

# **Healing the Self. Healing the World.**

## **The protagonist without organs**

**by Susanne Kennedy**

The protagonist no longer exists and the stage where he used to stand in the center of it all, is filled with other beings - human and non-human. They speak with voices and faces that are not their own. They move with bodies that have tentacles and feelers and tails, they crawl and float and are sometimes operated by remote control. They communicate in languages we have yet to learn.

The protagonist's body has burst into thousands of fragments, has become molecular, has become imperceptible. He is in the process of becoming and is no longer a „he“ but a „she“ or an „it“. He or she or it has developed a body without organs. A body that has become part of everything else, be it animal or plant or robot.

In the audience people cry and shout, they want their money back. They bang the doors shut when leaving the auditorium. Or they snort with indignation: „this is outrageously ridiculous!“

The voices on stage trample the well known rhythm underfoot. They howl and vibrate or become intensely quiet. The beings on stage perform an exorcism. It is the human being that is being exorcized.

In the beginning there was: HE. Man as the measure of all things so that he may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

He separated himself from the chorus' dancing and recitation and pronounced „I“: the birth of the tragic hero. From there he went out to conquer the world and all its inhabitants. He declared himself as „self“ and everything else as „other“. He declared himself as a rational and thinking being and on stage he recounted his adventures: conquering the savages and killing the beasts.

The monologue of the imperialist about the universal human condition was exquisite: He told us how he was created in Gods own image. He made him a subject, an organism - a tragic Adam who was cast out of paradise because he was seduced by Eve. The protagonist shouts, he weeps, he implores, he

moves the audience to tears. They see themselves in him! The applause was never-ending. The critics were raving about it.

But now! Suddenly in the middle of his performance the face of our protagonist distorts, his words become slurry, unrecognizable, his movements that have been strong and decisive become weak and lifeless. There is a cry from afar but which originates in his chest. His eyes roll back into his head and there: he bursts into thousand of fragments!

His hard leather body armor has been pulverized and he is now in the process of becoming a body without organs! The audience gasps with horror. They are witness to this Dionysian castration process.

*„No organ is constant anymore as regards either function or position,...sex organs sprout everywhere,...rectums open, defecate and close,...the entire organism changes color and consistency in split-second adjustments“<sup>1</sup>*

His becoming is never-ending and never finished. The play goes on and on. Hours become days become weeks and years. Our protagonist is „becoming-women, becoming-child, becoming animal, -vegetable, or -mineral; becoming-molecular of all kinds, becoming- particles.“ In the end he has become imperceptible. The audience is asleep or has left the theatre. What is there to see? Where is the drama? Whom can they identify with? Where is the hero?

The centre stage has become empty but in the margins there is movement and giggling. There are creatures whispering to the audience:

*„Find your body without organs. Find out how to make it. It's a question of life and death, youth and old age, sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out.“<sup>2</sup>*

The beings place our protagonist - or what is left of him, or rather what isn't left of him - one last time on the autopsy table to remake his anatomy.

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<sup>1</sup> William Burroughs, Naked Lunch

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus

Their dialogue sounds as follows:

- *Man is sick because he is badly constructed.*
- *We must make up our minds to strip him bare in order to scrape off that animalcule that itches him mortally.*
- *God, and with god his organs.*

Our Protagonist, who is no longer the protagonist, answers joyously:

- *For you can tie me up if you wish,  
but there is nothing more useless than an organ.  
When you will have made him a body without organs,  
then you will have delivered him from all his automatic  
reactions and restored him to his true freedom.  
Then you will teach him again to dance wrong side out  
as in the frenzy of dance halls  
and this wrong side out will be his real place.<sup>3</sup>*

A few psychoanalysts who are still in the dark auditorium shout: „Stop, find your self again!“ but their desperate cries fade away.

The protagonist without organs ist still in the process of becoming. It is a joyous happening. He no longer needs his voice to tell us how he killed his father and married his mother. He no longer needs a face to cry his tragic tears. The complex has vanished into the hot air of the theatre.

Meanwhile on stage the machines have started move to Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*. Like ballet dancers they sway across the stage, sprinkling white powder from ground-up bones, used as fertilizer, on stage. When all is white, a group of human beings in white protection suits enter and clear the stage. Only 4 people applaud.

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<sup>3</sup> Artaud, Selected Writings

The human face  
is an empty power,  
a field of death...  
...after countless thousands of years that the human face  
has spoken  
and breathed,  
one still has the impression  
that it hasn't even begun to  
say what it is and what it knows  
(Artaud)