stealing the golden cup which I have put on display in Targoviste square. Since anyone can drink from it, why steal it?

However, yesterday I was disturbed when a foreign merchant requested an audience. He begged for justice claiming that 160 golden ducats were missing from his wagon which he had left unguarded during the night.

I was mad at the thoughtless who had dared to break the law. I also wanted to put to test the foreign merchant’s honesty. So I ordered for 161 ducats to be placed from my treasury in the merchant’s cart.

Next morning the merchant came back and reported to me that he had found an extra ducat. I praised him and told him that if he hadn’t reported the extra ducat he would have been impaled alongside the thief who meanwhile had been caught.”

Jana Gaspar cut in saying:

- **“I commend Dracula for his justice but I don’t approve of his cruelty. Could this be due to the fact that he is a man? I believe that if the world was governed by women, things would be different. A woman’s sensitivity would never allow for such cruelty”.**

At that point **Helena Kubova** intervened:

- **“My dear friend let me tell you a story from my country which does not really flatter me since I am a woman, but unfortunately proves the opposite about the way women handle power. In the very old times Bohemia was ruled by Libuse who was both a prophet and judge. When she died, her husband Premysl, who was a prophet and farmer, took over. Since then, men started making fun of women and girls who had lost power. Enraged, women set young Vlasta**

as their leader, built their castle, Devin, and got ready to fight against men.....

VLASTA:

-“We lost power and men mocked and ridiculed us. In no time, I gathered every woman and girl and asked them to take swords and bows in order to fight men. We built castle Devin and got ready for war.

Men foolishly didn’t take us seriously. They attacked our castle but we defeated them and killed 300 of them. We don’t care if they are our husbands or fathers. We just want them to hand in power. We use every possible means, violence or trickery.

This way we killed the hero Ctirad who was set up by beautiful Sarka. What a foolish! We wanted to help her and suffered a tragic death. His body was broken in the wheel. This is what he deserved.

Now men are enraged and they are not willing to put up with our crimes any more. They are after us so I must hurry to lead my army against them.”

Helena Kubova:

- “Then men longing for revenge, confronted women and killed Vlasta in a battle. Without their leader, the women were defeated and men slaughtered them with no mercy. That was the end of the woman's war. Law and order were restored and Premysl ruled alone without women.

-“Your story is really sad” remarked Michael Ioneskou.

-“I never believed that women would display such cruelty for the sake of power. The fierceness of war in its glory. Your historian was absolutely right Alexandra.

However, what enrages me most about war is that young people

perish. So, since people subordinate to their passions isn't there God, Divine Powers to avert such futile bloodsheds?"

- "Watch your language my friend "Mehmet Oglou cut in.

- "Gods are never to blame for humans' thoughtlessness. Divine Powers always punish arrogance and reward piety. The same happened with our hero Delu Dumrul.

Delu Dumrul was a lad well-known for his bravery. He had built a bridge over a dry river and he asked for toll from everyone who wanted to cross it. He wanted to challenge everyone to fight against him because he thought he was the bravest of all.....

DELU DUMRUL:

- "Be blessed Almighty Allah he spared my life despite my recklessness. While I was guarding my bridge, heartbreaking wail disturbed my peace. Some nomads who had camped nearby mourned the loss of a young boy. The red-winged Azrail took his life by the order of Almighty Allah.

I was mad with anger and full of insolence and arrogance that I challenged Azrail to fight against me.

But Allah was so infuriated that he commanded Azrail to appear before me and take my life or fight against me. At the sight of Azrail I paralyzed. I realized my weakness and humiliated I asked for forgiveness. However, it was only Allah who could show mercy. With humility and piety I prayed to Him. He was pleased and he was willing to spare my life if I found someone to take my place.

But life is so sweet that neither my father nor my mother was willing to lose their lives for me. Only my beloved wife accepted but I can't live without her."

Mehmet Oglou:

-“Just then Almighty and Merciful Allah found the solution ; he ordered Azrail to take the lives of his parents right away and granted Delu Dumrul and his wife 140 years of extra life:

-“That’s a very didactic story Mehmet ” Alexandra Phillipides said.

- “ I totally agree with you. Divine Powers always reward people’s piety humility and diligence.

So to say , in the very old times there was in my country a village where Erectheas was its king .Its citizens were pious and had especially developed shipping , pottery and commerce .

Omniscient Zeus ,the father of Gods and all humans, knew that some day this village would become a glorious city .He then decided that Neptune , the God of the sea, and Athena the Goddess of Arts and wisdom would compete for the name of this city . Whoever of them offered to its citizens the most useful gift would offer his name to this city.

Neptune hit his trident against the ground and an impressive horse emerged from the earth .

Athena kneeled, planted a small seed and right away a huge olive tree grew

ATHENA :

- “ I am Athena , the Goddess of wisdom .

I offered my name to this city , which is now called Athens.

I beat Neptune because his present would make these people cruel and warlike .

My own gift , the olive tree , will be a symbol of peace , wealth and glory . Olive oil and olives will support Athenians healthily and they will spread its cultivation all around the Mediterranean .

As for this land, it will some day become the most glorious city in the whole world and thousands of years later the capital city of Greece”.

Mehmet Oglou:

-“So, the olive tree is a symbol of peace and glory. Now I understand why ancient Greeks used to crown the winners of the Panhellenic races with an olive-tree wreath and they agreed on truce among them during the races.

I wish we had the same customs nowadays. Wars would limit dramatically.

Alexandra Philippides:

- ‘My friends, this discussion kept for too long and has tired me. Let us imitate my ancestors, the ancient Greeks. They always accompanied their philosophical discussions at symposiums with food and drink.

I suggest that we go on with our discussion sitting over there, enjoying the majestic view of the thermal springs of Daruvar.

But what can I see? There is a Turkish carpet laid on the floor, a masterpiece of your art! Isn’t that right Mehmet?

Michael, get us, if you have no objection, to taste some palinka, your traditional drink.

I will take part in the symposium by offering the food. Olives and choice delicacies made of olive oil.

Helena, you could bring those renowned Bohemian porcelain dishes and glasses to serve ourselves!

After a while the table has been set and the five representatives make a toast standing:

-Good Health

-Friendship

-Cooperation

-Peace

-Development

Cheers and so long!