

Ethics of Dreamwork

Notes from EDEN

Mala Kline



Myths serve a practical function. They enable people to organize the experience of their own bodies. Myths dramatize the experience of our embodiment and which voice is speaking at a particular time. Our body structure determines a mythic way of thinking and gives us an identity.¹

Uncross your legs and arms and sit up straight. Close your eyes. Watch your breathing for a moment, letting it return to its normal rhythm knowing that when the breath finds its own rhythm, what is not in place tends to return into place. Then exhale slowly, counting backwards from three to one, seeing each number at an exhale. See the number one as tall, bright and clear.

Exercise 1

*See, feel and know there is no difference between the mind and the body; just the language is different. (Breathe out one time.) See and know that where and when the voices become one, there is the Garden. Breathe out and open your eyes.*²

This is an example of a 'Guided (Imagery) Exercise,' which are an integral part of this text. These exercises are designed to move us and realign us within. They offer us an experience of what the text is about, although they also help me demonstrate my own creative process. The imagery exercises propose an image and your body and imagination are asked to respond. Your task is only to observe what is propelled within you as a response. Without trying to understand the images, you simply stay alert, available to and accepting of the first image you see. For the first image contains all truth, that is the reader's particular embodied truth in the present moment. The first image reveals whatever is not in its right place in the body and suggests how it could potentially be returned to it.

Exercise 2

Sense in your body how we have lost the Garden of Eden. Describe your sensations precisely with words. Know what is it that you have lost. What word describes precisely your loss?

My performance work is image-based. It has always tried to engage with the inter-subjective space of imagination and ad-

dress issues pertaining to it. For some years my stance towards this 'collective space of images' was critical. I explored image as a container of underlying ideologies and worked around its representational aspects. I focused on image as something reproduced and dead. I thought about domination and hegemony of representation and scopoc regimes and the way they colonize our imagination and construct our social field. I observed how our mediated experiences become increasingly homogenous and how our sensory apparatus becomes increasingly habituated to technical artifice.³ Identified with this critical understanding of image I perceived image only as a problem and not at all as an opportunity. I played with these concepts only to end up deeply discontented.

In 2009 it felt like I had come to a dead end with this attitude and that the paradigm of image that exiles, displaces and disconnects us just wasn't enough because it didn't articulate and propose an alternative. I felt the urge to find another approach and invent an artistic practice or set of practices that would enable me to explore an alternative paradigm based on a different way of *seeing*, which by returning to the image reaffirms it as a medium of our connectivity, communication and exchange. I decided to take a two-year pause from work on projects and entered DasArts, a question-based Masters of Theater program at Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in Amsterdam. I took this time to meet and experience some of the possible existent alternatives and to later develop a precise and effective practice that could embrace the potential of our embodiment and imagination. During this period two encounters were a turning point in my research.

The first one occurred while I traveled and worked with different shamans to learn from them their techniques. One of the experiences I had, which left a strong and lasting imprint on me, were the Ayahuasca sessions I had when working with the Kogi Indians from Colombia. In one of the sessions I made the intent to remove my persona so that I would be able to really meet the plant, communicate with it and let it guide me into the unknown. During that session I had one of the most profound and transformative experiences in my life. I encountered and fully embodied a Snake. It felt as if it was a guide into the unknown. Not only could I see its image and feel its presence, rather I fully became it for a while. It was as if for a while the entire mind and matter structure dissolved and I entered into a state of pure consciousness flowing, expanding and transforming through all forms of life. I was in a

state of pure receiving. With my embodied mind I could willingly tune into other forms of consciousness. If I listened I kept receiving clear and distinct messages from them, I could feel what they feel, their pain and pleasure, and comprehend their intentions. As long as my mind remained subtle and clear it was receiving and it was aware of it. When I became too tired it all slowly stopped and I could return to my 'normal' state of perception. This meeting had made a lasting imprint because it allowed me to experience and know with my body and mind that we are a part of a greater whole, where everything is interconnected, and where all our deeds and all our mental volitions affect the other(s), that whatever we give instantaneously comes back to us as a response of this larger whole to which we contribute in its unfolding. I felt we had lost this sense of connectedness and unity that underlie all separations, the sense that I am myself and the other at the same time, and the feeling of compassion and loving kindness that are awakened with this awareness and knowing. And it is a great loss.

This encounter was important because it made me realize the discrepancy between the worldview I live in and the one pertaining to nature and thus the nature of my own embodiment too. I was looking for other ways to produce and articulate ourselves as human beings in relation to ourselves, to each other and to our environment. This experience gave me an intuitive notion that an image is a particular form of consciousness with its own intention and can be perceived and interacted with as a living being with its own presence, force and direction. And I realized that what I really wanted was to find and further develop a practice of working with or through images as something alive and conscious. I wanted this practice to be a vehicle that operates within a different kind of economy of connectivity and helps enhance our relationality, a practice that requires a different kind of receptiveness, listening, engagement and communication with one another and to the surroundings, a practice that engages with the potentiality of our embodiment and imagination and activates our capacity for *seeing*. This is how the second encounter occurred.

Exercise 3

See yourself as Adam. Hear God calling to you: Where are you? (Breathe out one time) What are you hiding from God? What happens when you reveal yourself?

I was in New York, where I met with Dr. Catherine Shainberg, who later became my teacher and mentor. The encounter seemed to be a happy coincidence but it felt all but only that. Of all the places in New York, an invitation of a common acquaintance of ours brought me right into her loft in the midst of Manhattan. I had an instant recognition in the moment of our meeting: my body felt very bright and open. The intention of my search brought me to the right place. It felt like coming home. That night I forgot my coat at her place, giving myself a reason to return. This is how my studies at the School of Images (SOI) began.

The School of Images is a Kabbalah school founded to advance awareness of imagination as the foremost language for instantaneous insight and transformation. SOI teaches the techniques of work with imagery and dreaming to gain access to the forgotten source of imagination within. The methods of this experiential work are derived from early Jewish, Sephardic and Mediterranean sources and are as such a continuation of the work of the ancient lineage of *Saphardic Kabbalah*. The work is pure Kabbalah (*kabbalah* means 'receiving'), in that one 'receives' from one's inner gazing.⁴ SOI's way of Kabbalah is an exploration of the imaginal field whose language is common to all. Each image exercise is a unique tool for instantaneous vision, transformation and healing. I continue to study with SOI to this day.

The work of SOI is based on the premise that the body is full of images. The images are always there, constituting the body's dream field. The imagery is the primary language of the body, the only language, which the body truly understands and responds to. The images move the body. They are there prior to any bodily manifestation. Any manifestation is thus the result of the images in the body because the body is dreaming all the time. Just as we dream in the night we dream during daytime. We have little awareness of the continuity of this process because our focus on consciousness is overbearing. Nevertheless, the process of dreaming is continuous and it inextricably joins the imaginal field and the body within its manifestations. The work is thus done within this intersection of the imaginal mind and the body, employing our ability for dreaming or imagining that always works in relation to the feeling body.

Exercise 4

See and map the light and the darkness in your body. Hear

god saying: 'This is good.' (Breathe out one time.) Look into a mirror and see your maleness and femaleness, which aspects of your body are Adam and which Eve?

Informed by these encounters I started working on a translation of SOI's methods into a set of artistic practices that can be applied and worked with in a performing arts context and later created a performance based on one of these practices. This was the start of EDEN.

I decided to work with the myth of the Garden of Eden. Let me first amplify the specific Kabbalistic understanding of the story. The traditional Christian interpretation of the story is that the Garden of Eden is a place of perfection and the 'fall' took humans out of that place. Read in this way, the Garden is past tense and 'placed' – it is an idea that is static and fixed. It conveys a belief that perfection was once known as a constant and then lost. It is only available to return to at a pinnacle of achievement – perfection again – which is the rectifying of the 'fall.' However, in the Kabbalistic understanding of the myth of the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Eden is located within us and thus available to us at any time. Our garden is fully in the present. It is the center of the Self. Falling and re-turning and then falling again is the human story. The pattern of this life is a spiral of infinite development. Rather than being static, the Garden of Eden is fluid. We experience it, we fall out, and return again. It is always there for us to return to.⁵

What attracted me most to the Kabbalistic understanding was that the myth of the Garden of Eden in a sense speaks about the here and now in the present and its potential and not of some other paradisiac space. It announces the possibility of the present as the time of presence and revelation. And as such it speaks about our earthly existence as an opportunity for expansion and growth.

When I thought about how to work with the myth I wasn't interested in staying on level of the story and its representation. The imagery of Eden did not interest me as representation in its recurrent historical and interpretative transformations and destiny. I decided to simply suspend all cultural context and associated problems and find a way around them, which would enable me to create a new myth, a new Garden out of my own imagination and experience, while in dialogue with the imagery of the original myth. I wanted the figures of the Garden of Eden to

speak again, remove my persona and make space within me so they could somehow become present and communicate through me, unconditioned by my individual prejudices and other burdens of my cultural and historical contexts. I wanted to see how these mythic images, to which most of us have become indifferent in the best case, move my body. I wanted to know what these images are about when I address my body with them and re-tell the myth through my experience of it. I wanted to see how my body responds and what it creates in case this response is performative. I wanted the body to speak again of images to which we have lost our connection. I wanted the body to speak through images as its original language.

Approaching the world of this myth objectively would necessarily mean encountering a mass of contradictory, far-fetched stories that were sure to tax my credulity. Thus I was rather interested to try another way to uncover what lies in the space where my rationality is subverted, where I usually suffer the frustration if I resort to and use *only* reasonableness in dealing with it. I was curious to see what the myth would reveal if I suspended my judgment, trusting that the story's hidden meaning would be revealed, like a multifaceted jewel, among all the apparent contradictions. And I was willing to attempt taking the *experience as a way of knowing* – knowing what is from its Source. In order to do that I adopted one of the practices used in SOI's work that engage our imaginal mind and that are based on experience as a pathway to knowledge (of the myth and its meaning), the 'Guided (Imagery) Exercises'.⁶ These exercises are designed to move us and realign us within. When we work with image imprints on the body and its dream field we seemingly engage mostly with our imagination and feeling while actually we give to all of our different bodies (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) the possibility to align. They are based on laws that are universal to the *imaginal* mind. I will briefly explain the laws of the realm of the *imaginal* because the imagery exercises have an inherent dramaturgical structure pertaining to them and a way of functioning, which I later developed further into a performance titled EDEN.

In Hebrew the word 'paradise' (*pardes* in Hebrew means 'garden') is written as 'PRDS.' These four letters represent four levels of interpretation of a text. First level, P for *pshat*, represents the *literal meaning* of the myth through the logic of its narration. The second level, R for *remez*, represents the *structural level* of the

myth, its patterns, similarities, parallelisms, clusters of images, mirror images, reversings, and movements within the myth. The third level, D for *drash*, stands for the *right question* of the myth, which gives us what we need. The fourth level, S for *sod*, is the hidden meaning or the *Source* that surfaces or springs forth as a response to the question creating a new image, a new myth.⁷ All these four levels or laws must be activated to fully exercise one's imagination. The guided exercises are not visualizations in which one is told what to see and they do not work only on the level of the story. Instead, a jolt or a shock is necessary to move us, for if there is no inner tension one cannot tap into the immediacy of the Source. But if one is properly jolted, one's whole self can be completely immersed and engaged in the experience of the exercise. Being in the experience, embodying the exercise is the key. When one is truly present in the exercise, not only one's mind, but one's whole *being*, is engaged in the process. In the space, the exercise opens the body and imaginal mind and both are called to respond. Response is receiving imagery through 'inner gazing.' The first image contains all truth. No interference of the mind with the process is required.

Exercise 5

See and know why it is that God puts Adam to sleep in order that he may take Eve from his side? (Breathe out three times.) Un-tell the tale: See feel and know what it means for you that Eve returns to be one with Adam through sleep.

In a cooperative research process the performers involved worked on translating this method of Guided Imagery Exercises into a performative context. We explored how the images received during the inner gazing experience could be articulated into a performative response witnessed by another person or an audience. One had to 'become' and embody the image one received as a response to the imagery given in the exercise. There was always someone watching and witnessing this process of mediation, translation and articulation. The guideline was to follow the image and allow it to guide you through its unfolding without interference. The important thing was to stay in dialogue with the inner imagery, listening while mediating, letting the image show you what it wants you to see.⁸ This performative practice of instantly composing performative material through mediation of imagery

received through inner gazing I named 'presencing.'

During the practice of 'presencing' the body of the performer would have to operate on two levels of attention simultaneously or, rather, continuously negotiate between the two levels of attention. On the one hand the body had to track its response to the exercise on the imaginal level and translate that into some form of articulated performative material. On the other hand it had to remain open to its environment recognizing the way this other is affecting the performative body in a perceptive, sensorial or imaginal way. While observing this practice I realized the body was constantly negotiating its inner and outer realities, that it was constantly aligning them and that it took utmost vigilance of attention and awareness to sustain this practice. Such practice requires to be fully present and aware, to be completely engaged with whatever is taking place and yet detached from it all and able to negotiate the arising emotions.

Exercise 6

See and feel that Eve is Adam's dream come true. (Breathe out.) Feel that with the creation of Eve what is inside and hidden turns outward and becomes visible. How do you experience this in your body?

In the practice a certain vision and experience of the (performative) body unfolded and established itself as the basis of all work. A body that is completely fluid and is in a constant state of becoming. A body driven by its basic creative ability to move and transform and be moved and transformed. A body, which is like a membrane, porous and permeable through and through, constantly oscillating between in and out. A body that is malleable, adjusting itself to the inside and to the outside, bringing inner and outer into alignment, every moment negotiating its being between the directions of the flows of its becoming. The more one was to practice this going in and out, the more present one would become. And potentially when one becomes completely present both worlds become present in the here and now.

Exercise 7

See and feel the Snake as the third presence. (Breathe out two times.) See and feel the Snake as the mirror, between the inside and the outside, as the oscillating reflection of the

inside and the outside.

I later realized that in its way of understanding and relating to the image, the practice of presencing to a degree resembles 'mimeticism.' Mimeticism is a general life principle that comes from animals that constantly 'imitate' or take on the physical properties of their environment. It can be seen everywhere in nature and it is a property of all living forms. In the current developments in some of the natural sciences the understanding of living beings as lived images seems to be much more productive than any idea of representation⁹, which is always already static and separated from real life and is the stasis of it. Thus mimeticism offers an alternative, where every lived image or embodiment is part of various other things in the world and is in a constant affective response to this larger whole. I realized that the performative practice of presencing together with its concept of a porous permeable body in a ceaseless flux of becoming was actually proposing a mode of existence, which is in the most literal classic religious sense 'being at one with the world.' The body is at one with all and all is at one with it because there are no borders where one begins and another ends and there are no separations, neither between images and real things nor between one living being and the other. In English the word 'alone' comes from 'all one.' This mode of existence proposes a continuous bridging between aloneness and all-oneness. All exists in a constant flux of becoming; perhaps something like the uninterrupted continuum of the 'body without organs,'¹⁰ an immanence constantly unfolding itself, emerging from the spaces in between one form and the other. All there is are connections, conjunctions of flows, continua of intensities from gross to subtle, from subtle to gross. Every body is merely a threshold. Always changing. Always aligning. Always mirroring its other to some extent. Always becoming other and returning to itself again.

Exercise 8

See how the Snake mirrors Eve by presenting to her the possibility of breaking boundaries.

Eventually the practice of presencing started to show its potential and I faced the challenge of making a performance based on that while still working with the myth of the Garden of Eden. I needed to develop new principles of composition out of the practice itself and not use principles external to it. What in-

trigued me most was the dramaturgy of the imagery exercises and the way imagery in the exercise gives a shock to the imaginal and to the body's structure, which in turn is given a space to respond, finding its own alignment through its response. I took this as a challenge. I wanted to see if the whole performance could work on the body and imaginal field of the spectator in the same way an imagery exercise does; if it could open a space for the spectator and trigger her or his process of revelation and realignment. Thus the initial question: What is the experience or memory of Eden in the body of the performer and how can it be organized? Or reversed into: What is the experience or memory of Eden in the body of the spectator and how can it be organized?

I was curious on how to stage a porous being, a body radically open towards the other in the process of negotiating the present moment of the here and now, within a flux of becoming, through working with the imagery of Eden — a process, which in the end inevitably became the process of the spectator, something to witness and experience. The main feature of the body of this practice is that it only exists in relation, that it always is itself and the other at the same time and that it is always negotiating and realigning within the economy of this relationality. This is so for every-body, for the body of the performer as well as for the body of the spectator. The axis of the performance thus needed to be the relation of the body to its other, the relation between the performer and the spectator. I wanted to rethink how a body lives its relation to the other within the basic performative relational matrix. The main figures, images and events of the myth (Adam, Eve, the Snake, two Trees, apple, angel and God) were to speak of what is taking place in the moment of the meeting of the performer and the spectator. EDEN eventually became a piece about this relation as it is experienced by the body and imagination (of the performer and of the spectator) — as an oscillating movement of fall and return to the garden within.

I looked for a way of choreography that would be based on the principles of the language of images as 'engrams,'¹¹ energetic imprints that move the body and the imaginal mind of the spectator. I imagined creating a diagram¹² of images that functions as a vehicle allowing for an intensified experience of the present time, in which our encounter takes place. It being a catalyst for a kind of empathy with the experience of time and space as it is lived. Enabling us to experience the sheer fact of our presence together

and the space between us, who attempt to feel and make a connection in the time and space we are sharing. Allowing us to see what is emerging from this in-betweenness of a relation. The 'new myth' would work as a 'somatic narrative' and as a structure that rendered the economy of connectivity, the way we relate to each other and the exchange between us visible; allowing us to experience imagination as a collective space of potential and creativity and to recognize the inherent ethics that address a radical openness and possibility of us in the present.

Exercise 9

See and live how Eve could only resist temptation by turning to Adam. What then is Adam to her?

Working on defining the basic performative set-up of the performance EDEN I again turned to the basic four-level structure of the imagery exercises, which are based on four laws of the imaginal mind. The four 'laws' of the imaginal,¹³ each of which is inscribed into one level of 'interpretation of the text,' are the foundations of each imagery exercise and are the basic strategies of inducing movement in a dreamer. These laws were the base upon which I defined the four dramaturgical principles that would generate the life and movement of the performance in time within a fixed score of tasks. The rest would remain open and would be generated in the moment of the performance itself while unraveling the relation of the performer and the audience.

Exercise 10

See and live being the Snake condemned to crawl on the ground. (Breathe out two times.) See and live that coming together of the inside and the outside is what returns you – the Snake – to the erect posture you had before the cur(s)e.

In the 'story line' of each imagery exercise, but also of the myth itself, the *law of imitation* is inscribed. Imitation is the body's primordial capacity. The body uses the ability of the imagination to break through the boundaries and to immerse itself in the reality of the other. The body learns and expands through 'becoming the other,' through having the experience of the other. Original imagination is fluid (and democratic). One easily shifts and becomes 'any other' of oneself.

Analogically, in EDEN we defined the performing body through the figure of a clown. A clown is figure that does not exist without its audience. It only exists through its response to it. As a figure it embodies the relation and inter-dependence of the performer and the spectator. It persists in the radical openness and acceptance of what is taking place in the present. It works through amplifying or intensifying its primal mimetic ability and affective response to what it encounters within its relation to the other. It is a catalyst for all that takes place within its own body, within the relation to its audience, or with the (in)visible in its environment. It doesn't dance *for* the audience. It dances *with* its audience. It does not perform the images. It performs a mirroring, a mimetic relationship with the world, so that the spectator also is a part of this mimetic relationship. This enables the spectator to establish a sense of personal connection and affective intensity, and to some extent experience an oceanic state, where there is no separation between the inner and the outside world and where being is a journey of discovery of all the multiple forms being can take. Thus the body of the performer serves the spectator as a mirror or as a threshold, while threading the path to inner imagery and worlds of every individual. While participating in what is emerging in the present through the relation of performer and spectator one can enter and observe oneself (one's own imagery, memory, perspectives or responses) from 'within.'

Exercise 11

See and live that there are two trees in the Garden; one on the outside that you can sense and touch – the tree of good and bad; one on the inside that is invisible to the outside eye – the tree of life.

In the structure of the exercise the numerous *laws of movement of the imaginal* are hidden. These are the possible ways to create tension within the imaginal field and provide a push to trigger its transformational movement: directionality (six directions and their attributes), penetration (pushing in one direction), return (switch to the opposite direction), pairing (experiencing both points of view), mirroring (reflecting back a reversed image), opposites (juxtaposing two opposing images), clustering (holding different possibilities together simultaneously), and malleability (transform from embodying one form to another).

The challenge of EDEN was to choreograph it as a possible staged version of the original myth that would – just like the exercises – induce movement and trigger transformation in the body of the spectator (dreamer). The laws of movement helped organize the overall structure and the scoring of the images in EDEN in such a way that it would support this shift to happen in a dream field and the feeling body of the spectator. Organized in this way, the performance would work in a virtual space of imagery but would have real effects on the body and would thus move the spectator to experience this shift within his or her own body and imagination and not necessarily rationally comprehend it. The images (dream field) in-form the body to frame its manifestations and transformation. And the body understands the images and responds to them because they are its primal language. Applying this principle, EDEN would set up the encounter between the performer and the spectator and speak about the body's relation to the other(s) in such a way as to keep open access to both worlds, the here and now and the realm of the imaginal. It would appeal to and reaffirm the spectator's ability to *see* with one's body and imagination or with the 'inner eye.' It would induce the ability to dream awake.

Exercise 12

See and live that in you are also two trees – your outside and your inside bodies. You know what your outside body looks like. See what your inside body looks like.

In the imagery exercise the *law of open-endedness* is inscribed within the level of the 'question.' We need not know the answer and rather allow the question to hang suspended over the void and really listen. Open-endedness creates the space for a response to come. This space is a 'pause.' Within the pause, the response finds a way to emerge. Open-endedness allows the imagination to unfold creatively.

Thus the aim of creation was for EDEN to function as an open question. Most of the images and scenes as well as the performance as a whole are open-ended. No obvious content is presented that could be reproduced each time and received as such. And all of the performer's actions are created in the moment and depend on the listening of and response to what is taking place. We are all in a process. Our relation is a process. EDEN rather

directs us towards the unknown. It is a playful quest through the spaces of the possible. This open-endedness allows the spectator to be given back to himself or herself. The openness, the unknown makes one present and engaged. The performer works as a medium for a process within the spectator, as a catalyst for the experience of one's empathy in relation to oneself and the other. It also allows one to see how agile and responsive one's dreaming mind is, to what extent it can dream its own dream in response.

Exercise 13

See and live that when God finished the work and entered the state of rest, he entered it by a hair's breadth.

Within the level of the Source *the law of immediacy* is inscribed. The exercises are sure to work as a surprise and trigger the inside to respond swiftly and spontaneously. The imaginal response is holographic, existing as it does in the language of dreaming. The first image that appears contains *all* truth.

EDEN is a vehicle that uses the language of the images to move the body and imagination of the spectator back into the open. In EDEN, just as in the Kabbalistic understanding of the myth, the focus is the intensified and more conscious experience of the present. It announces the possibility of the present as the time of presence and revelation that can be induced in the spectator through his or her response to what is taking place. EDEN does so in a kind of self-abandoned leaning back onto itself and its own process, instantaneously creating from its response to the other. Thus it leaves space to the spectators so that they can meet their selves in their own process of self-remembering.

Exercise 14

See and live that in rest is born a perfect man: (Breathe out one time.) Live why this man is called the comforter.

Early on in the process, when we barely had begun the research, I had a dream.

I am in a rehearsal in a beautiful white illuminated studio in a building next to the ocean. I work with different women. Suddenly they are all gone. I sit in the same space but different, now facing Catherine, my teacher

and mentor. She asks me if I am ready to do the work and I nod in affirmation. She asks me to go back into the studio where I was before and just let myself see what I need to see. I am in the studio (for the third time) and now it is dark. I see a lion on my right and on the left a man and a woman lying naked on the floor next to each other, motionless and as if asleep. They look like twins but the constitution of the female is more fragile. They appear as if frozen in time and perfectly preserved. In this moment of the dream I know that I (my dream body) am outside of my body at some other place watching this scene and instantaneously and effortlessly come back to sit next to Catherine again. She says to me: Wonderful! You remember it all right. In the dream I know this work (dreaming) is about remembering and reconstructing the memory matrix of the universe we are a part of. Catherine is happy with my work and says to me: When you start to remember, just let your body respond while you are seeing. It might be shocked or moved. Let it do whatever it needs to do. Follow it. It will guide you.

As I dream this dream today, it is teaching me to *see* and work within the realm of images. This work, as the dream shows, is the work of remembering. As the word 're-member' suggests, the process of remembering is about bringing the members, the parts of us, which lay fallen, exiled and scattered throughout the world back to ourselves. Just like shamans go on their journeys to fetch the part(s) of the soul one has lost, only to bring them back and return them to the body of the one to whom they belong.¹⁴ The dream also shows me that our memory is a part of a greater memory of the universe and when we work with the images and the body, bringing them into alignment, we are aligning a greater whole. It demonstrates how the memory of the universe is like an onion unfolding – a dream within a dream within a dream. It presents the imagery of the myth of the Garden of Eden as one of the layers of this memory that works in the present. And, finally, this dream also gives me the first directive on how to do the work within my own artistic practice and how to work towards the creation of EDEN. It is a simple instruction but it turned to be the essential one: Let the body respond. Let it guide you!

Exercise 15

See yourself as Adam when Adam and Eve are one. (Breathe out one time.); when Adam contains all universe (Breathe out one time.); when Adam is a concept in God's mind. What is at the beginning? What is just before the beginning? When you see it open your eyes immediately.

The Kabbalah tells us that before Adam (and Eve) there was Adam Khadmon, the first (wo)man created in the image of God. Adam Khadmon is 'Adam' before the fall and separation takes place in the Garden of Eden. This being is male and female at once, a being that contains all universe within its body. It is fluid and whole. It is alone and all one at once. The Kabbalah teaches us that the more we move in and out, between being oneself and momentarily becoming the other(s), the more present, fluid and whole we become. When we align the two we allow – momentarily – the two worlds at once.

Following the call of the image of the Snake made me understand that we live in a constant oscillation between inner and outer, between light and darkness, between male and female, between one and the other, between active and passive. The more we move in between, the more we remember who we are – for we are and always will be one and many at once. I always *see* EDEN as an open field, a field of moments of presence, moments of openness, moments of alignment, moments of connection, moments of remembrance. Moments when we escape from fragmentation and suddenly the gates of the Garden are wide open because paradoxically they never were closed.

If art is about *reasserting our first-hand experience in the present time*,¹⁵ EDEN too is a vehicle for an intensified and more conscious experience of the present. *It is not a blissful state of rest. It is a place of healing with a razorblade.*

Notes

- 1 Keleman, 1999, p. 6.
- 2 All Imagery Exercises* are the property of the School of Images, New York.
- 3 Evans and Hall, 1999, p. 15.
- 4 Shainberg, 2005, p. VI.
- 5 Buckner Bahira, 2012, p. 194.
- 6 Shainberg, 2005, p. 107.
- 7 Ibid., pp. 107-9.
- 8 Chekhov, 2002, p. 21.
- 9 Weber, 2010, pp. 184-85.
- 10 Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, pp. 177-78.
- 11 Michaud, 2004, p. 255.
- 12 Deleuze, 2003, p. 101.
- 13 Shainberg, 2005, p. 110.
- 14 Harner, 1990, p. 70.
- 15 Gormley, Antony, www.ted.com/talks/antony_gormley_sculpted_space_within_and_without.html, June, 2012.

Bibliography

- Buckner Bahira, Bonnie (2012). *Dream Yourself Into Being*. Lavergne: Blue Feather Press.
- Chekhov, Michael (2002). *To the Actor*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Deleuze, Gilles (2003). *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari (2004). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Evans, Jessica, and Stuart Hall (1999). *Visual Culture: The Reader*. London: SAGE Publication, in association with The Open University.
- Harner, Michael (1990). *The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Power and Healing*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Keleman, Stanley (1999). *Myth and the Body: A Colloquy with Joseph Campbell*. Berkeley: Center Press.
- Michaud, Phillipe-Alain (2004). *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*. New York: Zone Books.
- Shainberg, Catherine (2005). *Kabbalah and the Power of Dreaming: Awakening the Visionary Life*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.
- Weber, Andreas (2010). *Alles Fühlt: Mensch, Natur und die Revolution der Lebenswissenschaften*. Berlin: Berlin Verlag.