

I CAN BECOME A MOUNTAIN

Conversations With Huauhtli As A Path
To Revive And Develop Individual
Communication Abilities And Learn From
Non Human Entities

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Dedicated to the storytellers of my family who through their
words filled my life with magic

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ABSTRACT

Thinking about you, about the possibilities with you. Ingesting you in many different ways and thinking of other new ways for me. I ingest you through thought with the stories and words as carriers. Through the mouth so my microbiome interacts with you. I am trying to experience you in as many ways as possible through dreams, sound, smell and all others that happen in the process as a way to renovate myself. To become something/someone that I don't know, that maybe no one knows. You are my guide Huauhtli, who I love, for you have opened a never ending universe that is non complying with the one I live in.

IN THE FOG OF HUMAN UNCERTAINTY

Thoughts during the COVID-19 pandemic

In this time that I have been trying to figure out how I may get closer to you, Huauhtli. How may I get closer to all nature by breaking down communication barriers between species? We came to a sudden halt of our normal human lives due to the worldwide outbreak of a virus called COVID-19 more commonly known as Coronavirus. It is still unclear if it is nature itself trying to tell us something or humans playing with nature to manipulate and change the course of human systems. If it is nature's work it seems that it is as simple as trying to put what seems like the truest perspective before us. To make us see how much we depend on the wellbeing of the natural world and not solely on the human systems that are in place. Systems that make us believe that we have been able to outsmart nature. We have come to believe that we have total control and that life can be planned and managed.

Many people around the world are in quarantine at the moment. Countries have varying numbers of infected people and taking different measures within the quarantine to try and prevent further spreading of the virus.

Being in quarantine for some days now has planted a lot of thoughts in my head. First I started to think about other circumstances where people have to be in hiding in much than less favorable circumstances, war is the perfect example. People had to hide for years, not being able to go out at all or just for the basic needs in order to be able to survive and never have the feeling of being sure that you would make it back. This made me think about the strength and resilience of living beings. Not saying that being in that state doesn't have major consequences in the development of life, but one thing is for sure, we always try to stay alive. All life always tries to live until their last breath. This may seem as an obvious or logical notion, but it is that

energy beyond the physiological that unites all of life.

It has also come to my mind on how much our current state of living in quarantine seems like the life of an indoor domesticated dog or cat. Not stating this in the positive way for the dogs, cats or humans. Even though most of my life I have had dog companions I never fully shared the feelings of having to be confined indoors having limited spatial mobility until now. The “pets” of many people depend on the person for their possibilities to go out for a walk maybe once a day or once a week or less or maybe never if the house has a patio and in the case for many cats that live in flats some of them never get to go out, maybe occasionally in a cage when they have a visit to the veterinarian. Always depending on the human companion to be able to go out on what mostly are guided and controlled walks. Never having full freedom to be. Yes many of us humans know that it is healthy for the dog to go outside, but I think most of us have never felt what it is like to be enclosed and limited until now in the COVID quarantine. For other creatures that depend on us, we mainly spend our time with them trying to keep the creature alive and healthy. Thinking that we humans are enough to keep them satisfied and happy with our company and partial attention. But how do we know what makes them happy and if their life is fulfilled?

It comes down to the same situation with plants. The difference being that plants usually don't go for walks once they have rooted, one exception is *Socratea Exorrhiza* also known as the walking palm. Of course they have their ways of traveling, this being the wind, birds, insects, grabbing on to other moving surfaces and going to new areas. But in this case I am referring to an already born plant that someone has decided to care for, for whatever that reason may be. We humans choose where to put house, garden plants and crop plants. We decided on what kind of container they are in or location in the ground if it is outside. In the case of indoor plants they solely depend on us for their wellbeing. In some cases of outdoor plants it depends on the weather conditions the extent of their dependency on the human. They depend on our attention to live or die. Many of them will never reproduce, many of them will never be in direct contact with other plants, from their own species or different ones. Many of them will never experience the interaction that the plants

have in their natural habitat with other species like birds, bats, fungi, beetles and the list goes on. So why are there differences for what we can or can't do under the law to other living beings and also by personal, social or cultural moral standards? Why is it for many of us impossible to imagine a life in confinement with someone else making the decisions about our life for us, when we do the same for other living beings?

On the other hand this closer domestic situation has allowed us to establish a different kind of relationship with the animals and plants that live with us. It has created a certain symbiotic growth of both parts. Establishing dependent relationships between all parties. It has allowed us to make them part of our culture in its many possibilities. This relationship doesn't include real equality between the participants, as the human is the one that makes the decisions. Some are guidelines made by the state that have to be followed and the rest are cultural and personal. This doesn't break down the barrier of hierarchical systems imposed over nature, but in some ways it does allow us to question it. Many of these questions arise due to the fact that our behavior towards the natural world and its inhabitants has changed over time according to our lifestyle. In the current state of the ecological crisis of the world many of us find ourselves asking how may we understand the natural world on its own terms?

This situation is also changing our human relationships. To what seems to me to be a more deep caring relationship. This allows us to see how much having good relationships matter.

Currently we have the incredible possibility to be constantly communicated in real time with many people around the world via the internet or phone. Which seems like a big relief in these circumstances of the Corona pandemic that we are living in. It seems to be that we are using these tools to stay communicated instead of isolating ourselves which is what was happening with social media, ironically to the name it holds. We seem to want to be closer than ever before, regardless of the physical barriers that we have at the moment. When we ask someone how they are doing we really want to know their real state of being. At the same time when someone asks me how I am doing I respond with the truth and not with the usual, I

am ok and you?

It seems that this situation is making us really think about the life-style that we had before this. I have been discussing this with many friends from around the world and even though we are all somewhat worried about the uncertainty of the situation many of us come to the conclusion that this could make us change for the better. I believe that we are seeing what things really matter in life when many distractors or entertainment from the outside are not possible.

In my personal situation I have deeply enjoyed having the time to cook and eat calmly every meal of every day. To be able to go to sleep when I am tired and wake up when my body has had its required sleep. I always had trouble falling asleep and staying asleep for a variety of reasons. The main one was the constant pressure of time buzzing around my head. Now I'm getting into the mode of the natural night and day rhythm that also happens to me when I go camping in nature. I fall asleep early and wake up very early. Going to bed early at the time I am going to bed right now wouldn't work in the normal social, work and study scenario. If I had to wake up at the time I am waking up right now I would have to set an alarm dreading beforehand the feeling of listening to it in the morning.

Many of my activities at home have come down to the basics of any living creature. Basics not in the way of just trying to stay alive, but in the way of actually being fully present within these activities and enjoying them fully. Other activities like socializing with the house plants have changed. Usually the "taking care" of the plants just came down to making sure they stay alive. Now I notice daily changes in their bodies and I start to follow up on these changes. There are many changes now since spring has started. So many of the house mate plants are waking up from winter. There are many new leaves, new sprouts. I am also trying to make the space for each of them more comfortable. Each of them requires different situations to thrive. So each day I take the time to see them up close and see if new leaves are coming, if they are showing signs of stress or if I have to make microclimates for their proper development. I believe that they enjoy the interaction that we have and the betterment of their conditions. I think that it is reciprocal that we put each other in a positive mood by giving each other attention.

Even though it is uncertain how things will turn out when the COVID-19 situation is over, the questions of how we live our lives will remain for many of us as possibilities to turn them into positive permanent changes for the natural world where we see ourselves as part of that world which we are inherently dependent on.

Second Round of Lockdown

It didn't come back, it just never left. We tried to erase it from our mind, but this didn't translate well into life.

After some time of trying to live with the pandemics regulations many of us started to forget about it in a way. Some of us thought that the end of the pandemic was near and some others thought it would get worst. In numbers it did get worst, but there is a difference in how we are living the quarantine in the second round.

After half a year of being in this situation for most of the world and for some a bit longer...

The virus named COVID-19 has come to change our life in what feels like a permanent state. For us, the ones from generations that have been born and grown in a high speed paced lifestyle it seemed unreal to be able to slow down our mobility that had become the norm. Now we don't even have the same mobility within the city. We can't go to all the places we used to go and the ones we can go to no longer feel the same because of the regulations that we have to follow. Wearing a mouth cover now doesn't feel as odd as it did in the beginning. Not kissing or hugging friends and family to say hello and goodbye doesn't feel so distant anymore. Now it's enough with being able to see them in real life and not through a screen.

The virus which in human concepts is neither fitting in the category of dead or alive has come to disrupt life as we know it. It came as a reminder that our concepts don't really fit to the rest of the world, but only to us. That what fits into the concept can only go so far within our minds, but not outside of it. We make and have ideas of the world in our attempt to tame it, control it, direct it. Most of the actions taken to carry out these modes of thinking have taken the world into absolute destruction, all for the benefit of some people. Some countries have been taking the biggest bounty for a long time, others a few left overs and some just the emptiness.

The virus has the capability to travel fast through us, thanks to our ego of indestructibility. It can cross all kinds of borders from political

and geographical to religious and cellular. It seems to understand and work with our way of thinking and our way of living by constantly going forward and showing us that we have limits not just physical limits of our grand abilities to destroy, kill and disappear, but limits that we have created. Most of us haven't been able to overcome these limits to be able to understand the rest of the world. Limits that haven't always existed. They came to be when we decided to announce and impose that we wanted to part ways from what we call nature. Limits that made us think of ourselves as limitless in all aspects. In an absurd way this thought created a boundary, with much of the rest of the world. A lack of ability to communicate and to have a certain sensibility that allows us to connect and communicate in various forms.

Now we have come into the second lockdown. A variety of safety measures are being taken in other parts of the world. Some days it just seems like it will never end or it might be that we are just clueless of how and when this will happen. The pandemic piles up with other terrible events of human actions, that for many of us create an overwhelming feeling of unnecessary manipulated and constructed chaos. That appears to go in the complete opposite direction of healing the wounds that we have inflicted upon the natural world.

In a second lockdown we tried to move most of our human lives into the digital scenario. It seemed to work for a while. It fulfilled our desire to keep on with planned events, but eventually at least for me everything on the digital platform feels and seems irrelevant. Personally the digital scheme of life now is overwhelming and it makes me have the desire to never use a computer or any medium of that kind again.



ACCUMULATION OF THOUGHTS

In past projects I have explored what I consider an essential aspect in the formation and establishment of relationships. I believe that to make relationships we have to think of the other constantly, the other being from whichever species or classification we consider them part of. This already comes natural to us humans with other humans and with animals that we share our homes with. For city dwellers these are mainly domesticated animals such as dogs, cats and other animals in the classified as pets. People in rural areas and farms have relationships with other animals and there are groups of people that have other kinds of animals as their companions or people that live in different circumstances where interactions with other animals may occur on a daily basis. When you have an animal at home, because of the time shared with the “other” if the relationship is a balanced and positive one, both parties start to learn about the other in their own way. Noticing patterns in behaviors that allow us to develop a specific communication since the way of communicating in each species is different. Speaking for the human, the human may start to think about the animal companion in moments when they are not together or wondering about the thoughts and feelings of the animal and many other feelings that arise from the relationship. I speculate that the animal probably does the same or something similar.

Each species has special skills that can nurture the relationship. Some animals have different sensory systems than us which allows them to perceive different aspects of our mind, body and spirit. It may seem obvious that we can relate to other animals in a more direct way because their bodies and behavior are closer to ours, but this way of thinking hasn't always been the case. Throughout the history of religion and science we have changed our way of thinking about other animals. In some periods of our human existence we have considered ourselves completely different from the rest of the animals. It is even the case in the present with people that practice

some religions where there is a great differentiation of what an “animal” is and what a “human” is. As well as the opposing side of the previous, there are some religions that give equal rights to all life forms, including the vegetable world. So what are the factors that may allow our mind to relate with other species in a similar way that we carry out our human and some animal relationships?

For me the first step in this process is to be thinking about the other constantly. To acknowledge their existence through time and to be thankful for their existence because their existence has allowed for many others to exist.

This is written for Huauhtli, Amaranth, Amaranto, Ah-
parie, Tez, Xtes, Wa´ve, Guegui

I wanted to write to you directly. To take what may seem the first step to modify my way of thinking. To get rid of all the impositions and schoolings of categories, of massive groups. In an attempt to place myself closer to you. Trying to get rid of all the thoughts that are blocked so I can communicate with you. In this way I see how some of the schools of thought and actions that have been created by humans do not make much sense or seem absolutely violent. At many moments I come to the point where I don't know how to communicate, how to say something to you. This due to the limits of language that don't allow me to be able to speak directly to other non human life forms. How do I speak about people's thoughts when some of them only make sense in the human realm. Once exposed they just appear as a justification for over rationality which seems a forceful excess of totalitarian power that doesn't allow much room for exploration and development of an individual's capacity to connect with other life forms, organic and inorganic that inhabit this planet.

THOUGHTS FOR YOU

I stand in front of you in the realm of my mind. I need no physicality up to this point. I want to go the other way. In a parallel, but not rigid form from the path that we have strayed. The intention is to understand and experience our ability to communicate and to mutually love each other without corroboration from anything else. Is it necessary to prove to oneself when you love another being?

As it is in nature, in thought nothing comes on its own. You were not just an idea that popped into my mind from some gathered information from one day of living. You have been inhabiting my mind for years. Never fully detaching and never in the back of my mind. You stayed as a constant that made me wonder about you. As time went by I thought more and more about you. I slowly fell in love with you. I admire you. I want to know more about you. First as a species, now as individuals. I just see me and you, standing one in front of the other. I want to be stripped from anything that doesn't allow me to be fully submerged in our relationship.

This me who has presented itself to myself. In a distant way at first, like a dream that just appeared to be abstract. You kept coming back, every time getting closer and closer until I noticed who it was. I never questioned your presence, my presence. I just had the deep desire to be as close as possible, to allow myself to embody this.

THROUGH RITUALIZATION

I come upon the making of a space, a place where the representations of all the makers of these thoughts have a space to inhabit. To be alive on their terms, our terms. It becomes a mirrored image of the floating lights inside my mind that are reflected images coming from the external realm.

Through repetition of thoughts, questions and desires I slowly come upon the makers that have danced around me for many years. They, the makers, have presented themselves one by one to my previous self. They call upon others to join the new world. It is becoming a never ending dance. Now we all exist together.

On The Importance Of Making My Own Ritual

Parting from the reinterpretation of colonizers and archaeologists of a pre-hispanic ritual. I asked myself; How does a ritual come to be? How do the components that make it come together? What gives it meaning?

CONFESSIONS FROM THE HUMAN

The problem of broken interspecies communication. Limiting ourselves towards other life forms.

If each species communicates in their own way, but an interaction is established between different species, eventually new ways of communicating would be created. Humans have separated themselves from “nature”, and other beings that inhabit what we call the natural world.

Myself being an example, I was born and raised in a city. A city that is in an area that formerly was inhabited by nomadic groups that had deep knowledge of their natural context. Growing up I didn't learn anything in school about the native inhabitants of the land or about their practices, diets, language. They were smaller groups than in other parts of what is now the Mexican territory. They lived in a very different way than many other ethnic groups of the American continent. When the Spanish colonizers arrived in this area which is now known as Baja California, they did not know how to navigate let alone manage this type of land. In this region rain only comes in winter and summers are very dry. This would give reason to the nomadic lifestyle. Instead of trying to change an area, they moved along with the sprouting of life. Even though water was abundant at that time in certain areas, you had to know where the natural springs, oasis', rivers and streams were located. Instead of trying to learn from the interaction and understanding that the native ethnic groups had with the land, the Spanish colonizer imposed their own manner of doing things. The customs knew from back home which wasn't adapted to this type of weather and terrain. Many of the crops that they tried to grow couldn't survive. This made them abandon a lot of the places that they were living in. However some crops brought by the Spanish did survive and flourish in this environment. Of course some created problems for the already existing flora and fauna who they were now sharing life with. However one

of the main ideas was to dominate this wild and unforgiving nature to make it work for the new inhabitants. I am a life born from the mix of these thoughts and actions, although I do not come from the group of the natives of the region of Baja California, but from other natives of this continent and from newcomers from diverse areas of Europe.

This way of thinking and acting still prevails to this day. The control over the flow and gathering of water hasn't stopped since the colonial period. The cutting of hills and land to modify space to make it easily accessible has had a great negative impact on all life forms. The removal of native plants in exchange for others has led to the extinction and endangerment of many plants, animals and insects. Growing up most of us are taught that acting that way is the only way in order to be able to survive in this type of habitat. But now the damages are clear and some people have started to change due to the degree of drought that exists in this area.

Personally I came to the understanding that the problem was some of us, humans that have been dragging and growing these extractionist, colonial, imperialist and western ideas for hundreds of years. Now we are trying or pretending to try to solve problems that were created as a result of us considering ourselves the primary species. For many people this "us" in the previous sentence doesn't include them for reasons of racism, enslavement and colonialism.

So why do I keep questioning my abilities to communicate with non human entities? Have I accepted the impositions of totalitarian powers that have repressed our natural abilities for hundreds of years? I am almost sure that as a child various ways of communicating were more of an open channel. It is easier to make no distinction before being taught how different we are from other entities. Life in the human world can become lesson upon lesson of specieism. We dare to categorize, to break apart and put back together in a way that fits our perspective. We have created a hierarchical system to free ourselves from guilt. We use our carefully studied tools from oral language, history, religion to marketing and everything that touches communication to make ourselves believe what we want to believe. Empirical science as the ultimate truth for some. Religions that have

the belief that all the natural world was created for the people. Capitalism as an ideal way of life where nature is only seen and managed as goods and resources to be extracted. Manners of thought that have made the removal of people from nature, where we have no or little attachment to what we call the natural world.

Why do we still question the possibilities of other forms of existence when they present themselves as unmeasurable beings or something other than beings and not as subjects and objects?

I believe that this shows how we think about the natural world. A world that we believe belongs to us, not that we belong to the natural world. Why do we question our sensibility and ability to connect to other beings? Why do some rely solely on empirical scientific methodology to confirm knowledge that has been existing for hundreds or thousands of years, but was erased, destroyed, hidden or marked as primitive by totalitarian human powers?

It may be that some of the first intentions of science could have been to make public and accessible to all what were considered the secrets of nature. But since the beginning it was already fighting against other ways of knowledge even though it wasn't born as pure science from one day to the next.

These problems that we have created for ourselves, these walls are built up for control, to control. Many of the big shifters and constructors of thought that bring us/me to this gap in contemporary time are systems of control where the power of the individual is taken away to make a homogenous groups where a few get to decide who gets what. These problems are rooted in various branches of science, religions, colonization, imperialism, capitalism, gender inequality, schooling education, higher education, speciesism and racism.

Even though some of these human life situations like science and education have many positive sides to them, they have also created cracks that run deep and continuously. I believe this has taken us in the opposite direction. Where distance is created between the person and the other.

As in many fields of study categories for people who work with plants are created. There are biologists and botanists with knowledge only achieved through academic and laboratory settings. Much accumulated knowledge that belongs only to a few and experiments in highly controlled environments that only a few academics have access to. Degrees of expertise that mingl and intertwine with the capitalist system to privatize what should belong to no one.

There are other categories such as industrial farmers, gardeners, farmers that do it for the sustenance of them and their family, people who have interest in plants and people who don't know anything about plants. This leaves us with a great gap between plants and humans, even though we consume plants on a daily basis and share space with them. Before all of these methods of privatizing many of the people had to have knowledge of the plants that surrounded them. It was their sustenance, their medicine, playground, hunting ground. In many cultures there were shamans who had deeper knowledge about plants, but the knowledge was always laid out in the plant-human interaction field. Allowing for an interconnectedness of various life forms.

So what would/is the benefit if there are any for these categorizations that are based on isolating factors?

It seems that in our contemporary minds we don't yet have the ability to make these gaps smaller or for that matter the absolute closure of these gaps created by differentiating factors. As we try to come close to this gap, in an attempt to find new possible methods for making the breach smaller, for many people other ways outside of science seem to fall into mysticism, belief, unsustained thoughts, primitive, among other ways of ruling out different ways of thinking, experiencing, communicating and living. It seems that most of western science didn't create the space for this. With the knowledge that science accumulated, the gap became bigger and bigger leaving no space for closeness. Separating into hierarchies all life forms and stating an impossibility of our unity and communication.



TIME AND COMPANIONS

What an idea to try to force and hurry someone or something that hasn't come to existence just yet. It might be forming from others or it may still be far away.

In my trying to get to know better the individual within a group of a human classification/ plant taxonomy, in this case Huauhtli also known as Amaranth I have realized that this is a being that doesn't stand alone in my thoughts. It didn't form from spontaneous energy exchange from my neurons. It is an accumulation of my lifetime and other life times considering that much of the input comes from previous generations. In this accumulation companions have existed and exist in various ways. They are catalysts that have made the desire to travel and explore this path. They challenge my ways of thinking and living to be able to form new connections and new stretches of thought, like the arms of a vine looking for something new to grab onto. They have created the desire to develop new ways for me to communicate with other species. To transgress the limits of the abilities that I am supposed to have as a human of this place and time.

This makes me question what my mind, my capabilities and my body would be if I hadn't been born in this time and place that I was born in? This point in place and time carries with itself a deep history of ways of thinking, of concepts that I learned through my existence. Now it is the time to let go of them.

Where do I stand without this? Is it possible to liberate myself entirely from these taught notions? From foreign descriptions of what I am and what I can do? This intent of removal of pre conceptions has taken many years and I believe I am not even close to achieving it in the way that I imagine it right now, but on the other hand I wouldn't be able to let go of them if they didn't exist. I wouldn't be able to take down or build on top of what is already built. Many companions of thought have existed with me before Huauhtli. Even though Huauhtli existed in me since many years ago without

realizing that it was spreading throughout my body to be able to feel a deep interest and connection.

The companions exist in many forms. Some still share a close physical space with me. Some are distant, but visible. Some only seem to exist in memory or some form of documentation that has allowed me to pinpoint a moment. Sometimes they are named *Objetos de poder* (Objects of power), but the word object mainly implies that it is not living which is not the connotation that I have for these beings.

These companions of existence, creators of thought have allowed me to wander into other worlds. To be able to question my existence through them. To ask the question. Why are we together?

This question allows a flow of many other questions and possible answers. It creates the space for interaction. A space filled with possibilities that makes me want to turn over and over every single stone on all sides to admire it while we talk.

Some of them that are present and have accompanied and guided me through this process of establishing relationships with *Huauhtli* I have found in places and moments that I can't recall. Usually these companions that have shown me different paths I fixate upon and decide to carry them for a long time in what some people consider uncomfortable or unnecessary situations.

Branches

Many of them are small branches that give me a sense of security when I am taking a walk in a forest. They become an extension of my body even if they take the space of one of my hands that I might need, but for some reason it feels better to have my hand wrapped around a specific branch that calls onto me from the filled floor of the forest. Most of these branches come all the way to my home and stay for many years, some accompany me to my studio depending on when and where I can let go of them.

Salvia Blanca / White Sage

Ramas y hojas de *Salvia blanca*. Branches and leaves of white sage

that is native to the region where I am from. The smell can transport me to my grandparents ranch in Tecate, my favorite place in the world. A place that has taught me about the love that can exist between plants and people. A love that becomes poetry stated in many ways. Many creatures come together in this place, that may seem still to newcomers because of the silence this territory carries. A silence that suits the aridness who seems to hide life behind rocks and under sand.

The mountain that I see from the porch

From this place in the world, my grandparents ranch. I wake up to my favorite mountain. A majestic gathering of boulders that make me feel in a land of giants. This mountain which looks grand in any weather scenario has accompanied me in countless meditational moments. Not planned meditations, but a natural state that comes upon me when my face is towards the mountain. This mountain who I don't have a name for is one of the few that has the ability to calm me down, to take me to a state of blankness which I long for most of the time as I have a wandering mind that doesn't know very well how to stay still. In front of this mountain I sit usually in the mornings right after getting out of bed. If it is in the summer I walk out in my pajamas to take some of the cool air before the sunrise. If it is in the winter then I walk out wrapped in a warm blanket. This was a ritual that was formed since my childhood. Many reasons came into the making of this ritual. One of the reasons is that my grandmother and aunt taught me to greet the sun in the morning. This is done by going outside and breathing in some cool morning air while saying hello to the sun and thanking life for another day.

At the ranch the spot from where we admire and look towards this mountain is a meeting point for our family. It is the porch of the house. It may seem like an obvious place to meet because it is in front of the door, but when it is a tiny portion of the land that is the ranch it doesn't seem so obvious. We have spent countless hours in this part of the ranch. Four generations of the family including the dogs and visiting friends have slept, eaten, talked, partied, played on this part of the ranch that has its majesty the mountain, as a frontal visual reason to appreciate life and wander about it. This mountain has been the starting point of many or maybe all of my thoughts

that I write on this paper.

My deeply loved dogs

My Elton, Aruba, Whitey and Salvia with whom together we discovered the possibilities of learning new ways of communicating and understanding each other. We also taught each other new gestures, sounds and ways of showing love and appreciation for each other. They were one of the first to make me realize that there shouldn't be so many set boundaries on my capabilities to learn and create new ways of communicating in conjunction with other beings. That establishing these relationships is a process that takes time, love, nurture and patience from all sides.

Marimo

My beloved Marimo who traveled with me up and down Italy where we met. Since Marimo needs to be in water and doesn't like bright direct sunlight, he was in a glass container filled with fresh water and closed with a cork top. It was a small container, small enough to be able to fit in the pocket of my winter jacket where he was shielded from sunlight. He was only out of the pocket at night when I arrived at a hotel. He went to many places with me and I always felt the need to have my hand in the pocket where he was. Now he has a larger container with no lid. When I travel to other places I like to bring back a rock or shell to put in his container. I enjoy changing his water and playing with him under the cold running water of the faucet. After playing and having new cold water he gets activated for some days and floats around. Then he rests for some days at the bottom of his container laying on the rocks and shells gathered for him.

It was a special experience to travel throughout a country mainly by train and then by airplane back to Austria with a being that is not a common travel partner. It opened the door to start to communicate first in my human language to Marimo not just in private, but in whatever moment I felt the need to ask him something.

This made me realize consciously that it was not the first time that I had plants in my pockets. I already knew that usually I can find the remains of plants in my pockets, but it was different with Marimo who I wanted to keep alive in this circumstance.

Putting pieces of plants, peels, flowers, stems... has been something that I have been doing since I can remember. Some plants have stayed in pockets of my clothes or bags for years. Always with this need to be touching them constantly. The plants vary from Rosemary, Oak leaves, White sage or even seeds. They are usually with me at a time of my life when I need that specific one. I have always felt comfortable having them with me, smelling them, touching them and speaking to them in privacy. Sometimes questioning why did I pick this specific plant or part of a plant? Thinking that it was my sole decision to do so, but it seems that it is from both sides. I feel a certain calling from this being. An immediate attraction that makes it stand out from the rest of the beings that accompany that space.

THE STORY OF US

I met you when I was a child. I knew you as a traditional Mexican candy bar. Those types of candies that are not owned by big industries. In Mexico you find them in traditional markets or from street sellers. It was a candy bar that my grandparents liked and we were allowed to eat freely because it is healthy. This candy bar is known as Alegria which translates to joy. It is made from your puffed seeds mixed with bee honey or agave honey. For most of my life I only knew you in this way. Much later, in my adult life I learned how strong your body and seeds are.

You are a real life example of resilience and resistance. It made me start wondering why didn't I know more about you? I didn't have to read much to find out how intertwined your story is with pre colonial agricultural practices in what is now Mexico and the long history of adversity that you have had to resist since the arrival of the colonialists up until contemporary times with industrial agriculture that focuses on monocultures of GMO plants like Monsanto. I wanted to know more about you Huauhtli, why were you perceived as a bad plant and why are you still perceived in this way by some people. Why does the category of weeds still exist when it is a speciesist and derogatory term. Why is there speciesism towards you, Huautli, since colonial times where they started referring to you as blede. Bledé means something that one is indifferent to or that doesn't have much value or one of the layman's terms to name you Amaranthaceae. This made me start questioning many of our behaviors towards other entities, in this case plants and specifically to you and the long history that you have of interaction with people in many different levels of our existence.



OUR STORY NOW

Now I think about you constantly. I am counting the days to sow the seeds into the soil to see you grow.

I dreamt about you. In this dream I was going around a city that was filled with trees that were Amaranth trees. They were huge trees filled with all kinds of colors. Your seeds were so soft that they resembled feathers. You made the city magical with your majestic presentation before us.

The growing

It has been the same with Huauhtli, an attraction that has lasted for many years. Always thinking about our connection even though we didn't grow up together in the physical aspect. I never had an Amaranth plant at my home until recently when I tried to grow them in Vienna inside my flat on the bench of the living room windows, in rice and oat milk tetra pack containers cut in half. I bought various kinds of Amaranth seeds and put them in different types of soil to test its abilities to grow on different grounds. Some were put in sandy soil, some in dark compost soil, others in a mix of mainly bark and some compost soil and others in a mix of the sand and compost soil. There were 23 containers and in each container I put three seeds. I planted them late, about a month late according to the directions stated on the seed packaging, but I thought this wouldn't matter since Amaranth has become famous for its strength and hardiness. Many of them didn't sprout and many as soon as they sprouted they would die. There was one that always remained alive; it didn't grow too much, but it was alive.

I started examining the situation and came to find that I had a problem with a plague. The soil was contaminated with a bug that in the larva stage it eats the roots of the plants. These baby plants were not being allowed to grow their roots. I had to get rid of all the containers and start again, now it was even later in the year. I only kept the one that didn't die and I treated the soil. It grew very slowly, this could

be for many reasons. It could be because of how life started that the roots weren't allowed to grow, also the late time of the year, not enough sun. Maybe too humid? So many possible reasons and endless combinations of these. Despite all of this it was still alive. I came to find that it preferred a very uncommon place in the house. It liked to be on top of the edge of two other pots with a slight inclination that made me think that it could fall over at any moment. I figured this out because my husband moved it several times thinking that I had left it in that place and position mistakenly. When it was moved to another more secure location where it would get the same amount of sun it would start to wilt. So I would move it back and after numerous times I mentioned to my husband that this Huauhtli liked to be in this position and in this place. One of the times that I was trying to take a closer look at this little Huauhtli to try to figure out why it wasn't growing so much I accidentally pulled it out of the soil and ripped its tiny roots that it had developed. It was the only Huauhtli left and I was sure that after this it would not survive, but nevertheless I put the rootless Huauhtli back into the soil thinking about his strength. To my surprise this little Huauhtli kept on living and grew a little more. It never really grew much more than a sprout and finally after some months of living as a small sprout it died. The plague had come back. It was amazing to see the strength of this little Huauhtli. It was grown in what would be considered improper conditions, it was planted late and there was a plague that kept trying to eat the plant constantly. This reaffirmed the amazing strength that Huauhtli has. A strength that is not a mutation or a resistance, but strength from each plant.

The resistance is from individual to individual. Maybe something they talk about and teach each other directly or through other organisms like the mycelium of the fungi, bacteria or insects that can carry messages. What does it mean to develop this resistance towards human made methods of destruction and control?

Now I realize that growing Huauhtli in this way was not and is not the path I wanted to try and answer the questions that I have made and keep restructuring every time I come upon a new way of understanding another aspect of all of this.

Huauhtli is who I stand in front of as the mirror of my choice. To

try to see and understand myself in another light. It is with whom I choose to start a dialogue to question myself.

YOUR STORY WITH THE HUMAN POPULATION

You have not remained indifferent, but you also did not or have not changed yourself permanently for us. You have managed and learned to be able to resist the strongest herbicides. You resist Roundup and other chemicals of its kind. You as a species are able to survive and develop in GMO fields of other crops like corn and soy. I don't think it is for your sole survival. It is my belief that you are also protecting land, people, water and other plants from being slaves to the monsters of Monsanto and other industrial agricultural transnationals who dare to transgress every single boundary that respects and represents life.

You are still considered an invasive species in industrial agricultural growing fields. In the time of GMOs and toxic chemical herbicides like Monsanto's Roundup chemical. You are one of the family of plants that is causing the most problems to companies who produce agricultural chemical pesticides and to farmers who use and rely on the methods, chemicals and seeds these companies produce. You are also referred to as Pigweed in contemporary times and Bledo since Spanish colonial times which has had a negative impact on what people think about you as a whole species. Now categorized as a superweed you represent a large problem for the GMO industry. An industry that said that Non-GMO plants would not be able to survive harsh chemical herbicides you are doing the total opposite and it's turning these companies on their heads who are trying to destroy your strength.

You have not mutated. You have learned how to resist agro industrial herbicides and take over fields that tried to be fully managed by people. You have become a symbol for resilience and resistance against full control of nature. You are born in adversity in a way that states how incorrect the industrial agricultural business can be. Protecting land, water, animals, other plants, people, air, yourself from subjugation to a totalitarian system that objectifies living and non living

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There is a lot of controversy surrounding this matter due to the fact that some people believe more in the governance of the private sector like Monsanto transnational that promises power over nature. Even though you are a clear example that they can't have total control and they can't promise a static reaction because you and all beings have the ability to change.

For industrial farmers that use harsh chemicals such as Roundup you are a superweed. That being a title with a negative connotation. Superweed is highly feared in the industrial agricultural fields. You can't be killed with herbicides, you have to be pulled out one by one, but that becomes an impossible task in industrial agricultural fields due to the massive size of the fields. In addition to the factor that your roots are very strong and you are hard to pull out. People that see the existence of plants as something that is solely for the human to benefit see no benefit for you in these fields. Since you are not the type of Huauhtli that is harvested and eaten by people or if you are you are trespassing on private property. So for them you are just a problem in the field.

For other people that are against companies like Monsanto, a destroyer who produces products that contaminate everything and privatize seeds, you are a symbol of resistance. Of a being that can stand up and survive to who seems to be the almighty rulers of plants and their genes. You gave people strength and hope against Monsanto. They started using your seeds to seed bomb Monsanto's agricultural fields and have you as a symbol and fighting agent to recover and protect land that was taken.

WHAT IS KNOWN OF YOUR HISTORY

First you were consumed as a tender green in the wide classification of Quelites. The classification of Quelites embodies plants that are eaten as tender greens. Depending on the ethnic group the person knows what plants are quelites. Up to this day this classification is used in the traditional native markets and in recipes to refer to numerous different plants. Later you were domesticated to have your seeds nearby and make them part of everyday consumption and for ritual use.

The classification that was given to you by the native groups of what is now Mexico is very different from the botanical classification system used today. This makes it harder to interpret the codex that talks about your history, use and relationships in precolonial times.

The Spanish colonizers put you in another classification, not a classification in the botanical sense, which is a classification system of hierarchies that still stands in the present day. You were put in the category of *bledo* as mentioned before. You were not standing alone in this classification. Various plants were considered worthless because they didn't form part of the Spanish diet. In the present in some cases you are still referred to with this name.

You were not welcomed in the agricultural fields after the arrival of the colonizers. Many plants that made up the native indigenous diet were banned from the agricultural fields. Even though there is no physical proof from the Spanish crown stating your prohibition in the fields it is believed that the ban was from a religious reason as well as colonial.

The religious ban is thought to stem from non acceptance of the catholic priest for rituals where your seeds were transformed to various states symbolizing different energies of the world that interacted with other energies that were present in everyday life. In these

rituals sculptures of some of the deities were made from Tzoalli. Tzoalli is dough made from your popped seeds that was mixed with Agave honey. These sculptures were torn into pieces and eaten by the people practicing the ritual. The Spanish saw this as an act that came from the devil that was trying to copy the ritual of the christian communion.

Due to colonial reasoning you were displaced from the fields to grow other crops that the Spanish preferred.

There are brief references in different text from the time of the colony that talk about the relationship that you had with people. It is mentioned that you were carried in small sacks for long journeys due to the lightness of your seed and the high nutritional value that is embodied in you. This allowed the people to walk great distances without carrying heavy food.

Your history seems to not be so clear due to different ways of classifying, writing, living and thinking. What is clear is that you were ever present in the native's diets for a long time. A presence that carried admiration and care for your being from the people's side.

To the present day there is a ritual practiced with your seed. This takes place in the Nahua mountain region of the state of Guerrero. Where sculptures named Ixiptla are created from Tzoalli and shaped into various forms such as snakes, idolitos which translated means little idols, volcanoes, people and numerous animals. All of them relating to the ancestral cosmology that has been guarded by some communities through time. These are created to make petitions for rain, to make tribute to certain deities, to commemorate certain acting factors in their lives and history.

Through time you have been a medium for ritual that allows communication. Changing from various states, from seed to plant, to symbol, to seed, to dough, to sculptures, to food. Becoming an ever present being withstanding powers of destruction.

The interaction has also consisted of domestication. People selected seeds from your plants that had certain Characteristics that they

preferred. Such as the color of the flowers and the taste of your seeds among other qualities. There are various types of domesticated plants as well as non domesticated.

You have qualities that allow you to be born and grow on many different types of soils, weather and what are considered adverse situations.

Lately there has been a revival of the importance of your seed. Mainly due to the high nutrition value that you can offer us, but also for the strength of your plant. This is regarded as an important attribute in these times because of soil erosion and weather patterns that become harder to predict every day due to the damages that are consequences of our actions. Not all beings can withstand the actual situations of changing temperatures and the consequences that this brings to many life forms whose lives have been interrupted and can't keep existing in their current state.

THOUGHTS TO EXPLORE WITH YOU

Can we contemporary people living under western thoughts with residues from colonialism, capitalism, imperialism and all systems that have taken our individual powers away become something that we think we don't know? Can we change so much to be able to participate in an interspecies life benefiting all?

Free thinking, imagining, speculation or whichever one finds fitting to explore new ways of interaction and communication as a vehicle for different possibilities. Not just as wild thoughts that will stand in the shelf of fiction. More in the direction of clearing passages into other ways of thinking, communicating and acting. To be able to think in many directions with turns to all sides, back and forth, limitless, with different paces. Learning directly from plants, from other cultures and other entities that have a different relationship with plants. Looking through time and space further than the past as past and the present as who we are.

Thinking through plants. Learning from their abilities. Not in the sense to "humanize" them or to project our way of understanding. But to allow ourselves to go into what may seem like other worlds. Worlds that may seem too far away from what we know. That may make us feel uncomfortable because we don't really know much about them. Worlds that some people and surely other entities have already navigated. To lift all boundaries from what it is to be "human" and what it is to be a plant. How can we shift our way of thinking to stop seeing them as just passive companions of the planet.

WHAT IS THE SUBJECT MATTER?

To me Huauhtli is not subject, object or finale to be studied. It is many moments and different perspectives to the questions of what I am and who I am.

I can't seem to see myself clearly predominant society. Referring to the devouring western society that is the colonizer who forcefully inoculated their own thoughts into many other cultures and individuals. In this way of thinking we are taught to not rely on our self knowledge unsustained by the laws of science because it falls into what is considered the primitive. Primitive being a term and concept created by western thought to be able to classify other ways of living. This education was given to me through words that don't have the ability to grasp or state what I am trying to live and say.

Words that I try to use in the best of ways because I haven't made new ones. I find myself constantly correcting my words because it all seems to be too much from a human perspective. The words sometimes try to trap me and if I don't try to dismantle them they may also trap my actions.

This has become a way to reconstruct myself. To not be sure of my given self because of birth, because of institutionalized education. To not believe in the limits of who I may think I am and what I can or can't do.

TALKING ABOUT WORDS

In this text the word human/s is used to refer to the human species without any connotations of speciesism, colonialism, racism or hierarchies.

When I use the word “My” it is not in the sense of ownership or possession, it is a form to show endearment. In Spanish which is my mother tongue this is a way to show affection and love for the other.

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