

A

ARISING OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE

In the country of the unformed, before there is time and space, before there is name and form, the three go through beginningless, endless change. Nothing is stable, nothing has any relationship in their changing. Mari arises and because she has arisen, Buruda comes. She looks at him and says to him "Mirror, mirror." He looks at her and says to her "Mirror, mirror." She is the lady of persistence: He, the master of change. She is the source of all: He, the centre around which all change arises, the master of necessity. Some call him death, but they only see beginning and end here and there, small and large.

They are fed by the worms of chaos and they produce out of chaos two forms from which the worlds begin, the world which is and the world which might be. The maker sits between as the sun sits between the stars. It looks at the stars and says to them "Mirror, mirror!" and they look at him and say "Mirror, mirror." From the mirrors come other beginnings and the earth comes into being and they are made by the makers into the forms and the names having the time and the space of the maker. The serpents of air, earth and water and that serpent which is all of them, the Heren-Suge. He chews up the earth and excretes it and it comes into being. The teeth of the Heren-Suge tear up the heavens and thunder and lightning come. It chews up the oceans - storms and floods arise. It grinds up the earth - volcanoes and earthquakes happen. The daughters of Mari mate with the sons of Buruda and when they are with child they come to their mother and say "What is to do?"

"You will experience sorrow and joy. You will know pleasure and pain. You will feel empathy and sympathy. You will know in your bones the feelings of others, their helplessness under their lives' load and the strength that will enable them to hold to spirit even to the end."

The Lamiak came into physical being, each carrying within it the spirit which had yearned for it but still it had no understanding of the physical, but the sons of Mari took the nail which their father had given them and hammered holes into body and tied spirit to them and the living beings arose, and when its body's time had come they took their knives and cut the cord that bound spirit to body. That which was body returned to the visible world and spirit returned to the invisible, bearing the marks of experience. Some of the Lamiak stayed the same over many years. Some of them changed and their forms began to reflect the experiences which had impressed them the most. The Lamiak which had started simply as ghosts began to acquire hair and horn, teeth and tusks, feathers and fins, stingers and suckers, for when experience infected them they became more and more dedicated to their desires and when their cords were cut and they had no memory, only these desires remained in spirit form.

The Heren-Suge continued its task of grinding up the substance of the earth making finer and finer substance for the spirits to inhabit, and where it wandered the earth was cracked and the mountains and the valleys appeared. The lamiak were attracted to these valleys, birth and death were strong there, change ruled and new shapes of matter came about. Then came the time when the sons of Buruda began to challenge him and claim for themselves the powers of life and death. They began to mould the substance of the earth to make it more attractive to spirit but as desire began to substitute for necessity so creatures grew bigger and the Lamiak came to desire size and rulership. Mari said to Buruda "Keep your sons in order!" He said to her "That is the work for your daughters." So they both called their children before them saying to them "Do you want perfection? Do you want anarchy? Do you want dominion? Which shall it be?" And the children being of their parents after much arguments accepted their nature and began their tasks again. The sons accepted co-operation and competition and the daughters perpetuation and survival as their roles, and in order that they should be reminded they began amongst themselves to grow a creature that might become to them a challenge.

Along the cracks in the earth where birth and death were in turmoil they allowed the Heren-Suge to create combinations that would bring into existence three-brained beings having memory, experience and forecasting. Recall feelings and desires motivated them. Necessity became to them just another spirit. Power was to them only an idea which was a tool of their desire, but these creatures began to develop within themselves a possible fourth brain having its existence in the insubstantial world that is the field of Mari and Buruda, and in the unfolding of possibility this caused giants to appear in the world of the Lamiak and the four-brained beings began to appear upon the earth and they began to give form to the spirit world which they embodied without being aware of it.

The three-bodied beings began to concern themselves with death and afterwards right and wrong, and agreed rules amongst themselves as to what to do about them. The earth at this time appeared like a ball of clay which dried in the sun, and along the cracks the likeness of man came to be, there were many beginnings before the nature of man settled itself into its present form. In ancient day man was as he is today, a creature of habit, but in those times habit was the way he learned new things and he was very, very slow to change. In one area it appeared as if ocean had taken a great bite out of the earth and on the shores of this land a tribe of the elder race had its existence. For them life was comfortable. The tribe had remained in its form for a long time and divided itself into those which were valuable to it and those which it found to be trouble to it. The Nahas males were separated from the rest and were always given the dangerous and difficult tasks. Amongst the females the Nahas aunties lived apart from the men, women and children. Some became Sorginak, others experimented with plants, roots, insects, but the males left them alone and would not mate with them, they were not safe. In common with the rest of the tribe they celebrated the great festivals but they had to make them apart.

There came a time when they heard from travelling men that a new tribe of people had arisen in the south and were spreading over the world, they were called Katagorri for they were very clever and fast. The tribe took warning and posted sentinels to warn the people by lighting green fires, for smoke can be seen from a far distance, and indeed there came a day when smoke could be seen rising from the hills in all directions. They brought the mothers and young children from outlying districts and the warriors encircled them and prepared to defend themselves, but the Katagorri did not fight, they found places to live and because they liked making and trading they became useful to the tribe, but they were much too changeable to be accepted as people so that they lived apart from the real people. They did not celebrate the festivals but would mate at any time of the year and it was a further cause for separation.

This did not apply to the Nahas aunties, but it became evident that mating with the Katagorri was full of danger. There were many still-births and deaths amongst the women who did, but this did not deter them overmuch for they liked the idea of danger. In general these women, after very many generations, had settled into a stable community, a community with hunters, gatherers of roots and seeds, and had begun to become gardeners. Their children possessed the cleverness of the Katagorri and the innate conservation of real people and over very many generations begun to take over the land of the Heren-suge. They, like their ancestors, knew the Lamiak and the spirits of the land and allowed them room in their lives. They defended the land against all invaders. They took their strategy from the flow of water retreating to the hills and woods under pressure, then surging back when the pressure slackened. Their males having been brought up by women had no fear of them, and took their place in this culture based upon what they could do, not upon whose son they were. They were argumentative but not aggressive. In due course they were surrounded by other arrivals but they remained separate because of their customs and their way of speaking. They were fond of dance and singing and they liked to entertain each other by the telling of tales. They were not afraid of witches and wizards and herbalism and far seeing because that is how they began. Whenever they travelled to new countries the stability of their culture served them in good stead, but the anarchic Katagorri thread of their origins enabled them to prosper in new situations.