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Macrocossms within microcosms

Following PATAÑJALI'S definition of yoga in Yoga-Sūtra 1.2 *yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ*, yoga usually has been interpreted as a practice to calm down (*nirodhaḥ*) the restless agitations (*vṛtti*) of our embodied minds (*citta*) during their entanglement with the material world (*prakṛti*). On the basis of this classic definition a *yoginī* [practitioner of yoga] has to turn her senses away from the outside world in order to unite herself with the absolute that dwells *in* all of us.

In his article "'Open' and 'Closed' Models of the Human Body in Indian Medical and Yogic Traditions" David G. WHITE suggested to call such an orthodox picture of the Indian body its *closed* model. "As is well known, PATAÑJALI'S principal emphasis is not on the *vibhūti*s or the power of leaving an 'open' yogic body, but rather in the total isolation (*kaivalyam*) of the transcendent self through total yogic integration (*samādhi*), based on a 'closed' model of the same." (WHITE 2006, pp. 10-11)

Although this closed model became the most prominent one in the course of time, there did exist a wide range of significant alternatives in ancient times as well. (cf. WHITE 2006, p. 2)

It will be a main goal of this text to offer such an alternative reading of the Indian body as an *open system*. It is constitutive for such a view of the body to understand it as an entity, always already *ex-posed*, *substantially*, toward the world it is surrounded by, so that it is impossible for a body to hide itself from the environment it is embedded in and affected by.

In the final part of this text I will compare this ancient Indian concept of an *open model of bodies* with contemporary efforts of Jean-Luc NANCY to induce such a concept in the West by interpreting bodies as a form of a *world-wide being-with*. "Bodies are never a complete entity, no fulfilled space (space is everywhere fulfilled), but an open space, rather a spatial space than an occupied space, they are what we call a site. Bodies are sites of existence and there is no existence that can

take place without a site, a being-here, without a 'here', without a 'look here' for 'this here'." (NANCY 2003, p. 18) [English translations of German or French books quoted in this article are made by myself. The page numbers refer to the German editions.]

According to NANCY so far there has not yet been any thoughtful investigation into the ontology of bodies because ontology *as such* has never been considered *as* the ontology of *bodies*; *as states of existences*, or more precisely, as states of a *world-wide local* existence. (cf. NANCY 2003, p. 19)

The local body as the seat of cosmic planes

"Om. Dawn is the head of the horse sacrificial. The sun is his eye, his breath is the wind, his wide open mouth is Fire, the master might universal [...]; the stars are his bones and the sky is the flesh of his body." (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.1. AUROBINDO 1981, p. 327)

Like in many early haṭha yogic, tantric and alchemistic traditions (cf. ELIADE 1969, p. 235), the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* too draws a *macrocosmic* picture of our human bodies with the sun as its eyes, the wind as its breath etc. According to this text a body is not merely a three dimensional corporal thing located at a certain place (*loka*), but rather the local seat of cosmic regions. As far as these regions literally *take place* in the birth of a body only—"dawn is the head of the horse sacrificial" says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*—they are not only *external* to the place a body is corporally located at, but dwell *in* the body as well, insofar as it *is* the local seat of *their* world-wide existence. (cf. AUROBINDO 1971, p. 275)

"As is well known, both ayurvedic and haṭha yogic traditions conceive of the human body as a microcosmic replica of the universal macrocosm, whence the following two aphorisms, found in the *Caraka Saṃhitā*: 'Earth is that which is solid in man, water is that which is moist, fire is that which heats up, air is breath, ether the empty spaces, *brāhman* is the inner self (ātman);' (*Caraka Saṃhitā* 4.5.5) and 'Indeed, this world is the measure (*sammita*) of the man. However much there is in man, that much there is in the world' (*Caraka Saṃhitā* 4.4.13)." (WHITE 2006, p. 3)

The spatiality of a body apparently has been interpreted in these ancient texts in a *twofold sense*. On the one hand they do denote bodies as *local entities* corporally appearing at a certain place in space and time, on the other they take them as the corporal manifestation of a *world-wide plane*, of an open, broad and luminous *field* [*loka*], often characterized by the Sanskrit word *brhat*. *Brhat* is usually attributed to a vast, shining, bright, luminous entity. In matters pertaining to bodies it indicates their full-grown vastness, luminosity and brightness.¹

As far as the *spatiality* of a body is a twofold thing *in-itself*, the first two limbs (*aṅga*) mentioned in *PATAÑJALI'S* Yoga-Sūtra 2.29 *yama* and *niyama* are twofold too in regard to their spatial characteristics. *Yama* is a practice determined to

improve the relation of a *yoginī* towards its environment, where *niyama* indicates the relation of a *yoginī* toward her own *local* body. (cf. PATAÑJALI, 2.30-2.45)

Since in ancient times *improving* one's existence meant to make it vaster, wider, broader, more luminous and shining (*br̥hat*), in addition to these first two *aṅgas* PATAÑJALI also proposes to *stretch* the corporal flexibility of a body while practicing *āsanas* (third *aṅga*) and to *stretch* the brightness of one's breath by practicing *prāṇājāma* (fourth *aṅga*) in accordance with the very first and most fundamental aspect of *yama*, *ahiṃsā*: the yogic imperative not to harm any living being despite one intends to widen, stretch, broaden, extend, spread out the dominion of one's existence [all over the world] while practicing yoga.

Given that *every* local body is the local site of world-wide planes inhabiting a body, bodies do never merely exist at a stable, solid place within space and time. Rather they do *exists*—in the literal meaning of the word “*ek*-sistence”—as an *out-standing* entity, a priori in touch with the environment they are surrounded by.

God of Vastness (Varuṇa)

The field, the local appearance of a body is *surrounded by* has often been identified with the God *Varuṇa* in old Vedic times. The root of the word *Varuṇa* comes from *vāra*, “environing”, “enclosing”, “surrounding”, “pervading” something. It indicates the circumference a body is locally embedded in and in touch with. (cf. AUROBINDO 1971, p. 447)²

On the basis of this fact, the *R̥g-Veda* called *Varuṇa* the One of whom wideness is the habitation. (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 453) Being the One who surrounds all planes of existence without being surrounded by them, he is the God who dwells in the utmost heaven: *br̥had dyau*. “*Varuṇa* is this highest heaven, this soul-surrounding ocean, this ethereal possession and infinite pervasion (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 447) [...]; surrounding us with light his possession reveals that dark, *Vṛtra*'s obsession had withheld and obscured. His godhead is the form or spiritual image of an embracing and illuminating Infinity.” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 448) *Varuṇa* is the One who inhabits the *infinite* void that envelops all finite realms of existence. Therefore he is simply called the God of vastness. (cf. AUROBINDO 1971, p. 473 FN 5)

Insofar as human beings are capable to travel toward this realm of infinity via the astral rays of their bodies, they are able to experience this utmost world *themselves* that surrounds the entire cosmos at its outmost periphery.

Considering this all, it obviously would be a great misunderstanding to misinterpret the *macrocosmic* picture of the human body drawn in these ancient texts merely as a *metaphorical* description of our corporal being in a poetic language. Rather it is the other way round. Many of these texts—like the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* quoted above—try to reveal the *macrocosmic* dimensions,

always already *embodied* in the local site of a body in order to reveal that bodies do “ek-sist” as *outstanding* entities, constantly *dislocating* themselves in the literary meaning of the Greek word *meta-phero* (*transfer*) while corporally sensing the environment they are located in. Such a *cosmic*, to wit *world-wide* picture of the body has to be called an open one since it honors the fact that bodies are a priori exposed toward the vast openness of the world they are surrounded by as soon as they appear in space and time.

On the world-wide existence of a *br̥haccharīra*

Somebody who possesses a bright, vast and luminous body therefore has simply been called a *br̥haccharīra* in *Ṛg-Vedic times*. The body of a *br̥haccharīra* is *br̥hat*, broad, wide, shiny, brilliant and glamorous, because the *dehin* (body) of such a *dehin* [one who possesses such a body] penetrates all three cosmic dimensions distinguished by the *sages* (*ṛsis*) of that times: Earth (1), the *antarikṣa* or middle region (2) and heaven (*dyau*) (3), the third cosmic region of the universe.

“The *ṛsis* [*sages*] speak of three cosmic divisions, Earth, the *antarikṣa* or middle region and Heaven (*dyau*); but there is also a greater Heaven (*br̥had dyau*) called also the Wide World, the Vast (*br̥hat*), and typified sometimes as the Great Water, *maho arnah*. This *br̥hat* is again described as *ṛtam br̥hat* or in a triple term *satyam ṛtam br̥hat*.” (AUROBINDO 1971, pp. 42)

An early hymn, devoted to Mitra-Varuṇa explicitly utters the yearning of the *ṛsis* to reach this utmost heaven that envelops all other beings, *br̥had dyau*, for the sake of their happiness. “[B]ring to us, O *Varuṇa*, the might and the vastness; form in us the wide world for the conquest of our plenitude, for bliss, for our soul’s happiness.” (Ṛg-Veda V.64.6. Aurobindo 1971, p. 472)

The *body* of a *br̥haccharīra* obviously has to become vast and luminous (*br̥hat*) because the radiation of such a *dehin* is determined *to reach* the utmost heaven with its rays, *br̥had dyau*, the seat of Lord *Varuṇa*, called the king of all kingdoms, the Lord of all divine and mortal beings in old Vedic times. (cf. AUROBINDO 1971, p. 455)

Since a devotee of *Varuṇa* therefore exposes the most far-reaching and outstanding *mode of existence possible at all*, the entire body of a *br̥haccharīra* starts to shine bright and luminous. The *astral* body (soul), because it has learned to stay in touch with the realm of infinity (heaven) and therefore “ek-sists” “infinitely stretched”, as well as the *solid* body who’s local appearance shines bright, precisely because the local existence of such a *dehin* ecstatically experiences the vastness of its world-wide “ek-sistence”. Being sensitively in contact with the vast openness that envelops all other cosmic regions a *br̥haccharīra* is in the delightful position to discover the cosmic aspect of corporal beings. Literarily “ek-sisting” as the local

site of somebody whose astral body has corporally reached the realm of infinity, it is important to notice that in ancient times the *local* body of a *br̥haccharīra* is not only intentionally, but *corporally* in touch with the realm of infinity. Having grown brighter and vaster in the course of time, the full-grown body of a *br̥haccharīra* ultimately has *physically* entered the vast void, *Varuṇa* inhabits, via the rays the local body of such a *dehin* sends out toward infinity. – This realm of infinite, an infinitely bright body is in touch with, has later been identified with the World of Brahman.

“The *Maitri Upaniṣad* calls the channel that leads to immortality the *sūṣumnā*, along with, through the junction (*yukti*) of breath, the syllable *om*, and the mind, one may progress aloft (*utkramet*). (*Maitri Upaniṣad* 6.21) This same channel, ‘piercing through the solar orb, progresses beyond (*atikramya*) [the sun] to the World of Brahman (*Maitri Upaniṣad* 6.30).” (WHITE 2006, p. 7)

As far as human bodies, at least in principle, can enter this *sūṣumnā* channel that a priori yokes the solid body of a human being with the World of Brahman, the outstanding journey of such a trip toward infinity, in itself stretches the astral body of a *br̥haccharīra* infinitely and thereby makes it the proper place of a local existence that shines crystal clear, like a diamond, capable to absorb and reflect everything the way it enters the realm of such a brilliant body (*siddhi-deha*).

Thus it becomes clear why yoga has prominently been described as a method that enables us “to reach a point one could not reach before”. (DESIKACHAR 1980, p. 2) Since a *yoginī* is ecstatically directed toward *br̥had dyau*—not only mentally but *physically* as well—the body of a *yoginī* is in the brilliant position to overcome, successively, the ignorant status of a body; its stubborn narrowness, in which it falsely identifies itself with the *local* space it inhabits only rather than with the vast and open plane of its macrocosmic existence.

To conquer this ordinary heaviness, dullness and ignorance (*tamas*) of vulgar bodies, a *yoginī* has to stretch her body in order to get rid of the stiffness and narrowness of her embodied mind (*citta*).

According to Yoga-Sutra 2.30, the body of a *br̥haccharīra*, or, expressed in later terms used by PATANĀJALI himself, the body of a *brahmacarya*³ who has learned to stay in contact with the World of Brahman finally will realize the utmost *yama* possible at all *aparigraha*.⁴ “The last *yama* is *aparigraha*. *Aparigraha* means ‘hands off,’ ‘not to grasp.’ *Parigraha* is the opposite of the word *dāna*, which means ‘to give.’ In the way we use *aparigraha* it means ‘to receive exactly what is appropriate’.” (DESIKACHAR 1980, p. 108.)

Once somebody is infinitely stretched toward infinity and henceforth stays in touch with the endless void that comprises all finite beings, one has reached the ultimate quality one can desire and long for: not to demand anything else and nothing more than that, one already possesses.

Aparigraha, being satisfied with what one *is* and what one *has* is the Indian idea of *amor fati*.—It is generally known that this concept has strongly been reaffirmed in the West by Friedrich NIETZSCHE and poststructuralist readers of his work. (cf. DERRIDA 1988)

Accomplishing *aparigraha*, *amor fati*, a *brahmacarya* has finally mastered the ultimate aspect of *yama*; not because he became an ascetic, but because he has learned to affirm, enjoy and embrace his world-wide existence entirely in an *ecstatic* way.

Substantial externalization of a body

On the following pages I will provide some more arguments that this *out-standing* performance of a body, in which it spreads the presence of its local being all over the world, has been understood as a *corporal* procedure and not a sheer *mental* one in ancient times.

According to this claim one has to assume that a body, every time it turns itself toward its environment, *in fact does emit parts of its bodily substance* into the world that surrounds it. An outstanding performance that allows a body henceforth to sense and ex-perience even the space *external* to its massy form. Literarily a *fragile* procedure, because as soon as a body *physically* transgresses its solid form *by the radiation of the particles* it has started to emit the body involved in this act actually splits in two parts: On one side it still exists in a solid form at a certain place, but on the other it began to “*ek-sist*”, *at least partially*, in a second (astral) body that has left its solid form in all directions on its world-wide journey through space and time.—An illuminative moment in the life of a body, because it enlightens the environment *of a body with the light of its own corporal radiation*. *Physically* stepping outward itself, *any* body that *shines* consequently posses a second, luminous “*ek-sistence*” *outside* the length, bright and depth of its solid appearance according to this ancient doctrine.

“The rays (*raśmi*) of the sun, moon, or any body possessed of radiance or splendor are the means by which [a] body externalizes its innate powers or qualities. Without its rays the sun cannot shine. In the same way, individuals externalize their innate sense capacities by ‘beaming’ them outside of themselves, when they perceive objects. The beam or ray is what connects the perceiver with the object of perception. Like the sun, the perceiver externalizes a portion of himself, in the form of a ray of perception, without losing himself in that ray or in the perceived object that is the endpoint of that ray. [...] In this special case, as in the general case of perception, the concrete channel through which one eternalizes oneself remains a solar ray (*raśmi*) which, as was already indicated in the early *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, is concretely linked to the internal channels (*nāḍis*) of the subtle body.” (WHITE 2004, pp. 617-618)

Via the sun-like rays, which bodies automatically emit by virtue of their very nature of being a *corporal, hence spatially extended* being, each singular body is never an isolated thing-in-itself, but rather the singular of a plurality, always

already in touch with other bodies it is surrounded by. (cf. THOLEN 2002, NANCY 2004)

Once a body starts to radiate and shine, the radiation of the body obviously has to *penetrate* the local *surface* of a body in order to get out of the finite borders of its massy appearance. It is important to recognize that a body, while actually *perforating* the surface of its local form by pouring some of its *soma* out into the peripheral world thereby creates a porosity *at* the surface of its corporal being that henceforth enables it to sense and experience *both* somatic dimensions of its world-wide existence *at once*. Its local, solid site as well as the site of its astral “ek-sistence” within the macro-cosmic dimensions of the radiation it has rolled out during its luminous appearance. Existing *partially* in a solid body, *partially* in an astral body, the subject involved in such a procedure has finally acquired a *skin like surface* by virtue of which it is able to *sense* its environment *directly on the periphery of its bodily surface*.

Though *every* body that radiates exists in this multi-dimensional sense within in space and time “[y]ogis can, however, through their ‘out of body concentration’ (*videha-dhāraṇā*), greatly augment this process, and externalize far more powerful components of themselves (their breath, energy, mind, intellect, consciousness etc.) in order to leave their bodies behind [...]” (WHITE 2004, p. 618) Intentionally *pouring out* (*visarga*) some of their soma into the outer world to ultimately connect their astral rays with the highest heaven, *brhad dyau*, the *deha* of a *yoginī* finally starts to shine vast and bright, like the sun.

In many Hindu traditions the channel that combines the local body of a *yoginī* with the cosmic realm of the infinite void is signified as *dvādaśānta*, the “end of twelve”, because it was perceived to be a located twelve fingerbreadths above the fontanel. (cf. WHITE 2006, p. 11)

Once a *yoginī* is able to open this yoke (*cakra*) so close to the solid form of her body, a passage opens that directly connects her local form of her being with the utmost cosmic sphere of the universe, the World of Brahman.

Changing the quality of matter: a corporal trope

It is important to realize the *performative* aspect involved in this fragmentation of a body. Because, directing the *radiation* of a *body* toward the realm of the vast openness that envelops all other cosmic regions actually takes place as the performance of a caesura that marks *a radical change of the entire quality, the material world as such is corporally experienced*.

Whereas ordinary bodies usually experience the *prakṛti* aspect of the material world, in which our corporal existence appears as a narrow, heavy and painful reality (*tamas*) that imprisons the cosmic regions of our mind, the *body of a yoginī*,

in touch with the World of Brahman, acquires a *śakti* quality: the quality of the feminine aspect of the divine Lord (Īśvara).

According to ELIADE'S thoughtful investigations on the relation of Yoga, Tantrism and Alchemy, this transformation of *the way, how* we corporally experience the quality of matter in our own bodily existences has been an important aspect of many tantric yoga traditions, especially in regard to their sexualized ritual performances. (cf. WHITE 2003, p.1-26)

“Every naked woman incarnates *prakṛti*. Hence she is to be looked upon with the same adoration and the same detachment that one exercises in pondering the unfathomable secret of nature, its limitless capacity to create. [...] The second stage consists in the transformation of the woman-*prakṛti* into an incarnation of the Śakti; the partner in the rite becomes a goddess, as the yogin must incarnate the god.“ (ELIADE 1969, p. 259)

Wherever such a tantric ritual is accomplished successfully, the body of the ritual performers acquired a *sattva* quality by virtue they are able henceforth to mirror and reflect the true positions of things. Having implemented the form of vastness *into* the realm of matter through the ritual adoration and detachment of corporal enjoyments, earth itself has become a “divine” place, in which plenitude, bliss and bodily happiness flourishes. (cf. ELIADE 1969, p. 259)

“The ceremonial union between the *brahmacārin* (lit., ‘chaste young man’) and the *punīscalī* (lit. ‘prostitute’) may well express a desire to effect the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the reintegration of polarities, for we find the same motif in the mythologies and the iconographic symbolism of many archaic cults.” (ELIADE 1969, p. 256-257)

The ritual coitus (*maithuna*) between a “chaste young man” and a “prostitute” is primordially determined to induce the rhythmic concentration of the bodies involved in the tantric rite in order to merge their polarities, so that the performers *corporally* start to sense the brightness of their earthly existences and the gayness of their corporal beings.

Matter, in Indian philosophies, therefore essentially can possess both qualities. It *can* appear as a prison for any body prominently experiencing the *prakṛti* aspect of it. On the other hand, once this dull aspect of matter has been mastered, matter can *expose* its divine qualities (*śakti*).

In alchemist traditions this *śakti* aspect of matter has been carried to its extreme in assuming that our ordinary body can even be transformed by the successful accomplishment of adequate rites into an *extraordinary body* (*siddhi-deha, divya-deha*)⁵ that has become “incorruptible” through drinking the soma wine of immortality.

“The body thus built up in the course of time by the Hatha yogins, tantrists, and alchemists corresponded in some measure to the body of a ‘man-god’—a concept that, we know, has a long pre-

history, both Indo-Āryan and pre-Āryan. The tantric theandry was only a new variant of the Vedic macranthropy. The point of departure for all these formulas was of course the transformation of the human body into a microcosmos, an archaic theory and practice, examples of which have been found almost all over the world and which, in Āryan India, had already found expression from Vedic times. The ‘breaths,’ as we have seen, were identified with the cosmic winds and with the cardinal points. Air ‘weaves’ the universe, and breath ‘weaves’ man [...].” (ELIADE 1969, p. 235)

Driven by the vital force to manifest the ‘man-god’ form of a body here on Earth,⁶ one could say that the ancient Indian concept of the human body was a *hybrid one* since it assumed that the quality of matter permanently oscillates between the *pakṛti* and *śakti* aspect of the material world, at least in a human life.

The Dawn

In order to actually *posses* such a diamond body (*vajrayāna*)—a *yoginī* has to direct the vital forces of her horses (*aśva*) toward infinity in order to induce the factual birth of such a lumionous body. “Om. Dawn is the head of the horse sacrificial,” says the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. (1.1.) “There are so many dawns that have not yet glowed”⁷ NIETZSCHE quotes from the Ṛg-Veda as the motto of his book *Morgenröthe (Dawn)*.⁸

Both texts force the *aśvas*,⁹ the vital forces of our corporal existence to look ahead in order to prepare the arrival of a new mode of existence, in which a living being has actually learned to affirm the vastness of its bodily existence as a mode of being-in-the-world rather than being-in-itself.

“‘Dawn,’ says the ṛṣi, ‘is the head of the Horse sacrificial.’ Now the head is the front, the part of us that faces and looks upon our world,—and Dawn is that part to the Horse of the Worlds [...] it is the Being’s movement forward, it is its impulse to look out at the universe in which it finds itself and looking toward it, to yearn, to desire to enter upon possessions of a world which looks so bright because of the brightness of the gaze that is turned upon it. The word *Uṣas* means etymologically coming into manifested being; and it could mean also desire or yearning.” (AUROBINDO 1981, pp. 337-338)

Corpus. (Jean-Luc NANCY)

So far I have considered *ancient Indian* concepts of a *bright, vast and open body*. I would like to continue my considerations with some remarks on Jean-Luc NANCY’S remarkable text *Corpus*, in which he actually offers us an extraordinary concept of the body.

Assuming that one has to acknowledge that “[t]he whole philosophy of nature’ has to be revised, once ‘nature’ is thought of as the exposition of bodies” (NANCY

2003, p. 35), NANCY argues that a body can never be a *thing-in-itself precisely* because the *surface* of a body functions like a *skin*. (cf. NANCY, pp 18-19)

A skin, however, does not merely *cover* a body at the margins of its corporal surface; despite the function of enveloping a body it also *opens* it while making its surface porous. This sensible act, in which a body actually realizes that it *already "ek-sists" in a world*, surrounded and affected by, radically changes the whole spatial situation of a body. Because recognizing the world-wide openness of its position, a body reveals the *exposedness of its* local appearance. A priori thrown *into* a world that surrounds it, a body no more appears to be a thing-in-itself, but rather an *extraverted* being—a mode of “partes extra partes” (NANCY 2003, p. 29), since it can never take place *with-out* a world, *in* which it appears.

Realizing *its ecstatic* nature as a mode of *being-in-the-world*, bodies “are not merely in a space, but space in the bodies as well”. (NANCY 2003, p. 29) In touch with the vast openness of the world that surrounds it, it is part of a wider, vaster, broader space always. Appearing *within* an outside that exceeds its local appearance, a body is already *in distance* with itself. Constantly distancing itself from itself it actually *ex-poses* that a body is “infinitely more than a primordial (finite) being only.” (NANCY 2003, p. 29)

Leaving the home of its “proper place” to extend the presence of its corporal appearance upon the world external to it, this act of widening and transgressing itself is nothing alien to a body, no inappropriate operation against its very own nature, but rather the *proper, authentic way* in which a body follows its very own nature: to continuously stretch the inner-worldly extensions of its world-wide existence.

The operation of a body, in which it *breaks-away-from-itself*, flees, and thereby fragments itself, is finally nothing else than very essence *exposed* in the lifelong performance of a body. Since the *aseity* of a body essentially consists in the movement, in which a body *transgresses* its local form of being, it follows, that the *proper* place of a body can never be fixed by measuring the spatial extensions of its local appearance. On the contrary; – driven by its very nature to widen the realm of its luminous appearance, “a body is that which pushes the margins of its existence to the utmost extreme by padding in the dark, grasping, hence touching.” (NANCY 2003, p. 124)

One does not have to *push* a body to flee its proper place, since bodies do follow this move automatically. According to their very nature they long to encounter, grasp and touch *other* bodies.

Extension

“The soul is extended, but does not know it.” (NANCY 2003, p. 23) This note from FREUD, published posthumously, summarizes the central endeavor of

NANCY'S book *Corpus*. One should forget to think of souls as immaterial entities, because they are, according to this line, rather the (in)tensional aspect of corporal extensions. "The soul is extension or the extensional aspect of a body. [...] After we have emphasized the aspect of the *ex-* in the phenomenon of *ex-tension*, by now we have to consider the tensional aspect of an *ex-tension*. What is the essence of an extension? Every extension is an expansion. But an expansion is also a tension in the sense of a tense intensity." (NANCY 2003, p. 123)

The Greek root of the word *tensio*, *tonos*, still emphasizes this tensional aspect of extensions. Bodies primordially *feel* the world-wide extensions of their appearance in the tones and tunes, produced in them by the world-wide relations they are corporally embedded in. (cf. NANCY 2003, p. 124) Emotionally tuned by the sound of their world-wide strings, inter-medially yoking a body with others, the realm of emotions produced in a body is never a "private" matter of an isolated thing. If anything, it is much more the result of world-wide relations, a body is involved in and engaged with as a mode of being-with-others.

To emphasize this *communitarian* sense of emotions, NANCY proposed to call them com-motions, because "[c]ommotion is a word that has the advantage to contain the prefix 'with' (*cum*). Commotion indicates the phenomenon of 'being-actually-moved-with'." (NANCY 2003, p. 125) The commotions of our souls, despite they are experienced *in* one, are effects, emotionally derived from external relations a body maintains in accordance with other bodies.

The etymology of the word "ex-perience" speaks a clear language. *In Latin experiri* means "going out", "moving away", "opening oneself for an adventure", a trip, without knowing whether one will return back home or get astray in the course of the journey. (cf. NANCY 2003, p. 124)

In order to remember the fact that our souls are extended beings—souls are extended, but actually have displaced this truth—NANCY suggests that we have to recover foremost that *bodies substantially matter*. A doctrine that has to be developed up to the point where it becomes impossible for anybody to ignore the substantial weight of a body; either by spiritualizing the concept of a body in order to get rid of matter at all, or by reducing the essence of corporal substances to a massy "something", an isolated thing-in-itself, deprived and hijacked from its outside. (cf. NANCY p. 126)

Conclusion

As far as the local place that takes place in a corporal manifestation constitutes the three dimensional *volume* of a *body* only from which the *world-wide* dimension of its earthly existence cannot be separate entirely or subtracted, it is the picture of the body as a *world-wide* entity that has to be recalled for the sake of an open model of bodies. Sensing the cosmic space that surrounds a body, the eyes, ears and mouth of a body suddenly opens. Astonished from the infinite vastness of its world-wide existence, it is on the way to expose and discover the brightness of its being.

„Now the word *aśva* must originally have implied strength or speed or both before it came to be applied to a horse. In its first or root significance it means to exist pervadingly and so to possess, have, obtain or enjoy. It is the Greek ἔχω (old Sanskrit *aśā*), the ordinary word in Greek for ‘I have’. It means, also and even more commonly, to eat or enjoy. [...] Shall we not say, therefore, that *aśva* to the *ṛsis* [*sages*] meant the unknown power made up of force, strength, solidity, speed and enjoyment¹⁰ that pervades and constitutes the material world?” (AUROBINDO 1981, p. 337)

The *aśvas*, the vital powers of the horses are needed in order to let this open, outstanding *deha* actually take place in the dawn of its local birth, *uṣā*.

¹ *Brhat* etymologically means bright in Middle English, from Old English *beorht*, akin to Old High German *beraht* bright, Sanskrit *bhrājate* [*bhrājaka*] it shines. “[...] Mahas, the great world, is the Truth of things, identical with the Vedic *ṛtam* which is the principle of *brhat*, the Vast.” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 43)

² The proper position (*sva-rūpe*) of a body is one in which it is ultimately stretched all over the world while being directed toward the Vast as the ultimate Void that surrounds all other planes and local forms of existence. (cf. PATAÑJALI 1982, YS 1.3., pp. 9-10). In AUROBINDO’S reading of the Veda (*The Secret of the Veda*; 1971), *Varuṇa* plays a significant role. As a leading spiritual poet in 20th century history AUROBINDO re-emphasized the necessity of the idea of a possible evolutionary divinization of our bodies in order to avoid the rejection of the material world. (cf. BÖHLER, 1996) *Varuṇa* has often been related to the Greek Uranus and has been identified with the King of “the highest covering ether and all oceans. All expanses are *Varuṇa*’s; every infinity is his property and estate.” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 448) All Vedic rivers are streaming from *his* ocean that surrounds all other realms and beings but is not surrounded by them. “[T]he Veda tells us that this King has in his service a thousand physicians; it is by their healing of our mental and moral infirmities that we get a secure foundation in *Varuṇa*’s wide and deep right-mindedness. (I. 24.9. *Viśvāyu* (IV. 42.1).” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 453) *He* release us from ignorance (*avidyā*), narrowness, heaviness and egoism. Because he, together with Mitra is in possession of the truth of infinity, this extraordinary couple leads us “to the vastness of that Truth [...] As lords of that powerful impulsion they bring down the heavens in a luminous rain upon the mortal and take possession of the vast as a home.” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 481) His water thus releases us from sin and destruction. “In sum then, *Varuṇa* is the ethereal, oceanic, infinite King of wide being, wide knowledge and wide might [...] earth and heaven and every world are only his provinces.” (AUROBINDO 1971, p. 455)

³ Later on, in yoga terminology, somebody who is sensitively aware of the utmost region enveloping all other regions is called a *brahmacarya*. “The word *brahmacarya* is composed of the root *car*, meaning ‘to move’ and *brahma* meaning *truth*. Brahmacarya is ‘to move in the direction of truth’.” DESIKACHAR 1980, p. 109. PATAÑJALI calls *brahmacarya* a religious scholar continuously directed toward the ultimate reality. (cf. PATAÑJALI 2.30, 2.38)

⁴ The five *yamas* mentioned from PATAÑJALI in Yoga-Sūtra 2.30 are: *ahiṃsā* (not harming anybody), *satya* (speaking the truth), *asteya* (not stealing), *brahmacarya* (moving toward the World of Brahman), *aparigraha* (“re-signing” what is given to one).

⁵ Some schools distinguish two forms of “incorruptible bodies”: *siddhi-deha* and *divya-deha*. The former is the body of somebody liberated in life (*jīvan-mukta*), the later the one of a *parā-mukta*, a wholly spiritual body (*cinmaya*), possessing infinite knowledge (*jñāna-deha*) as far as such a divine body is no longer at all bound to matter.

⁶ AUROBINDO has re-established this ancient goal of Indian spirituality in 20th century India, posing that a “divine life in a divine body is the formula of the ideal” that he envisages. (AUROBINDO 1989, p. 20)

⁷ “Es giebt so viele Morgenröthen, die noch nicht geleuchtet haben.” (NIETZSCHE 1980, Vol. 3, p. 9) On the significance of the sun in NIETZSCHE’S *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (cf. NEHAMAS 2000 “For whom the Sun shines: A Reading of *Also sprach Zarathustra*”, pp. 165-190)

⁸ This book explicitly ends with aphorism Nr. 575, in which NIETZSCHE quotes India as the site of a culture we intentionally try to reach with our boats, but probably will fail to arrive, because, driving from Europe in a westward direction, we are in danger to go astray on our “Indian” journey toward infinity. “*Wir Luft-Schifffahrer des Geistes! – Alle diese kühnen Vögel, die in’s Weite, Weiteste hinausfliegen [...] Wird man vielleicht uns einstmals nachsagen, dass auch wir, nach Westen steiernd, ein Indien zu erreichen hofften, – dass aber unser Loos war, an der Unendlichkeit zu scheitern? Oder, meine Brüder? Oder? –*“ (NIETZSCHE 1980, Vol 3, p. 331)

⁹ In its chronological gallop the horses manifest things in time and space. Their gallop is the quality of time, in which it actually takes place while generating things during the dawn of their birth. According to ancient times this race of time does not *produce* the things that are successively revealed during the course of time, but merely *let them appear*. “All things exist already in Parabrahman, but all are not here manifest. They are already there in Being, not in Time.” (AUROBINDO 1981, p. 342) So long as the horse of time keeps on running, all different kinds of things will *enter* being according to the swift movements of the horses of time. Each thing that appears during the act of its spatio-temporal genesis is a certain type of rider of such a horse of time.

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