

The Music of Forgetting

By [Mr. Z](#)

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I remember when we first came to this small Mexican island in the Caribbean. The pace of life was very slow and time seemed to spiral, not chug straight ahead. It seemed as if local people far outnumbered visitors, most of whom came for the off-beat rhythm of life. The days floated by as did the people along the narrow streets, in and out of the little cafes and aqua water as if everyone were a sea bird soaring on the up notes and dancing down with the swaying palms. Celestial music filled the air.

Now that we have returned to the place where destiny conceived me and I sit on the sandy shore looking out to sea, cut off for a few days from the news of another war and the endless staged propaganda pouring from the Western media about Ukraine – being out of touch, so to speak – I contemplate the sea’s musical cadence as it breaks on the shore under the rising sun. The beach is deserted except for some singing birds and me. I am for the birds, heart and soul. They are beautiful spirits.

Then he appears from the rear out of the coconut palm trees and dense flowering gardens. A man armed with a drone and his Barbie Doll. He launches his mechanical bird over the water while his lady friend prances and poses for its camera. He shoots her again and again, as if once were not enough to still her mechanical gestures.

I need no entrails to read this early sign. Yet the Sphinx asks me its riddle anyway: What at first can’t grasp its own image, then learns to see it, and finally can see nothing else?

I get up and walk away down the beach. When I look back, the drone man and his doll have disappeared. The rosy-fingered dawn, like a radiant monstrosity on the altar of the world, returns me to reality and I plunge into Aphrodite's warm waters. I float in her arms. I swim and forget. With each stroke of my pen the waters of forgetfulness grow stronger, and I turn on my back and spout winged words of joy and adoration.

Many people have heard of Friedrich Nietzsche, and even many more, whose numbers are growing, have not. Quite a few, who have, probably think he is a dead rapper and others, just some crazy artist like Van Gogh. His general reputation is that of a dark and depressing thinker who went mad. This negative reputation even holds for many somewhat familiar with his writing, the so-called educated classes who readily believe the media's lies and erroneously associate him with supporting Nazis while they embrace the Nazis in Ukraine.

I have little doubt that this rejection of Nietzsche, based on their groundless "knowledge," is because he told his truths that few want to hear, because he long ago grasped what people would become. And it's not a pretty picture, which all the self-images they take and worship reveal.

Nietzsche was obsessed with the theater and the theatrical nature of life. Not in its aesthetic sense or theater on a literal stage, but life itself. At the core of this was the actor, what was an actor, who was an actor, and what did it mean to act or to be "a genuine actor," if possible. This was because he saw acting as imitation at the core of epistemology, the fundamental issue of knowledge and reality.

In his own way, he was true to ancient Greek philosophy whose core theme was the relationship between Being and Seeming. "To stamp on Becoming the nature of Being" was his goal, which flipped the terms in a way that offers little solace to those who act as if their knowingness is not groundless and imitative, and their acting not a feigned relationship with reality. Unable to play the music of forgetting, he knew they would turn on their false selves with every weapon at their disposal.

Ah reality, here, with the sun risen, she comes down the beach with exposed buttocks quivering and cell phone and tripod in hand. She sets her camera up and smiles at the machine in pose after pose. She is so beautiful she tells herself and sees nothing else but her grotesque smiling image. And she comes every morning to this stage of sand to play her part for an audience of one.

Later, with the sun at its zenith, hordes of actors arrive with their image-making machines. They primp and pose on the sand and in the sea, holding their little mechanical gods high above the water as they walk out up to their necks in the water, grinning and clicking their visages. The sea bobs with hundreds of unreflective skulls, a watery cemetery for modern times.

They are students in what Eduardo Galeano calls "the looking-glass school" where ignorance is the rule:

There are no admission exams, no registration fees, and courses are offered free to everyone everywhere on earth as well as in heaven. It's not for nothing that this school is the child of the first system in history to rule the world.

In the looking-glass school, lead learns to float and cork to sink. Snakes learn to fly and

clouds drag themselves along the ground.

This is the world of nihilists that Nietzsche knew would come to dominate, the self-regarding ones for whom the world does not exist beyond the masks they wear to face the faces that they face.

“Are you genuine?” he asked. “Or merely an actor? A representative? Or that which is represented? In the end, perhaps you are merely a copy of an actor?”

Yes, I think, copies of copies of copies without end. Nothing original, for that would suggest the groundless freedom of becoming when you forget yourself and move only to the music.

It is sardonically comical to observe these actors playing the part of Dionysian people – those who once in their forgetfulness could live out life’s tragedy but who are now nearly extinct – parasitically imitating that which they cannot be or comprehend. They cannot forget or open their eyes to reality because they must remember how to act, to imitate all the images, and perform their lives in front of their mirrors. Do they think their machines can stop time for them, freeze their becoming, or “make memories” that prevent them from dying?

I remember coming here when it wasn’t so, or at least when the performances were not so blatant. The cell phone has unlocked the largely unconscious secret of the masses: That feigning is all we can do, but since we are doing it blatantly, it is real. We are real fakes.

The world has been turned inside out and upside down. Some know it, most don’t, and then there are those who play the music of forgetting where each note, each word is forever new, a gift out of the blue.

As for me, my name is Diego Sandoval, but my name it means nothing. I come from this island, at least my parents told me I was conceived here when they were traveling to Cuba from Mexico City. My father fought with Fidel, but Fidel knocked him out. They had met in Los Angeles when Fidel was in Hollywood to make his movie debut and my father, who was a psychiatrist, was hired by the production company to analyze the acting because the film took place in a mental hospital where even the staff was crazy. It was an unusual movie for its time. It wasn’t a comedy, but my father laughed at one scene where Fidel, who was playing a young staff psychiatrist, flubbed his lines. I never knew what my father found so funny, but Fidel was incensed and punched my father. When my father woke up, he thought he was a patient in the hospital and Fidel was his doctor. So many role reversals. Fidel also woke up soon thereafter, abandoned Hollywood for a better role. He became a genuine actor in a different world.

Anyway, that’s the story my father told me, but being a psychiatrist, he often made stuff up. He often wove tall tales to entertain me. He loved magic and considered himself quite an amateur magician. I guess my interest in acting started then.

Nietzsche? Maybe that began when I was fourteen-years-old in a bi-lingual school in Mexico City and first saw his photo in a book with his Emiliano Zapata mustache. I had found a discarded Spanish copy of his book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and read it, although I must say I didn’t understand much, yet something in it struck a deep chord in me. I only had some wispy hairs then but by seventeen you should have seen me; I was ferocious looking. Still am, some say. When I became a poet and singer, I took the stage name Mr. Z to honor

my heroes. Perhaps you've heard of me. Few who come to hear me perform know my name's origins and I never explain.

As my popularity grew and fame pursued me, I grew many disguises. I answered questions with questions and gave answers so enigmatic that no one understood me. I didn't understand myself much of the time since more and more I said whatever popped out of my mouth, but this delighted me. I laughed a lot and stopped taking myself seriously. I kept forgetting more and more and my poetry and music seemed to come from some unbidden place. I guess you could call it intuition. But I'd often forget the lyrics and have to improvise. That became so enjoyable that even when I remembered the lyrics I would change them just for fun. The audience hated this, but I didn't care. Forgetting became my musical forte and over time I realized that it must permeate my life and so I became a genius at active, conscious forgetting.

I even forget why I am writing this. Perhaps it is to remind myself to forget what I have seen on my return to the island. To write about it as a form of exorcism. It is all so utterly changed. To see all these poor players on the stage of self, so serious and self-absorbed makes me want to never return, to fly away. I ask myself how can I ever forget the images of all those shaking, flabby buttocks staring me in the face. Maybe if their cameras captured their asses, they would reconsider showing them. As for me, to paraphrase a wise man, if you gaze too long into an ass, the ass gazes also into you.

I should work on my music, so I can simply soar like a sea bird on the up notes and dance down with the swaying palms, and in the playing I will forget everything and be lost in the celestial music.

"I do not know of any more profound orientation of an artist than this, whether he looks at his work in progress (at himself) from the point of view of the witness, or whether he has forgotten the world, which is the essential feature of all monological art: it is based on forgetting, it is the music of forgetting."

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.

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