

## 13 Theses On A Burning Asylum

Two silent bodies stand beside each other there: a naked man and a woman. *Movement I: The man whispers into the ear of the silent woman. Break. Movement II: The woman talks to us and at the same time the man, now silent, burns with a lighter the hairs on his skin. Break.* Two bodies continue to repeat the above-mentioned movements. This is the matrix of Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa's performance *The Asylum Is Burning* in its very elemental level. If one at the end collects all the sentences told by the woman, it is possible to reconstruct the following story: as the story is told, a white young man rapes a young 13 year old girl called Clara Asturias. Vela, the mother of Clara, takes revenge on the rapist. The oral tradition of the story has transmitted three scenarios of the revenge: revenge by pouring a pot full of hot chocolate on the head of the rapist, revenge by performing witchcraft directed on the penis of the rapist and revenge by stabbing the rapist with a pair of scissors. Clara and Vela are imprisoned. Pregnant from the rape, Clara in jail gives birth to a baby girl. The story makes here a direct leap into the future, when Clara is committed to an asylum. One day the asylum catches fire and Clara burns in the flames.

1. There is neither such a thing as pure fiction nor such a thing as pure reality. Every fiction, like every reality, is impure. The undecidability between reality and fiction is the constitutive rule of every fiction and reality. There is only real fiction or fictive reality.

2. The man and the woman stop abruptly to continue. The boredom of the subject, when the subject has to continue but cannot, is the true condition of the passion. In exhaustion, the subject discovers the royal dance of possibilities, the love and the art.

*Action T4: The Asylum is Burning Adriana Contreras (L)  
& Naufus Ramirez-Figueroa (R) 2011*



3. There is no image for the story. It is purely told through the retina of the words. Not because there is no proper image for that but because the lacuna in the story, in every story, is the only possibility of resistance against the representation. The prohibition of the image is due to a talking mouth, in which the tongue is extinguished or from which the tongue is amputated.

4. The man and the woman are not a couple. They are in a never-ending process of coupling. What makes their coupling possible is a voice, a calling, which comes into the skull of the woman from outside.

5. When the man stops to whisper, the woman begins to talk. The death of his murmurs gives birth to her speech. The sacrifice of the voice heralds the arrival of the meaning. The speech of the woman bears witness to its own ruins. What makes the language possible is its own silence, which vanishes in every act of speech.

6. The hairs burn on the skin of the body like the trees in a forest. The body becomes a landscape by its very depopulation. The idea of the politic is the idea of a missing people. A clearing (Lichtung) is the arena of the poetry (Dichtung).

7. The breaks bring the language of the woman to stutter. The woman doesn't talk, she stutters. In her stuttering the language exhibits nothing but its pure transparency.

8. There is no way to prove what the woman says is the transmission or translation of the murmurs of the man. What could be proved is just the existence of language as such.

9. The woman bears witness to the gray ash of the burnt body of the man. To be a witness is precisely what makes her insane. Her stuttering is just a symptom of her faithfulness to the truth.

10. The man is outside of the woman by his very being inside of her. His murmur penetrates into the darkness of her ear's cavity. The ear's cavity is the womb. The woman is the (M)Other of the man.

11. A woman listens to the murmur of her shadow or a man whispers into the ear of his shadow. A calling comes from outside to an ear only when one lies in the darkness beheaded. The listening subject is a skull.

12. Those who think what is at stake is just a tragic story regarding the history of Guatemala under the dictator regime of general Jorge Ubico Castañeda in the 1940's (the burning of the Guatemala City Mental Hospital) have to look around carefully in order to see our naked life subjugated to the power all over the planet. We are all refugees living in an asylum, which is called the earth.

13. There would be love, wherever and whenever there would be two subjects in the process of coupling, one whispering and one listening. And love is the only weapon left to us to resist.

Hamed Taheri