

Lady Bird and Firebird

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I tend to indulge myself in a religious-pseudo pilgrimage for communication and interaction during the weekends, a ceremonial site where redeemers and disciples congregate in a state of physical and spiritual ecstasy as they rise to apocryphal literature.

It is there that collective corporeality and consciousness express themselves, and it is also there that I have fallen in love on the dance floor yesterday.

The DJ takes the role of the archaic priest and holy spirits take possession of dancing human bodies through the medium of techno music. Repetitive rhythms of the music convulse the heavenly bodies while light machines simultaneously paint the sacred space, sending the masses of dancers into a trance. As I moved along the percussive and monotone music, for a split second, I caught someone looking at me from a distance and our gazes met briefly.

Perhaps it was my imagination, maybe I was a little drunk, but our eyes locked for the second time.

In need of another drink, I slipped past the crowd while grooving to the music and made my way to the bar.

“Ich hätte gern einmal Vodka Red Bull bitte,” I said to the bartender with my best effort at trying to speak German. *“Ich auch!”* someone with a deep voice said, to which I turned my head towards the person ordering the same drink as me. And there he is, the same tall and slender guy with blonde curly hair that I saw on the dancefloor is now standing right next to me. I was mesmerized by his blue-hazel eyes under the spotlight. He knew that I was looking at him and smirked at me, in a way that I found suspicious but hot and cute at the same time, and then he proceeded to murmur something in German. I replied with a very confused expression, *“Entschuldigung, ich spreche kein Deutsch.”*

“Ah, but I heard you speaking German.”

“Ja, aber nur ein bisschen,” I responded.

“It was really good though. I wanted to say that you have a nice outfit.”

His hands wrapped around his glass of Vodka Red Bull and lips parted ready to take a sip, he had his eyes on me. Without giving a second thought, I mimicked him but emptied half of my glass in

one go. Boy, was I thirsty, or was I feeling anxious? One thing I know for sure was that the effect of the drink was instantaneous.

I wiped my mouth with my shirtsleeve, not realizing how foolish I looked, and asked, “Want a cigarette?” before we made our way outside the club.

Joining a crowd of smokers, we could still hear the music from the club.

Meanwhile, in a corner, I saw my friends chatting away and laughing uncontrollably but they did not notice me.

“Do you live here in Hannover?” Guy asked.

“Yea, I study here,” I replied.

Guy, because for some unknown reason, we did not introduce ourselves to each other. Guy studies Latin, Greek and philosophy, and is involved in performing arts. Despite being in a state of drunkenness, we talked and exchanged ideas, and shared our favorite books and music playlists. It was unforced. It was nice.

“I really like talking to you. Should we exchange numbers?” Guy asked.

I smiled shyly and blushed a little, and said “I’d like that very much,” then proceeded to take my phone out of my pocket with a blank contact page opened and passed it to him. Our hands touched as Guy grabbed my phone to put in his number and then give it back to me.

I took a look at his name and stared at him bewilderedly, “Lady Bird?”

“Yes. I am Lady Bird. What is your name?” he asked in return.

At that moment, I remembered a similar name from a film I had watched a few nights before, and I said, “Firebird. My name is Firebird.”

Lady Bird had not expected that. He looked back at me with the same bewildered expression I had had before, “I see where this is going,” while nodding his head with a devilish smirk on his face.

We grabbed another drink before heading back to the dance floor. This time, the dance floor was spinning twice as fast, or should I say my head was spinning twice as fast. The music was different now. Some dark techno was playing, so it must have been after 4 a.m.

Techno’s exaggerated structuring of time and tempo was stretched out to its limits. It creates a sense of timelessness. I remember dancing to the music with no intense build-ups or beat drops. It was then that I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was my friends, Michiel, Abigail and Sonia. We embraced each other with a big hug as if we had just bumped into each other by pure coincidence even though the four of us had come to the club together.

They were dancing on one side, Lady Bird and I on the other. Amid the electrical grandeur from the stage lights, Lady Bird wrapped his hands around my waist, leaning close. Our minds and bodies had realized and felt what was coming. There was nothing left for us but to kiss.

Outside the club, it was dawn. Lady Bird said to me, “Yourself a specter, how would you see others as alive?”

“Wow. That was very poetic and profound. Did you just come up with that?” I asked.

“No,” he responded, “it was a quote from my favorite book.”

... “Should we go back home?”

As we were walking in the same direction, “so where do you live?” I asked.

“I live just around the corner. And you?”

“Same” I responded. By then, we were already standing right in front of the building where I live.

“Wait a second, you live in this building?” Lady Bird interjected, “How have I not seen you around?”

I woke up the next day to a WhatsApp text from Lady Bird. It was a Spotify playlist titled “*im einklang mit der zeit und den göttern*,” followed by a message saying “for you <3.”

Author Biography

Jia Shen Lim is a student in the MA North American Studies program at Leibniz University Hannover (LUH). Prior to his enrolment at LUH, he received his BA in Graphic Design and Art History from the University of Hertfordshire, UK, then went on to work as a fashion and art writer for a newspaper. His job was invigorating and fun but it was not enough – intellectually speaking –, so he decided to leave his job to study again. His research interests include gender and transcultural identities in visual art, periodical culture, and the combination of close reading techniques with critical theory.