

Recueillement or The dispersed Body

“What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them?”¹

I am talking to the Sea. I am asking... I want to know. I whisper.

how do you survive?

and the Sea said:

The Sea is an ancient body, breathing inwards, breathing outwards. It holds ancestral and certain truths. It is the memory device, the organic archive, the remembering body.

what shape does this body have?

The Sea has no shape: it has no edges, no outlines. Instead, it creates negative space which is the land. The Sea itself is dispersed, it is everywhere or nowhere and as such has no shape.

It is not vain like the gated land that tries to claim shape and identity as its body.

what is a body without shape?

It is a mass of material, an element. It is the body that moves, creates and shapes other things. It is like fire or wind. It creates shapes.

me: what is a body without identity?

It is a fragmented and dispersed body, oftentimes and essentially estranged from itself through domination and violence.

how can there be reconciliation?

When there is *recueillement*.

¹ Audre Lorde, *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action*, in: *Sister Outsider*, 1984, p. 41

what is *recueillement*?

It is the act first of *finding*, then of *recovering* and finally of *reassembling* the shapes, the dispersed parts of the body in non-linear time.

what is a body?

It is that mass of material that has been shaped and created by the shapeless body. It is the body without identity, the dispersed body, an element of the self.

and what is the self?

It is the shape created by the body without identity. It is the dispersed body also.

but then, isn't the dispersed body...?

It is the Sea. It is you. It is everything.