

ON THE
COSMIC JOURNEY
OF A BODY
or
THE POLITICAL AGENCY
OF A SENSITIVE DIGESTION

JASPER GRIEPINK

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#### Introduction

When thinking about art nowadays one easily discovers the eminent desire of artworks to be socially or politically engaged - to activate, illustrate, highlight, celebrate or change things. This is true also for my own art practice, though it has been operating primarily via the body rather than within concrete works of art. It has been operating through the knowledge that is gained through the experience of my body as well as through the bodies of the people I have been in contact with. In a sense it has been operating under, via and through the skin in a realm of heightened sensing, or awareness that affects things within the body and within the social and political realms that consist of these (interrelated) bodies. In addition to sensing (or how to sense), I've been exploring what the body can manifest outside of itself through action - by being present, by dressing up, by dancing - in performance. In a sense I research the relational coherence in between the body and its environment by exploring how messages can be send to the subconscious using the medium of acts. One of the major 'acts' I have performed in the past year has been my travel to Iceland and America, which will form the baseline of this writing.

But before we take off to Iceland I have to introduce you to some other acts I have performed right here in the middle of the concrete jungles of Rotterdam, the second largest city of the Netherlands, which is where this account has actually been written down as an extension of the research I

have been doing at the Piet Zwart Institute, where I am currently finishing a Masters of Fine Arts Program.

In my research I have generally been occupied with creating and sharing experiences of having a body. I have been developing works that place intuitively led actions or performances within pre-conceived and/or designed settings, which at this point have resulted into contemporary versions of temples and/or shrines, as temporary bathhouses and/or ambiguous health clubs. The actions that take place within this practice become 'happenings' or events that offers a variety of services to both members of my public, to myself and to those that have already been acquainted with my procedures through previous encounters, or by having a more intimate relationship with me in general. These participatory events take place in art spaces, public spaces (such as forests, meadows and/or city-streets) as well as in private groves such as my house or a hotel-room.

For me the notion of 'playing' is very important in the creation of these moments, as 'playing' seems to uplift my spirit from the analysis and problematic thinking that seek to define things prematurely in order to understand them. I find these defining principles rather limiting though I do not abandon them in total. Instead I aspire to capture both the past and the present bodies of knowledge so as to offer new pathways into exploring the more 'cosmic' implications of our bodily incarnations. Here I would firstly like to define 'playing' as a sacred act. This 'Sacred Play' requires a heightened self-reflexivity or awareness both before and after the moment of play; the moment in which exactly this awareness of the self actually slips away for a moment. In this way it is similar to older concepts such as 'meditation' and 'trance.' I require my Sacred Play to access or activate my body rather than my mind, since that is where - for me - the story takes place. In this sense 'Playing' becomes a guiding source of knowing, by being automatically anchored in the traditional concepts I have been researching as well as the response my body has towards the elements of the contemporary (urban) culture that I am surrounded by. The formulations that I produce within this meeting of realms creates a friction that both highlights the problems of dogmatic and traditional thinking (as those formats seem to be rudimentary and rather 'stuck' within themselves), yet also validates the essential precepts that lay at their cores. I attempt to approach the supposed 'essences' of many spiritual cosmologies playfully, in order to liberate the soul of these spiritual

forms from the authorities that seem to posses them. I will do a similar thing in this particular writing, by inviting you into my body and into the journey it has been on in the past year. I believe this short story, which travels through the experiences my body went through within several particular environments to be socially, politically and potentially artistically potent.

It is within my belief that bodies are actually recording devices that take onto themselves everything the outer world hurls them, but I also consider that the respective contents of our bodies have the same inscribing ability towards the outer world as well. Bodies of course, exorcise a political agency that has a direct effect on our social reality - we can see this in protests, actions and the general performance of our daily business. Yet I believe that this political effect is increased when action is undertaken inside of the body also. I am referring here to things such as food, information or other metabolic processes that turn the body, politically and economically, into the world. Additionally, and in this writing especially, I wish to refer to the inner determination or focus that turns the world into the body also - I am referring to the exhausted term magic, or to the political act or agency that is embedded within this internal operational gaze. The act of magic, for me, strongly relates to a notion Hannah Arendt describes in 'The Human Condition' (1958). She starts off by describing how 'speech' and 'action' are our two most distinct political acts before she continues with stating that we are simply prompted into these acts by our sheer 'natality' - by being born. She explains how our lives are full of agency because we are alive, and how the start of this political act of life itself is marked by the moment of birth. I agree with the idea that being alive inherently makes us act political as much as I believe that in its basis magic essentially is an extension, or continuation, of this political act; the act of being born, the act of living; an act that we are continuously exorcising, whether we aware of it or not.

A large branch of my practice, namely my healing practice, comes into play here. Through this practice I have been making myself, as well as others, aware of the contents of our bodies – be it organs, chakras, judgments, concepts and/or renderings of our bodies – in order to activate an embedded power-of-body.

An example of this is Sjassa B. Lovejoy's Practice, a work that took place one month before my journey to Iceland commenced. In this work I had

transformed a gallery-space I which I was living into a 'healing-salon', by placing an appropriated massage table, handmade room divider, waiting bench and a rug and towel cabinet in the space. I also stocked up some essential oils and 'sacred' liquids from 'Santeria' shops, and assembled utensils and objects that are initiated by frequent use in both public and private sessions and shows. These objects are often created in my studio, at home or in the space and time of a running project, in which they are directly used. Alternatively they become source material for further development and other enterprises.

In the working space of the Sjassa B. Lovejoy Practice project the light was altered to an overall red light which changed the perceptibility of space and time-of-day. Layers upon layers of burning sage smoke was distributed across the space, as well as cologne and liquids that were being vaporized. The distributing of scents was done by walking in a pattern that could best be perceived as a swastika with an inverted swastika overlapping it, spreading over the room as a square grid. (See image below). The release of the scents was supported by visualizing cleanliness and sacredness, and by a self-convincing visualization that made past, processed and/or lingering energies exit the space. The Double-Swastika pattern was never preconceived as it was derived by a gush of inspiration, that in that moment made it seem to be the best way to consecrate and bless the room. The treatment table that was present in the space hosted various people throughout the 3-day event that I had promoted via posters and flyers in the city, advertising the visit of a 'famed healer'.

Upon entering the 'healing-salon' people where notified that one does not enter the healing room 'just-like-that' as there was a sign-up sheet located near the entrance of the room. The presence of the visual elements and/or atmosphere that seemed to be intricately distributed throughout the space promoted an intriguing experience to take place. People soon lined up in the hallway of the space in which I had placed a few pitchers of water and fruit juice to drink.

A visitor could gain access to a deeper layer of the experience by signing up for a one-on-one treatment of which the details were unknown, and which at that point was based only in their expectation or imagination. The visitors that signed up where then asked to take off their shoes and outer layers of clothing before they were placed on the table where to begin their hands and feet got washed and whispered to. In 45 minute long sessions

visitors received treatment, which were not pre-conceived other than being based in training in Reiki I had received before. But aside from that traditional training the work was executed in relation to self-discovered methodologies for working with energy, performance, objects and atmosphere as well as by being attuned to the specifics of the participating member. The participants where not explicitly informed about what was about to happen, which, as I believe, brought them to a more sensuous domain.

In the process of this particular project, as well as later ones, I came to accept that the idea of an outside of the body is as radical as the idea of an inside of the body - for these realms seem to have always been interconnected, mirroring in some way, if they're not obsolete terms finally. So as far as the Art I can state that it is as kind, but perhaps naïve, to characterize all artistic activities to be healing as it kind and naïve to render all healing to be artistic - but these realms do certainly cross paths occasionally and they certainly support one another, as they do in my own practices. As an agent of both of these realms it is natural for me to give to each of them something of the other - to generate so to say a growth, if not the warmth of familiarity, in both partakers. It has been important for me to emancipate healing practices (and mysticism in general) from their traditional rules and regulations, as much as it has been important for me to do the same in the arts and in the social - so as to suspend the conditioning and often limiting division between director and directee and the stagnating procedures of leaders and followers. Paradoxically this thesis is based upon several encounters I have had with 'teachers.' It is evident to state that it is the body and the body alone that can render another to truly be a teacher. It is the body that can decide how it accepts and relates to that which surrounds it - it is the body that turns experiences into lessons, friends into Wiseman and living into a true adventure. A related concept here is the concept of the wounded healer - a traditional shamanistic term, or story, in which a person starts off by being wounded in the literal sense and learns how to heal him/herself - and in the process also others. If we are to consider being wounded as being endowed with specifics we could render everyone as a wounded healer, seeing that we are all exploring and reconciling our specifics - be it our bodies, our status or our legacy. Each and every one of us is dealing with the particularities given to us by life. In this light, the concept of the wounded healer becomes a marvelous emancipation of the body from the direction

of doctors, leaders and teachers, as it recognizes that everyone generates an autonomous body power and/or tactics by simply being aware of the specifics of having a body. In the thesis you are about to read you will discover that my body has been having some difficulties obtaining this 'emancipation.' It becomes clear that the body and its knowledge are involved in many realms of existence – the emancipation here is not a sweeping independence-of, nor a separation-from; rather it's a definitive clarifying of the body's true relational existence. I can say, retrospectively, that these difficulties specifically have guided my body into a better understanding of itself, as you will hopefully understand from this document. Certainly for me, the challenges that my body faced did in the end map out a geography of awareness that became essential for my navigation in the cosmos, and in my life.

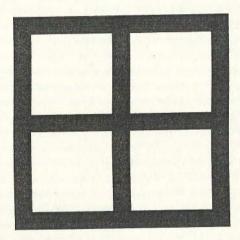


Figure 1

1.

I begin this account in Iceland, which is where I located myself in July of last year. It was either in Olafsvik or Grundarfjodur - two very similar small towns in close proximity of one another, both located on one of the shores of the island I had been hitchhiking on for several weeks, where I begin. Initially I went to this volcanic state to either meet some of the huldufólk, the Icelandic hidden people or elves, or to encounter a sense of myself in what I had preconceived as real nature; a distribution perhaps of man, space and emptiness which seems to be so alarmingly missing in the Netherlands, the crowded flatlands I was born in. Several stories of those who went before me triggered my desire to touch base with the oh-so-magically described caves of warm liquid mud, subtle as a thick healing milk, to be discovered next to just about any road I would choose to go over. If not these mythical womblike crooks into the mother then surely the mountains, the volcanoes and the mesmerizing shorelines would break down the mindset I had acquired growing up where and how I did, being spoon-fed by the state. I realized that everything that supports me brings me to where I am, so what is there to resent? Yet I felt stuck in the involuntary constellation that seemed to plan my life more that I was planning it for myself.

This is not however a moment to advertise Iceland as more favorable than Holland, nor is it a promotion of travel; rather I would like to conjure up the image of a body in transfer or in a meeting with its profound desires.

On Friday the 13th the huge oil truck that carried me over coastal roads, as wavy as a quite terrifying dream of an ocean, released me back into the state I was in before I got picked up – desiring a ride. Though it seemed in a way idiotic to leave a ride I had waited for beforehand, the now had changed and I was ready for a new chapter of my solo-hitchhiking adventure that didn't include the oil truck anymore. Also I had spotted a very cute sideway dinner that seemed to be doing a successful mating dance with my persuasive hunger. I sat down in a pleasant but quite confusing mixture of summer sunshine and polar winds and I scanned the menu for something that I could either afford or eat without getting sick. I have a stomach that does not seem to agree with pastries or meals that include yeast and/or milk products; everything on the menu had either one or both of these substances within it so I ordered a tea as usual. Eventually I gave in and ordered a piece of chocolate pie.

There was of course milk in the pie.

As I had once again stepped into the world of upset stomachs I started to loose my liking of the outside terrace. I closed Jodorowksy's *Spiritual Journey*<sup>i</sup> for a minute and decided to sit inside to shelter myself from the eternal ocean winds on the north coast of the Sneafellness peninsula.

#### It was there that I met Suzanneil.

She first appeared to me as a lady delicately eating pizza with a knife and fork in the glass covered porch the joint offered. As I had already stepped into eating dairy and had no money to actually buy a substantial meal myself

i 1 was reading from Jodorowsky, A., 2008 The Spiritual Journey of Alejandro Jodorowsky, Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press

ii Suzanne Morgen; born Switzerland, age unknown.

For me meeting Suzanne was one of those lucky occasions in which I found myself explaining what it is that I do (playing the sad shaman – way too often) to someone who actually has an interest and a clue about it too. Suzanne could tell me that I was currently walking around with an aura of about thirty to a hundred meters wide, making me sensitive and vulnerable to everything inside its circumference. She also told me that there were hundreds of *souls* surrounding my light. She advised me to send those spirits away in search of their own light even though admittedly I thought it was pretty special to have so many around. She advised me to retract and re-affirm my aura closer to my body as a barrier that transpires but does not get pierced.

- which at that point a pizza actually was – I waited patiently for her appetite to cease (which was marked by the placement of her cutlery) before I asked for the remainders of her meal. Soon enough we spoke about our current occupations and I was amazed to find out that Suzanne was a body worker from Switzerland who shapes therapeutic treatments with the idea that the body already possesses the answers you look for. She took the moment to tell me that my throat chakra was blocked after asking my stretched arm some questions.

Where I accepted that a blocked throat chakra implied a impairment in communication or stating from the heart, I was, at this point, not fully aware of the broader implications of this block. It took me about six months before I realized I had actually been hiding my heart under layers of Fall leaves and cold muddy rain droplets as I coherently led my throat charka into constipation. It was only when I met Evan in the panorama bar of the Berlin club Berghainiii on the first day of the New Year, that I have been sensing my heart to be a radiating crystalline shape again, slowly ascending from underneath those mucusey layers into the cavity of my chest. I am not quite sure, and happy about that too, what it was exactly that made it radiate so vibrantly again. But the moment when Evan helped me get into Down Dog it sparked and I started crying because of it. We then practiced Bridge Posture, to open up the throat chakra, and Camel; for the heart. Meeting Evan made me believe again in the possibility of actually passing trough life like my inner spirit ushers me to; in happiness, strength and with spirit. I wonder often, smilingly, if I had been able to accept this person into my life had I not done a magical rite in which I consciously chose to open up my heart again. I had done this ritual just days before I arrived in Berlin - so it seems to me that these event are related. But perhaps it was the advice my friend AA (whom I will introduce later) gave me around that time too about altering the relationship I was having with my anus in relation to my heart. Underlying all these scenarios is the knowledge that I could accept their help, since I had helped myself first.

iii A Berlin nightclub that hosts parties taking several days and which, during Sylvester (the German New Year's Eve), hosts an orgiastic celebration of life. Berghain is German for 'Mountain Grove.'

2.

The second stop I want to bring you to is New York City; surprisingly not the total opposite of Iceland, though the Fairies I was to meet here where of a different kind. I arrived in New York about a month after my adventures in Iceland driven by a similar desire.

It was in PS1, an art space located in Queens where I first met Genesis P-Orridge<sup>iv</sup>, an alchemistic protagonist that gave a workshop in Sigil making that summer. The workshop attracted many individuals with an interest in either performance art, magic or the transgendered.

Genesis P-Orridge, who fused with his life partner Lady Jaye when she left her bodily incarnation behind, is usually addressed as s/he, seeing that s/he became both partakers of their former dual bodied relationship. Genesis is a famed authority on magic, alchemy and body modifications and seemed to be the right person to get in touch with on my quest for a more 'emancipated' body, and a more 'emancipated' act. Genesis started the gathering by denoting the room we where in as being perhaps the only reality currently still in play – referring to the possible absence of the world outside of the room, since we were not witnessing it at that point. The idea of an absent outer world triggered an almost pleasant chain of thought inside of me, since the outer world seemingly appeared to be the reality I was to struggle with – the thought of a bodily space freed from the entangled social web

sounded appealed to me, for I can say with some dignified certainty that in the urban environment the specificity of my body has been guided by frames, boxes and aisles, which inevitably makes it act in accordance with someone else's inscription of reality. There is a tremendous political power implicitly present in this control of bodies – in the guidance of the social so to speak. According to Genesis there is also a cosmic and magical power implicitly present in this as well. He says that magic is a 'science of making things happen according to your desires in order to maximize control over one's life and immediate environment to create a universe that is perfecting in its kindness towards you' (P-Orridge, 2008, p.104). When we take into consideration that our perception of reality in turn creates the reality we are witnessing and are a part of – we can understand that we are born with the ability to have an effect, and thus; agency'.

The singularity of our specific reading of a situation in the ways of magical understanding becomes a specific creation of a situation. This holds a lot of power potential. When we dissolve-into-specificity, our perception - which registers reality - becomes the very key to the possibility of possible realities. More specific, the particularity of our desire (want or choice) unlocks the world, or; the potential world(s). But what if the specifics of our bodies are controlled by advertisements, happy meals and Macintosh desktops? We can take a step back into time, to the moment of birth, the moment when the constellation of customs, ideologies and tradition formulates not only our language capacity but also our ability to register our surroundings; our understanding. Class-structures, financial position, Heritage, Culture, History, and not to forget Family prescribe the world that we are born into and determine who or what we are and how we are to act. The moment when we adopt the language and mode of address of our forefathers as our main source for communication, explanation and understanding, we ultimately become part of their consensus reality; 'an amalgamation of approximate recordings from flawed bio-machines,' as Genesis (2008, p.107) puts it. He proposes that it is quite possible that the energy or phenomenon that glues together a repeatable experience of solidity and materiality on this earth is the pres-

iv Genesis, or Breyer P-Orridge (1950) is an Artist, Musician and famed authority on Magic, Alchemy and Body modifications.

v This effect (or 'agency') has for an eternity been explored via ritual and magic and is currently also being researched in quantum-physics, where experiments show that subatomic particles require an observer to come into existence and without an observer's presence they do not come into existence.

sure of billions of human beings simultaneously, and in close proximity, believing in what they see and hear. It is a remarkable idea when we see infinite micro-realities that humans, animals, plants and perhaps even objects dream up as existing simultaneously – social and macro-realities existing parallel to one another – colliding and competing for supremacy, as Genesis puts it. He calls our bodies to arms, or to magic acting, when he explains that the ways and tools that allow us to seize the means of perception become vital in our fight to construct 'a self, a character; an identity that is truly and independently our own.' He states that any magic that empowers us to do that – constructing an emancipated self – is a matter of survival; 'a cause of infinite concern in terms of the evolution of our species and ourselves. [...] it's a divine territory that recognizes behavior, perception and character as malleable matter equal to all other forms of matter'(P-Orride, 2008, p.104).

The knowledge that every moment is a new moment is lost in the belief of the assumed chain of cause-and-effect. Genesis started his class with denoting that it is a similar belief that makes us assume the outer world takes place as we expect it to when being in a room that's absent from that world – a didactic 'icebreaker' that would sway even the skeptics in the room into participating in the faithful exorcise we were about to do – Sigil-Making.

Sigils vi are markings or visual collages that one shapes in accordance with one's desires – desires that are actually being assessed either while making the Sigil or in advance. Sigils can be as minimal as black and white markings and as elaborate as a three-dimensional sculpture or depiction, but frankly almost anything made intentionally can be a Sigilvii.

The way an altar is set up can function as a Sigil as well, though here it is better to talk about the Mesa, which is usually a square surface to be placed on the floor, upon which elements are placed that represent specific phenomena, people or desires. Occasionally the floor itself or a table is used. Mesas are a site for a game of magic-intention-chess that takes place via the placement and moves of the pieces that have meaning or feeling attached to them. These pieces seem to be controlled by the invisible rules of your own mind, and so 'breaking' the rules convincingly here teaches the unconscious, or the spirit, to do the same viii.

A Sigil can also be performed and could then be called a 'ritual' or 'ceremony'. I have done so before when I walked across a room I was preparing for the sentience necessary for a healing session to take place inside of it. I have described this procedure more thoroughly in the introduction chapter of this text, but I will repeat this briefly for the sake of understanding. The blessing I did here was done by walking in the shape of a Swastika with an inverted Swastika on top (figure 1.) while spraying Florida Waterix and burning dried sage leaves – I invocated aid-full spirits and banished that which was unwanted from the space. Here the Sigil making process became the ritual it is intended to be.

In a sense the Sigil is a magical tool (or act) which during its production becomes the embodiment (or symbol) of your specific desire(s). When performing your Sigil you are performing your desires – you are making them present already. The ritual becomes a 'tool' or a 'map' that shows you what you want while you are performing it – it functions via a mixture of self-analysis and magical self-realization to which the universe kindly responds. Magic

vi It is important here to note that the term Sigil, or 'seal' is but a term popularized by contemporary readings of a much older practice of magic – but for the sake of this text I have chosen Sigil as a handling term since Genesis has done so in his class as well.

vii The matter a fact is that you have probably already seen at least a bunch today if you live around humans, for they tend to make Sigils over and again, whether they are aware of it or not.

viii For example; when moving an object that is representing a house closer to the objects representing you or a friend you might imagine all the reasons why you or her won't be getting a house – but, when you convince yourself of the game-like reality of the mesa, and therewith your actual life, you train your unconscious radio frequencies to send out a perhaps more 'audacious,' or 'freed' desire.

ix A cologne that is being produced in New York, and in Peru which is officially nothing more than scented water – but is commonly used in 'Santería' – a syncretic religion that mainly interweaves Roman Catholicism with 'Yoruba' – a religion that orbits around the worship of 'Orishas' – which are supernatural spirits that are commonly present in many African religions. I first encountered Floridawater as it is being used Peruvian shamanism; a practice I encountered via Dutch practitioners of Shamanism.

thus is not a tool for the supernatural - but a vital potential for the natural. It isn't (necessarily) a spectacle like it is in the movies – it is deeper and more essential than entertainment – though some might need the spectacle to counter the spectacular game of reality we are living in. Plus, I would be the last person to advocate the 'less is more' precept when I believe that concepts so purely minimal are allowed to be festively dressed. But granted; desires themselves are often less spectacular than we might assume – so our powerful acts can coherently be more concentrated too. Genesis also informed me that for a magic spell or wishing-devise to operate one must be extremely specific in what one wants. Approximation is to be abandoned if one is to move.

About the world out there not being there I decided that, next to the millions of people out there who conjoined together in their creation of it, the world itself – the world that was here before us – must have been desiring or dreaming itself into existence since before we began. The dream of the earth isn't necessarily ours to project onto it – it's of itself – and thus I decided that some natural laws hardly bend. The planets, stars and the rules of gravitation and expansion have been here since long before us, promising our faint impact upon them. Yet still, even keeping this cosmic preordained knowledge in mind, this does not explain the sustenance of our living social confinements. Perhaps this is why babies cry – undergoing such a rapid change; waking up in a human world after being born in a cosmos.

3.

While the inquiry of my travels this past summer is related to the body and its emancipated act I have ironically ventured far beyond it's present location – its regular location: here – so that is where we have our next stop. Now I have been going to regions not particularly close to my birth-place, as many do throughout the year, but what I discovered is that even though I depart with the same body, it would diversify how it was for me have it in accordance with the diversity of the places I would take it too. The changes of the surroundings of our bodies actually sheds some light on the particularities of our bodies. In a way the body finds a location of itself in the echo of it's new habitation – like it does within the premise of certain specifics like disease of fever also. The body continuously adapts and reconfigures itself towards its surroundings, which in turn offers it's carry-on passenger new ways of existing. Intriguingly this change of settings doesn't have to happen in the 'geographical' or 'terrestrial' sense. This Journey can be made into the body as well.

Now I wouldn't be a 'real' Shaman if I wasn't able to take you any further into the realities I am unraveling here – inside the body. So to further invite you into the insides of *my* body I would firstly like to go further into the *Wounded Healer* concept that I have already introduced to you at the beginning of this text.

The Wounded Healer concept resonates mildly with vaccination, where the attribution of a disease teaches a body how to fight it, but it is often far less benign. To start with the most extreme story of the Wounded-Healer manifestation I will have to introduce you to the Pagos; the priests of the Andes of which there are only a few for their births are as lethal as they are unique. The first time lightning strikes a person in the Andean mountain s/ he will (often) die, until a sequential second strike brings him/her back to life. However it is only the third time that the lightning brings him/her to his/her name, Paqo, and into awakeningx. The Paqos are known as the most gifted and wisest priests of the Andes, they passed through death and lost the obsession with the division of life and death that is so common to us. The anxieties of being faced with death (or with life) have exited their bodies. Fortunately there is a more accessible way to realize the Wounded-Healer within ourselves when we start exploring our own specifics - and therewith step into becoming novices of the self-healing trade. Many forms of autonomous healing essentially start with the application of techniques on the self before they are applied and/or taught to others. The teaching here relies on the 'student' to practice and develop a personal and specified method - fitting the moreover particular reality of your body, rather than an ideal body that would belong to an idealized medicinexi.

Jodorowsky, who I've been exploring, would be very upset if his advices – his *medicine* – would be diversified, since a part of their operational efficiency is the internal struggle to obey to that which he prepares for you<sup>xii</sup>.

His 'Spiritual Journey' (2008) and the later 'Psychomagic' (2010) give their reader a surprising feel towards certain exploratory modes of behavior that might emancipate the body - and its life - from the direction of a lot of unhelpful events and/or people. Jodorowsky (2010, p.118) argues that we are 'marked, not to say contaminated, by the psychomental universe,' and that 'people have associated with them a personality that is not theirs but borrowed from another member of their emotional environment.' I read this as a firm observation on the way people copy the behavior of other people and in that way adopt scenarios that once worked out but might surprisingly fall short within the context of the specifics of the new constellation - you. Moreover the present culture doesn't seem to be based on specification in general, as most people seem to only have a lot of individuality, yet aren't being individual (Fromm, 1993). Like a sword of freedom that cuts the wrong way we are able to adopt, re-appropriate and recontextualize what is around us, which leaves us to ruminate on what is already there. Jodorowsky's therapies aim to go beyond the obtaining of a freedom in a preset framework as they seem to want to suspend the entire framework as part of their functioning.

x I have learned about Paqos similarly to the way I learned about the 'Wounded Healer' concept; through extensive fieldwork that I have done over the past years at meetings and workshops that are focused on contemporary practices of Shamanism. The Shamans from the Andean mountains are famous amongst practitioners/followers of the traditional forms of shamanism that is being practiced there, and is told over and again at the start of ceremonies or meetings.

xi Still, over and again writings and instructions surface that are left behind by others in pursuit of their own understanding – these writings are like the carved embankments of someone else's explorations and can be used to find a resonance in – to which infinite diversifications are to be launched. Surely it can be pure bliss to accept a scenario and to run with it now and then also – at times this is even advisable if one wants to observe firstly what is taking place, or when one is faced with a good yoga-instructor or a healer that can show you the way to handle techniques by yourself.

xii Paradoxically he is a true agent of autonomous self-exploration also, so I've been granting myself the freedom to respectfully learn from his concepts while realizing they are all fitted to their own circumferences. This however does not mean that his scenarios are unstable or unverifiable. On the contrary; they work extremely well because they are so sharply attuned to the relations the body is in.

Jodorowsky's scenarios in particular might be way more than you would bargain for as they obliterate the limits of what one man can say, know or tell about another without having a direct line to 'God'. It's amusingly fascinating to read the ease at which Jodorowsky seems to solve deeply rooted internal configurations of the people that seek his aid – telling, for example, a creatively blocked writer that describes her problem as feeling like she is wearing her body like a second skin that she is closed off from her actual potential because she was 'meant' to be born a man – Jodorowsky entertainingly uses the word 'Homosexual Knot' to describe this condition.

See part 3 of the 6-part Youtube video entitled 'Alejandro Jodorowsky: Psychomagicm,' as seen on the Spanish TV program 'Negro sobre blanco.'

His counsel isn't based on the traditional detecting of messages sent by the unconscious but rather inversely by *sending* messages *to* the unconscious – or inner body if you will. He does this by using the language of the unconscious; a symbolic or metaphoric language that is communicated by an *act* similar perhaps to the Sigil. He argues that whenever someone does not believe in the power of the 'sorcerer', it is appropriate to remain impartial and to leave an opening for the sorcery (or *act*) to work – for even if a person (in his mind) does not believe in the therapeutic mechanism he is exorcizing, the unconscious body will respond to the messages that are sent to it (Jodorowsky, 2010). For his practice to work it is necessary, above all, to *participate* in the game without seeking to understand, so the body – or the heart – can act freed from the mind<sup>xiii</sup>.

What brought me to Healing, Jodorowsky and the discovery of my own 'Wounded-Healership' has foremost – next to a quite extensive research into magic in my teens – been the sudden appearance of a drastically decreased digestive capacity in the stomach somewhere in 2006. But the specificity of my stomach was but the pinnacle of my body's voice – it lured me into a relation with the world (and its co-inhibitors) which is by far kinder than it was before. As much as the sensitivity or articulation within my stomach could be perceived as a problem I transformed it into a guide. My stomach and my digestive system became a reflection of the way I was digesting the world and so it guided me into an increasingly specific way of living that ushered me into an exploration of alternatives that lead me to like-minded, or like-bodied, people in return.

Whereas Genesis believes in seizing the ways to adjust, control and breakup the *physique* as a raw material as malleable as any other medium I would like to argue for the acceptance of the specificity that has been given to you by your own body. Though I indeed did endeavor to explore how to 'fix' my stomach, it is in this continuing exploration where the story is developed –



Snaefellsjökull, Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Iceland, 2012

xiii The 'mind' itself, when we see it as our intellectual identity (or ego), can play tricks on us. It will easily lead us astray from goodwill and spiritual development. Jodorowsky also says that this same ego is also the eggshell that is keeping our 'yoke' in place, which is a good thing – an eggshell though, is very thin – precisely what is needed to uphold its center and perform durational – a healthy ego, according to him, would so share these specifics.



Where Suzanne and I spoke



Snaefellsjökull, Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Iceland, 2012

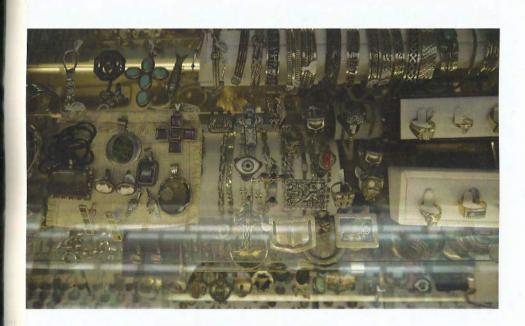


Original Botanica; a Santeria supply store, Bronx New York City, 2012





Original Botanica; a Santeria supply store, Bronx New York City, 2012





Charms store, Lower East Side, New York City, 2012





Two Examples of the 'Mesa'

and where life is taking place. So I certainly changed the way I handled my stomach (through which it revived itself to a large degree) I would have never cut it out just-like-that - for it was evidently related to the unraveling of a much larger story. So although Genesis most profoundly embodies much of what could be called 'Queer' (by being an amalgamation of more than one marginalized essence) I find his take on altering a 'given' so radically rather problematic and perhaps even in contrast with the notion of the Wounded Healer. Somehow, by paradoxically radicalizing the agency of our desires, the agency of the body gets smothered and a question rises about acceptance - which so seemingly seems to be the panacea of the Queer - for the Queer are inscribed with a 'stab' wound from very early on as their modes of behavior (their acts) are undesired, not welcome(d) and not accepted. In the native Americas these wonderfully differentiated souls are called Two-Spirit(ed) People; or Berdache; those who are in-between the worlds denoted as 'male' and 'female' and who often performed their role as healers and/or community shamans. Many European, Eurasian and Siberian priests were also either transgendered, transvestite or simply in resonance with both male and female conceptualizations of life - in pursuit of a reality beyond those polarities. Unfortunately today only few seize the Queer birthright to walk on the path of sensitive and articulated 'Two-Spirit-hood' as most 'Queer' attempt to either belong with what rejected them originally or formulate artificial 'gay cultures' which often maneuver the spirit to either the 'male' or 'female' or into the industries of entertainment and dance-clubs.

Surely the 'gays' aren't the only ones fitted to wear the Queer coat-of-arms. To dissolve the Queer into the specific I must argue firstly that Queer-hood isn't attributed to the 'multi-gendered' (whether *physical* or enacted) only, but to *all* that live(d) and/or died in the margins of the social, as my friend AA<sup>xiv</sup> would put it. He invoked all the spirits of the Queer in a series of Rituals fittingly titled 'the Invocations of the Queer Spirit.' These rituals took place in five places in the Americas amongst which Winnipeg, the longitudinal center of North America was one. Together with several accomplices AA generated a location – the ritual – for the Queer Spirit to enter history and to be addressed as still present and with honor. The following *invocation* will illuminate us on the vision he had on who presumably were 'Queer;'

xiv AA Bronson (Vancouver, 1946) is a New York based artist and healer.

'The First Nations shamans and medicine men who recognized the magical and magnetic pull of the Fork and their geographic location as the geographical center of North America; the French, English, Scottish, and Irish explorers, trappers, traders, coureurs de bois, and other adventurers of an all-male life; the Metis under Louis Riel, whose rebellion and persecution marked the early days of Canada as a harsh environment of military rule, intolerance, corruption, and greed; the Chinese railroad workers who built the Grand Trunk, the Canadian Pacific, and the Canadian Northern Railways that converged in Winnipeg; the loggers, miners, and cattlemen, whose camps constituted all-male communities; the missionaries, priests, reverends, and rabbis; the homesteaders, farmers, and ranchers who came from the Ukraine, Poland, Iceland, and Scandinavia- Ukraine, Poland, Iceland, and Scandinavia-those who settled here and those who pushed west; the Douk-hobors, Hutterites, and Mennonites who espoused universal brotherhood and settled here so that they could freely practice their beliefs; the queer working in the hotels, taverns, gambling houses, and brothels of the frontier Red River; the queers of Winnipeg's first Nations and Metis; the musicians of Winnipeg's Philharmonic Orchestra, established in 1880; the dancers of the Winnipeg Royal Ballet, North America's oldest running ballet; the queer professors, teachers, and students of the city's schools; the mistreated workers who took to the streets in the General Strike of 1919; the queer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the brotherhood of Freemasons who built many of Winnipeg's landmarks, included Manitoba's Parliament Building with its Golden Boy and sacred geometry; those who dedicated their lives to psychic research and pioneered psychic photography, turning Winnipeg into a spiritualist hotbed in 1920's and 1930's; the artists of the Manitoba Theatre Centre; the men and women who frequented Happenings, Giovanni's Room, the Office Bathhouse, and the Campus Gay Club at the University of Winnipeg, and in doing so homesteaded a queer community; (and) also: those who were persecuted for their difference and murdered: those who suffered from abuse as children or adults; those who committed suicide; those who died of disease, including the influenza epidemic of 1918 and the encephalitis epidemic of 1922; those who died of HIV and AIDS [...]' (Bronson and Hobbs, 2011, p.)

An invocation like this conjures up a strong backbone for those that are facing the Queerness within the self as well as for those that wish to proclaim the Queer without. For as much as I doubt that these spirits would themselves desire to be addressed as a supposed group - let alone as Queer and/or marginalized - I do however understand, and respect, the attempt of stating with an exclamation mark that everyone is - in one way or another - marginalized. Everyone is indeed specifically endowed with their place and marking in the relational and natural world. The invocation however does specifically address the men of 'all-male life' repetitively, which for me does not so much denote a preference to the persecuted and repressed homosexual men as it expresses the affiliations Queer-men, like themselves, (would) make towards their environment which - within their light of Cosmic equality - consists only of the Queer and the specifiedxv. Yet a fear of losing this acclaimed Queer position by dissolving into the 'mass' remains perhaps, as the ritual did so specifically invoke Queer Spirits as opposed to all Spirits, and thus remains - although being very strong - in isolation.

Exemplary in the case of the Two-, and/or the Queer Spirited is the way the condition 'marginalized' or 'Queer' is being handled – wielded even – as a special asset. Wounds of social nature inflicted upon you in the macro-social world or in the micro-social interpersonal world affect the body and thus its act and vice versa the act the body. Yet the way we go about this specification makes us potentially a victim, a wielder, unaware of it or at peace. Here I would argue in favor of wielding your specifics to such a degree that – even when you are being identified (by either yourself or by another) ás a victim, you see this position as merely denoting the tactics you have obtained towards finding resonance within these specifics. Surely my body is not in decay, in denial, or invisible, like some bodies which are unable to wield any tactics whatsoever – to those that are truthfully being repressed and denied to an extend at which their own bodies are incapable of breaking the spell I can only bless – May Leopards and Eagles find you from within and from without; may Elephants trample the cages one man attires unto

xv Still the position of all-gay groups nowadays often resides in isolation; a space that has been made available by the emancipatory *rites* of the 80's and onwards – hence the prevalent desire of gay men to envision men living amongst men in whatever way they are to acquire an emancipation via interrelationary coherence and acceptance, rather than by division.

another; may All end in Beginning – But the rest I would usher to be inconceivably sharp in knowing who is identifying you as victim and who is repressing or denying your body – I would usher one to explore the power that is within the body as to break with assumptions attired upon it by either yourself, or by others, in order to commence on the exploration of the actual state of the body – 'To be awake, to be ex-dream' (P-Orridge and Louv, 2010, p.17).

4.

To invite you further into my body I would like to ask you to practice sensing your body while you have your eyes closed – breathe in deeply trough the nose and ask yourself what you are feeling – where you are, and where you are going. Attempt to conceive a time in which life proceeds without eyesight. Imagine the spaces you venture to when you are asleep – try to imagine travelling there without losing your awareness. Jodorowsky (2010) writes that paradoxically dreaming taught him to be awake. He practiced lucid dreaming and familiarized himself with being awake – or conscious – in his dreams, now, Jodorowsky argues, he is no longer sure whether he is awake or sleeping since in both of these realities he acts similarly.

When I practice being awake – while sleeping or when 'clinically' awake – I begin to sense the flowing waves of energy within my body to merge into a stable current. The world then seems to come to meet me as if the energy turns its face toward my body. When I extend this practice time loses its duration and it becomes an expansion in which I take part – and with each breath I seem to dissolve into a vibrant relation – I become a key part of what is happening and via the memories of my life I access a body of knowledge that shows me how time within is not linear at all, it continuously renews itself from the source that my body is.

Extending the realization of time being nothing but a field of continuing novelty can be difficult in a square world – the assumed world of *cause-and-effect* – for it is in fact a very convincing stage-play; a magnificent theatrical

production with its own rules and regulations. But when we merge our two brain-halves, via meditation or via other methodologies, the rational division dissolves into the specificity of our bodies – or hearts. When we attune to the specificity of the *inner*-body we conjure up the magic 'thinking' and start to act according to our potential. We take a step outside of *cause-and-effect* and accustom ourselves for a while to that reality – altering the repercussions of the world outside of ourselves. To *think* of the world turning inside-out like that is harder than it is to *experience* it. It has little to do with analytical comprehension as it bases itself upon other principles.

An American archeologist took a step in unraveling this time and space paradox<sup>xvi</sup>. He learned that we are not *in* or *of* the world – but *with* the world. Stephan, as he is called, was researching the *Nasca lines*<sup>xvii</sup> in the way most scholars research; from above and from the outside. Analysis after analysis followed the photos taken from airplanes that revealed the lines as amazing figurations of birds, monkeys, spiders and spiraling other forms. Every sense got lost as the most fantastical ideas about primitive magic were extrapolated and written down – the lines would be airstrips designed for alien spaceships to land onto and so forth. The comprehension within the minds of the scientists created their own fantastic scenarios while the body got excluded from their reconnaissance missions as it would not possess any rational knowing. Stephan sensibly took the advice of a local to *walk* the lines, and so he did.

To walk over the Nasca lines is like entering the consciousness of the people that built them. As Stephan walked over the path of one of the spirals he sequentially faced all the directions of the compass repetatively until his perception started to inverse on itself and he actually began to walk in a 'straight line' while the earth itself was revolving around him – ofcourse from the outside we would still see him walking futher down the spiral, but that is not where the magic takes place.

"[...] As my footsteps continued around the curves of the spiral, it occurred to me that one of the most important functions of the "mysterious" Nasca lines is no mystery at all. The geoglyphs surely provide(d) a kinetic, ritualistic reminder to the Nasca people that their fate was tied to their environment—its natural beauty, its ephemeral abundance, and its life-threatening austerity' (Hall, 2010).

The understanding of the Nasca lines as a mechanism for the sharing of a divine and cosmic experience which places the body embedded in a relational world here, has been obtained by first hand (or first bodied) experience. Again, with or without faith in the mechanism this Nasca tool offers, the participation in the game is what matters\*\*viii.

xviii In Shamanism it is actually accepted that anyone with a consciousness has access, or 'direct revelation,' to what is experienced in the Nasca lines; an inversion of comprehension that places our bodies outside of 'regular' time-and-space. In this light the idea of a healer or shaman being in authority over -, or possession of -, power, is quite backwards and perhaps medieval even. Still the assumption that anyone-else could have power over your body is extended into the realm of the social and the political when we assume ourselves as we are made to - guided - by the great play of our daily automated living. In the core of shamanism lays the understanding that even our waking days are but a dream of reality; a 'Waking Dream', as the people of Africa's Great Rift Valley say.

Hank Wesselman (1941), who has a PhD. in Anthropology spend some years in search of the origins of man in the arid, eroded landscapes of Africa's Great Rift Valley. He explains that at the core of the worldview of the people living there is a perception that the dream is actually the real world. He says, in acceptance of their world view that the human being is actually dreaming twenty-four hours a day, and that the everyday physical – or sensuous world – came into being in response to the dream, not vice versa. These assertions are accompanied by the conviction that the dream world is minded; '[...] it is consciousness itself - alive, intelligent, and power-filled - infusing everything that emanates from it with awareness, vitality and life force. [...] This is as not a philosophical theory [...], nor a concept, but a percept, an absolute known based upon direct experience - upon direct revelation if you will,' (from Ingerman, S and Wesselman, H (2010) Awakening to the Spirit World: The Shamanic Path to Direct Revelation, Sounds True, Inc.)

What is evident in both the case of the Nasca lines, and within the worldview of the waking dream, is the understanding that these views are embedded in a bodily

xvi For more on this read; Hall, S., 2010 Spirits in the sand. National Geographic, [online] Available at: <a href="http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/03/nasca/hall-text">http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/03/nasca/hall-text</a> [Accessed 22 March 2013].

xvii These are large designs that are produced on/in the ground and are typically formed by rocks or similar durable elements of the landscape. The 'Nasca lines' are located in Peru – and I have yet to experience them myself.

My experience with this suspension of regular time and space – or with the suspension of the division reality and imagination – is based in my experience with *Trance Journeys*<sup>xix</sup>, be it intentional induced trances, or involuntary occurring ones such as the one I entered in May 2012, shortly before I went to Iceland.

I was hanging, upside down, from a metal bar underneath the roof of an Amsterdam nightclub – dancing – when I slipped and tumbled downwards through the air. Then suddenly time thickened. I accessed a state in which I could see myself from the future or from out of my body – a state I had already encountered before. I must have been about 12 years old when my friends and I used to make fires in the metal rim of spare car-tires, to cook. That day we were making pancakes. My mother was a special guest of the occasion so I had brought over special flour from the old watermill down

practice rather than in faith. Similar to this would be the practice of shamanism – which is also a *practice* rather than a faith.

'faith is something of a low quotient in these experiments. [...] Rather we are looking at an early, workable model of the future, in which a positive, compassionate unfolding of our latent qualities as a species is defined and described in the vainglorious hope [sic] that we abandon all rational thought and immerse ourselves in the ecstatic series of creative possibilities.' as Genesis (2008, p.) would say.

Important to note here: by 'Shamanism' I refer to the contemporary practice of Shamanism that is presently understood as a practice that is equal, liberal and available for all – 'Shamanism' in it's traditional formats is not to be assessed here entirely as I am not a historian and furthermore interested in the direct experience with matters rather than second-hand comprehension. In this light I study moreover personal accounts of practitioners – knowing that their references to the past and/ or traditions within Shamanism might be acceptably fabricated. I see my resonance within these accounts of others as more valueable than the verifyablity of them.

xix A 'Trance Journey' indicated the conscious exploration that is being exorcises when or while entering a trance – which is an alternated state of mind in which the body disassociates itself with it's direct environment without losing consciousness. This would offer one an experience of reality outside of regular conditioning. A state of trance can be achieved by rhythmic breathing and/or movement, via additives such as mushrooms and/or drugs but also via rhythmic sounds that bring both brain hemispheres into a conjoined frequency of 4-7 Hertz; fusing the rational with the intuitive.

the road and I had, in homage of her found a *new* tire to use. Of course this new tire still had air in it, which the former tire had not. Imagine the pressured air in the tire that was being heated up by the burning of wood and coal inside of its metal rim.

Nothing dangerous was noticeable while we ate the delicious pancakes. After the last pancake had been swallowed by our tingling bodies my mother went inside the house to clean up while I stayed close to the fire. Then something enveloped the moment while a panic sharpened my senses – my eyes zoomed right into the right side of the tire where I could see – as if I were looking through a microscope – a tiny hole appearing. The tire was letting out the hot gassed air it contained and I knew that it was going to explode. In the surreal microseconds that followed I turned my body away and – *boom* – pieces of melted rubber fired into the garden and sideways through my left eyebrow. It had shot itself through the flesh like a comet scraping the face of the earth – it would have gone straight into my left eye had I not turned away before I possibly could have.

A child covered in rubber, ash and blood was brought to a surgeon by a panicking mother and her neighbor – an anesthetic injection needle scraped my skull before my numb and rosy wound was cleansed and stitched very neatly –leaving hardly any visual evidence behind except for my clear recollection of the *thickened* time that had appeared as a plane of options. This same densification of time was appearing again – midair in the club – as I was falling down. I knew in that moment that this drop was going to mean a great deal to me and that it had come at exactly the right moment – a time in which I was putting my body down roads I had previously exhausted. I could see my drop from beyond the moment it took place and I smiled as I whispered; 'it has already happened.'

I was fully relaxed when my body hit the concrete dance floor below – bending and crushing my back and neck – *knowing* this was another gateway.

The next thing I remember is seeing myself recollected in the bathroom of the club with a bunch of people standing around me who were giving me water and asking if I was alright as I kept saying that it had already happened before – that it already happened in the future, and that I knew it was going to happen at exactly that moment. I couldn't explain that knowing this didn't

imply that I dropped down intentionally – it was a fun moment of revelation that ended the next morning. Miraculously I had only sprained 5 ribs.

My doctor casually prescribed 6 to 7 weeks of painkillers; a remedy which I refused immediately, having a way too specific stomach for this kind of medicine.

At home I brought myself into a state of trance by rhythmic drumbeats and rattle sounds of a Sandra Ingerman CDxx to meet a 'Healer' within.

"... I tumbled down through a tunnel in a tree and I wake up in the lower world. The lower world is a dense, muddy and watery jungle with deep pools of rainwater. I am laying in one of them – broken and stuck. I look at the sky which is filled with dark clouds, thunder and lightning.

A full moon pierces trough the dense leaves of the jungle canopies when a Jaguar appears. I feel relieved as well as grateful when the firm and graciously muscular jaguar takes me by my neck and brings me into a hut made of big green leaves. I am left there to dry close to a fire while the jaguar watches. In the morning (still in the trance) I wake up and I find myself placed on a sort of sacrificial table on the outskirts of a small seemingly African village that was bathing in sunshine.

A man dressed in feathers cuts open my body from my groins up to the top of my ribcage while others parade around and make festive sounds. The operating man starts to take out all of my organs and then washes the inside of my torso with brown sandy water until I am completely hollow and clean in that part of my body. He then starts to stuff my torso with stones, rubble and rocks before closing me up again by placing criss-crossed stitches made from a sort of grass.

The people from the village take me up in their parade and bring me to the waterfall – the very same waterfall I keep encountering in my trance journeys – the waterfall that I dare not to jump from, even though I realize it is nothing more than the inversed floating dream version of the steps I do not dare to make in my 'real' life.

The feathered man lifts me up and tosses me down the waterfall and I see myself (a Hare) falling down and down with the water. I then try to realize where I am as I am cast deep inside the river below. I try to see where I am

xx Sandra Ingerman is a psychotherapist and Shamanistic practitioner. She writes books about Trance Journeying as well as on other transcended body-techniques. Her books often include CD's with recorded trance inducing soundtracks and guided meditations.

ending up or what reality there is past this fall, [...]\*xxi – only to find out the reality behind the fall would appear to me when the sock turned inside out again - when I would return from the Trance Journey.

My sprained ribs had vanished as had the pain. I had received several emails informing me that some of my long-term plans had drastically changed. I was accepted at a residency, got denied a grant, got offered a show and decided immediately that I was going to move away from Amsterdam and the unfulfilling reality that I had my body reside in, while my fear of the unknown clouded my desires. Everything that I had been postponing took place that week and the world around me reacted by giving some of the answers I had been waiting for – I booked a flight to Iceland and a flight to New York. Where I met, amongst many others, Suzanne and Genesis.

My unconscious registered the steps I took in the trance, and in turn made the steps in the sensuous reality much easier – as if they had already happened.

By engineering under the skin these 'psycho-magical' *acts* bypass ideas and conclusions that often determine and/or re-enforce situations and traumas as *irreversible* – and thus these acts formulate a *lubricant* for reality, and an increased body potential.

xxi From my personal trance journey notes.

5.

As a last stop in this account surely we must pass through my resonating inner organs such as the heart – and the anus. AA Bronson, who I visited on Fire Island<sup>xxiii</sup> in the summer after the waterfall, is an artist and healer that specializes in butt massages specifically, as he sees the region in and around the anus as a site for stress, anxiety, shame and fear, which is often being neglected in therapies. He sees the anus as a home to punishment since as early as childhood, when 'corrective-slabs' are often destined for the buttock – also later does the spot remain to be the most proficient to hide anxiety and stress – deep within the body, as he would say.

When we initially met, some months earlier, I refused to tell AA that I had actually contacted him for the sake of my own anus and instead we spoke about both our healing practices – which was not a bad alternative – but for some time I had been having troubles with my ass, and with the implications of having one. Where I used to be skilled in meandering from active to passive intercourse and had a strong connection with the multifaceted dimension of my Queer gender, a period without any relationship had left me perceiving this specific openness towards my identity as a weakness. I

xxii Fire Island is an island located offshore New York City's Long Island and is home to a forest denoted by AA as the 'Magic Forest,' as well as a historical site for early Queer endeavors. During my travels through New York I could of course not refuse the invitation he extended to visit him in his condo on the magical sandbank the island really is.

judged my position to be subdominant which in turn made me look at the world cornered – inaccessible to help, love and support. I reigned as a lord over my body as I felt the necessity to explore my 'masculinity' more, in order to overcome my 'weakness' and to get what I wanted.

It took me until late 2012 to confront this lock-up, when I told AA about the increasing stress I could sense in my butthole. He told me then to 'visualize' sending stress and doubt towards the *heart* and not towards the anus – for the anus, as a retractive muscle, is apt at keeping, ánd increasing stress, whereas the heart with its flowing and beating nature is adept at massaging and letting go of that what passes through it. My heart processed my sorrows and I started to heal – my asshole relaxed, now that my focus was elsewhere, and so became pleasurable territory again. I realized that acceptance does not make one docile or subdominant. I could receive again for my heart realized that receiving is as much giving as giving is receiving – I started to radiate again. The problem of my anus as being so closely related to that of my throat chakra was a new knowing<sup>xxiii</sup>. I had lost the ability to speak and state from the heart – as I had lost the ability to have an open relation to my asshole. The coherent ability to act evenly as open diminished. The degree at which this block shaped my world was unknown to me before this point<sup>xxii</sup>.

xxiii I was aware (Shubin, 2008, p.116) that in the pre-embryo phases of our bodies (and in that of many other species) our body develops from a body of several cells into a multi-cellular shape that resembles a *tube-in-a-tube* – signifying at this early stage the magical link between these two premiere holes trough which we process the realities of life – the beginning and the ending of the esophagus – the entryways through which our bodies can be caressed and nurtured from the actual inside. Yet realizing how closely related these two areas where I did not before that point.

xxiv I had been enveloped by the research into the social – devoured social-philosophies written over the past hundred years and started to recognize the 'demons' in the *exteriority* of my life. I waged a battle *against* the exterior reality of the 'normative' which I had never sensed a belonging to. But now I began to see the sketches of my own *autobody*; the auto-assumption of myself in exile and abandonment; a separate atom.

I had been proclaiming holism and unity in my work and writing but failed to recognize my interior integrity to be flawed. The idea that my weakened stomach could have been similarly specified-as-it-is by my own actions in the past – bad

I started to develop an increased knowledge of the digestive system and would discover the existential truths subsiding in my stool together with my friend Loyendaxxv. We realized that we are to look at our excrements much more than we admittedly or openly do - tracing back the processes of our digestion makes us aware of what we select - choose - in the beginning and thus in our continuing days. He told me once that he is the proud producer of an unsmelly stool. He explained that his stool had this specific quality as a result of the attention he pays to what and how he eats. He told me that at a younger age he would often feel demasculinized or lacking by having his handicap - until he realized that every judgment made about his person (by himself and by others) were based on a very external and superficial levels. He realized that the ones that would comment on him had no substantial ground to base any judgment on as they were not aware of the processes of his internal body. Loyenda jokingly told me that he was certain that all of the people that would think less of him probably possessed stinking poop, as all of them are still adrift in their automated life - asleep in the dream - and

nutrition, dwelling on stress and more unconscious action – became the signifying realization which made me attune even more to the voice of my body.

xxv Loyenda Franco (1956) was born in Angola. In his early life he was conditioned by the proximity of a civil war that took place there for 31 years – dividing the people physically and spiritually, as he would tell me. At the age of 20 he fled to Portugal where he made a living in abandoned train wagons and by selling self-made jewelry. Having Polio did not make his life in exile easy – especially after breaking his leg at a younger age, when he was climbing a coconut tree.

For the major part of the year Loy, now lives in Amsterdam, where we would often meet to talk at length about food, nutrition, the body, the spirit and the cosmos. I would be welcomed into his house and would find myself surrounded by hand-made furniture, self-built tiffany lamps and beautifully crafted leather bags and pieces of clothing. In his house you can also see the many wheelchairs Loyenda has designed for use on more extreme environments.

Loyenda has, according to me, ascended the mountain within as he taught himself to let go of the assumptions that had been made over him and his life, and to attune to his specificity; being a handicapped refugee. Loyenda has developed Yoga techniques for specific bodies, is a teacher in Raw-food and Ayurvedic massage and is currently building a Yoga-Retreat Center in Chiang Mai (Thailan) by hand.

in no way acting awakened or conscious towards their assumptions and acts.

We would trace back the processes of our digestion to the very beginning. This would go as far as developing awareness of what exactly we are eating, of what kind of information we are (consciously, or unconsciously) digesting and of what we are assuming to be (our) reality. When we compared the production of our excrement to the production of garbage we realized how much of both bodies actually produce.

Seeing that humans do not automatically identify themselves with their bodies but rather with their minds, it is another league to have humans identify themselves as a relation to – or with – their bodies, to – or with – their organs and to – and with – their shit, only in anticipation of them realizing their resonance with the whole entire universe.

Of course many cultural engineers such as witches, sages, shamans and other 'heretics' have been working with this realization throughout our days only to have been taken for granted by the rise of a more capitalized socialcoherence of definitive bodies with clear in- and outsides. However, phenomena such as excrement as well as tears, spirits, saliva, souls and semen fail to support the division between an inside and outside of the body as they appear only as relational phenomena that advocate reality to take place in-between itself. A space such as the stomach alone already displays the falsehood of inside and outside as the food we digest in the stomach is both outside as well as inside of us as we are but a canal or tube orbiting around that which we metabolize. Our being - our body - resides, similarly to everything else in this universe, in a realm that functions as lubricant, signifier and energetic exchange-market that does not denote the mechanism of swapping one thing for another in search of value and profit - but an exchange that contributes to both partakers and which doesn't leave any one victor. The distinction between the self and the Cosmos is thus a false dichotomy akin to the distinction between (inner)body and (outer)world. In a sense the body is the world, as the world is the body. These realms seem to have always been interconnected - mirroring in some way, if not the same in the end.

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