

SNAPSHOT 6: CITLALMINA AND NANAHUATZIN
MEXICO (2010 - 2016)
Karoliina Sandström

The following texts were written in response to the actor training dynamics, *Citlalmina* and *Nanahuatzin*, and reflect two features of the work which I have come to consider tremendous wells of understanding and learning with regard to the process of being an actor. One of these is the manner in which, through the dynamics, one can learn to become more attentive to the observer self, and the internal mechanisms of the construction of a habitual self. The other is the sheer power this work can have for an individual, in enabling them to transgress their personal, habitual, physiological, psychological and energetic limits.

There are few teachers of acting who embody over 40 years of experience of generating, expanding and directing energy, as can be said of Nicolás Núñez and Helena Guardia. And here much could be observed regarding the recent investigations which show that the teacher's embodiment of psychophysical practices such as mindfulness, sitting meditation or meditation-in-movement transmits a knowledge of embodiment and being to the student, even when meditation is not being taught. In my experience of this training numerous doors opened, and others closed. I am forever grateful to my teachers who showed the way of transformation.

Citlalmina

To be present in every step, present but without grasping. To be here yet to know here is nowhere and everywhere.

Sweat, sweat and confusion, a battle against thought. A battle against thought manifested in form, in the limits of form. A constant noticing. I think I am here Now, but know Now is already a concept. It is already one step removed. I find myself full of mind. Attempting my best to be the space

in which experience happens. There is confusion; What is life? What am I? What can I hang onto if I have no time to construct the usual, the known, the controlled?

There is a sense that at this speed, the natural ways of distraction, habits of mind, come forth like a speeding train with all kinds of crazy folk on board – apparitions of self hanging out of the window, shouting out their shopping list of complaints to an innocent bystander! There is no escape from being able to see the mechanisms at work in being me.

...

The dancing goes on forever, because forever is eternal. The universe flashing by in all its glory, constellations, stars, planets and black holes, and my brain with more nerve connections than there are stars in the sky. When I think I cannot go on, I remember I already have. There is always another wall to break through, another feather to watch floating in the air. There is always more depth, more width, more closeness and more space.

...

Dancing is home; it has become home, and it has shown me I am always home. I am home. There is no outside and no inside, yet the dance of the earth joins with the dance of my bones; the flight of the stars is knitted together into the light of the dancer. Dancing is home and home is now – this I learnt in Citlalmina. Citlalmina, bow bent towards a shooting star, intention bent on burning the tales of mind, so well practiced.

Nanahuatzin

I saw various suns pass before me; I saw them close their eyes, turn their soul to its next trial. The flow of life emanating from their twirling force as they turned into the next sun. The next light to guide the way of man. Women gifted their life energy like Nanahuatzin, to illuminate the lives of others.

We ran, and ran, in the river trail of sunlight, spiralling through the space.

She came to me – my mother, my grandmother, my bloodline of life force, the lineage of light I had been born from.

My number was up.

I was calmed, hands reaching out for me, to hold me as I fell, as my self fell away from me into the ground. Into the dark soil of my childhood. Chunks of me fell away, to mould into compost. I let myself go and was lifted into the air, empty. Unleashed into a million hands, into a multiplicity of directions unknown, to be buried. Turned upside down, inside out, so another one could stand. Could find her way, in the path of those before her. Women, finding their light, their radiant flight.

And then I flew beyond myself, beyond the molecular walls of my cells. I traversed every body, and pillar, every wall and wood; twirling without centre, a body in the sky. Sound escaped, and all levels of being were shone by this new light.

Direction was taken, held between these two pairs of arms. You ran – I was not there. I had been undone. Life had taken my place. Force, power and love had taken my place.

after

I kept breathing and breathing. Like breath had opened a door into a savannah and there was no end to the inhalation. I had been restored, rebuilt, re-cognized and recognized, for the first time. Woman. Sun. Unlimited, running. Running without legs, taking her first flight.

After still

Gratitude is boundless. The reinvention of the *conquistador* – the conqueror of oneself. One turns into a warrior in the hands of the greatest teachers.