

Who am I actually pregnant with? A case study of one constellation

The need to narrow down the wide-ranging research towards existing practices led me, Anna and my residential colleague Matyáš to a practical experiment. Together with Transfer collective member Jane Scalabroni, we mutually subjected each other to a two-day constellation practice in which we used Bert Hellinger's psychotherapeutic method of family constellations as a self-subjective tool to change the distribution of our own bodies, emotions and relationships. During the hour-long sessions we gradually put ourselves in the "roles" of people who could not be with us in Bratislava for various reasons. The individual situations surprisingly quickly took us deep into a wide range of feelings, from joy to despair. Here I attach my subjective description of one of the activated constellation situations:

I put Monica in Jane's body. I asked her if she needed help, while in my mind I wished she would give me a hand so we could exist normally next to each other, just to be together. She averted her eyes, then squeezed herself into a corner, still stubbornly saying, I don't know. I felt helpless, and at the same time I knew very well what the solution was. I pushed it away as far as I could, but eventually I asked: Should I leave? Would it help you if I left? Silence at first, but then a hesitant yes. So that's how it all started: inability and impossibility to be together. The total absence of the other. Even though the real Monika couldn't be with me in Bratislava, her imprint remained in me and placed in our constellation a situation that was the answer to everything that happened a month ago in Prague. When I turned away from Jane-Monika and sat down at the table facing the wall, I felt only great pain. I ended up crying a lot, with tears on the outside, completely bleak on the inside.

Through its techniques, the Hellinger constellation of-

fers the opportunity to plunge into the depths of a relationship problem directly - physically and emotionally. A person who was not with us at the time, Monica, came between us through Jane's body. My perhaps too intense gaze on her provoked a reaction of rejection in Monica-Jane. My emotions and Monica-Jane's were real; I was mirroring myself in another person, and in the end it didn't matter who it really was. Because I have a piece of Monica inside me, one particular situation that I still haven't come to terms with, and she's lying there inside me. I am pregnant with Monica, as I am with many others [PLEURISMA 03]. Endless loops of what I am, what I want to be, what I was a moment ago, what I realize I am not, what I am together with... [PLEURISMA 12] My self is not a simple bounded space safely separated from others, selves, from other bodies, spaces, situations, emotions. In common with the words of psychologist Margaret Warner; my 'self' is always in process, any experience always shapes my identity in its absolute complexity more than I could have imagined [PLEURISMA 10]. The self is a process, a process is not only about me, but about many others who enter into me.

The body and pregnancy in the title can therefore be read as a metaphor, but Maurice Merleau-Ponty is, however, very literal in his descriptions [PLEURISMA 01]. The body and what it carries with it are fundamental to my understanding of the world outside it. This process is pervasive and unceasing. An endless re-organization, becoming, transformation. The body as a site of contact that is modelled from within and outside. A body through which I perceive the world; a body that is full of everything I do, even if it doesn't concern me. [PLEURISMA 13] This body influences Monika right now. doesn't (seemingly) concern the constellation situation with the impossible, (referring to the of PLEURISM), the interdependence as a kind of unwanted totality. There is nowhere to escape, we cannot cut ourselves off from our umbilical cord that connects us to others. The basic distribution of forces will always be clear - even though I perceive myself as a unique and somewhat separate entity, I am *connected* to a multitude of processes and entities that are unseen (because they are smaller, or transcend me, or outside of me entirely). We swim in the water-air of the placenta, we are simply all of us, and there is no other way.

- And what if we already are?
- 1) Let's deconstruct me. Let's watch suspiciously the definitions of the individual.
 - 2) Let us sink into ourselves, surrender, inhabit and be inhabited by the incoherent. Let us allow ourselves to be pulverized by the parts we have viewed as the whole of ourselves. Let us become the garden and the grave, the rotting that allows the oddities to grow.
 - 3) Let us not hold by force of will the illusion of the unity of our body and psyche. Let us soak ourselves with eczema. When our nose bleeds, let it wash us out to others.
 - 4) Let us not throw away self-consciousness or our own specificity, rather let us be led to divide the self into disparate parts, let us allow the self to be completely unconscious and let us relax our vigilance, let us blur our focus, let us not fear our own stupidity.
 - 5) Let us seek unity in disintegration. We are made of each other, we are so embodied in each other that we cannot even be erased. We can belong to each other, surrender to each other, experience the special specificity of that bond.
 - 6) But this also means that we cannot escape from this oneness, but neither can we have insight. So let us develop perspectives of looking from within.

- 7) Let us participate in the experience of others. Let us train our capacity to be us through our capacity for dispersion.
- 8) Let us be affected by uncertainty. Let us let it enter us through the deconstruction of the self. Let us be challenged, let us lose our illusions and expectations.

Sometimes I'm like behind the curtain, like out of this world. I'm here, but it's like I'm not. The faces of others are beautiful and terrible ghosts. My body flees away, as if only an abandoned facade remains of me. The world has only a surface, a skin on which I slide away. (A skin that separates and protects me from others and from myself.) I feel like I'm driving a car with the door open. My body whispers to me, half in and half out into the void. You are unwelcome in the world.

The feeling of belonging is like a claw digging into the surface of the world. One fixed point.

Belonging is like proof to yourself that you're still here.

Instructions for dolls
-> Make my doll. That doll, made up of any object and any size, is me.
-> It's mutual. I'll make your doll too.
-> You can do whatever you want with my doll. Dolls can do what we can't do. Meet, disassemble and put themselves back together. You can manipulate the doll's body.
-> There are no other rules. It's a surrender.
-> It's a way of being together, even if we can't be together. It's a practice for intimate relationships.

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Unfortunatly, we hallucinate a shared weakness

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What if it is necessary to escape outside from the body?

How to survive when we experience something too scalding: Projection - moving subjective content onto an object. Moving from the inside out, transferring oneself to foreign elements, inhabiting the world with oneself. A process whereby subjective contents alienate themselves from the subject and become embodied in the object. A self-deceptive defence mechanism that protects us, for example, from contact with unacceptable experiences and pain. A way that allows us to transfer our selves into virtual space. We can become a virtual being that identifies ourselves or parts of ourselves with something in a space mediated by a particular technology. Through this, we embody a virtual avatar (twin) that promises new forms of cohabitation. The inhabitation of virtual space promises a multiplicity and defragmentation of the self, a division of ourselves between our avatars (twins). The search for new identities of our own.

The potential to leave one's body or to have relationships outside it. A return to escapism, but one that allows us and relationships to survive.

A story about a virtual group: Lockdown. How to maintain relationships online? The user interface does not perceive others as the group. That's why small groups break up. We don't feel each other's bodies, we miss a lot of small interactions that build a sense of knowing each other at all. We miss the small things that nourish our relationships. A group of people creates bodies of themselves in a simulation. The simulation allows the dopplegangers to behave completely autonomously, deciding how to spend their time independently of the original people. Dopplegangers have no lockdown and no limits; they live in their own world together. Dopplegangers can do things that original humans cannot do. Meet, touch, deliberate, dance. I can intervene in the simulation, raise my alter ego's morale else. If I want it for the lockdown, we'd be on a road to give a group right now. So we're moving our alter ego on a trip! They're living our experiences through their avatar's presence! Two groups living parallel lives side by side. Every morning I see what my digital double is doing. What he's talking to. I always miss the hope to see him developing real relationships. I write to the people he likes to. He's looking who we're talking to right now, you and me in another world. I realize my virtual self's friends with people I would want to be friends with in the real world. The two groups live each other and influence each other, interacting and this maintains and creates a shared memory of the group. [PLEURISMA 25]

You don't know a new one is born not knowing lays down the old system

What if we're all me?

I want to tell you how complicated that view is. You may not transcend yourself and your condition. But you're still more of a many than a one.

- I only feel what I feel. It's hard for me to look around the corner and see how the other one is doing. So I've created corners within. Rooms. And now from one to the other we have a conversation.

We relate to the world through our selves. The relationship between our self and the world is flexible, our self is very inconsistent.

- I need to explain it to myself sometimes to make sense of it. It was strange at times, I went against everything I thought of myself. So you showed up.

The totality of our experience is more than what we identify with. It was smart of you not to be alone anymore. We have become parallel voices to make sense of our experiences. We built a new self-concept around incomprehensible or overwhelming experiences, around strong emotions, your failures and anger.

- It's as if I'm absorbing the people around me. I adopt their thinking, their emotions, their strategies. They are my filters through which I access new experiences [PLEURISMA 15]

You've adapted. We adapt. You too are a filter for me.

- They are still talking. It's like I don't even have a personal life.

Our personalities are a living record of the relationships we've had. We've inserted ourselves into each other. We live through each other. That's why we're talking to each other now. [PLEURISMA 42]

- It's like I don't have the distance and see it too closely. I meet everyone in my body.

We can't do otherwise.

toužím po my po sounáležení po patření po dání se toužím se propadnout do druhé And then eat it.

We are layers of memory!

- And it makes you so happy...

Their memories come alive again with each new interaction, creating another new self!

- Their memories come alive again with each new interaction, but they overwrite me, so where am I? Where are the others really? Every relationship and every situation has created me a little different. I get lost in the shades. I am a mixture of bodies and strategies, of opinions. Where is the purity if I just keep crumbling over time? [PLEURISMA 10]

I don't know what you're angry about. The totality of our experience is more than what we identify with or how we view ourselves. You would never even be here if you had to make do. [PLEURISMA 12]

Put people in roles Someone for your liver and kidneys Someone for your lungs Someone for your heart

Sigh over how we define individuals in terms of science. Holobiont challenges the traditional biological definition of the individual. He emphasizes the view of symbiotic relationships and the importance of interconnectedness. Different organisms form an assemblage - a biological unity. [MARGULIS & MEYER-ALBICH] Microbes in the human brain and gut change our behavior. Viral DNA that was incorporated into our DNA during evolution millions of years ago is involved in mental disorders. Many of us carry another person's cells within us. Questioning the distinction of the individual, questioning the simple reading of anatomy, immunity, genetics. [PLEURISMA 17].

Transgenerational transmission refers to the transfer of an experience or trauma of an individual who has not experienced the event themselves across generations of a family. The older generation has experienced the trauma, but its effects or psychological and physical symptoms do not develop until later generations. These experiences or traumas can be seen, perceived or felt. Even if we do not speak about them, we experience them as part of the realm of the unspoken, the unthinkable, the unspoken, but which is transmitted beyond language [PLEURISMA 08].

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It's autumn, it's very humid. You're walking down the sidewalk, you're in no hurry. Your left foot alternates with your right foot, and an almost imperceptible tremor spreads through your body from your feet. Your arms hang loosely along your body, helping you walk, and they tingle gently. The surface of your body is very sensitive, the tingling and uneasiness spreading. Your arms and legs tingle, your stomach tingles, your back tingles, your neck itches a little, your hair scratches. It's not unpleasant. You're walking steadily, the surface of your body is expanding. A few hairs from your forearm drift down to the ground.

You take a deep breath.

You walk along the pavement, feeling the air rush through your body, and slowly you begin to disintegrate. The molecules are separating. A wind blows on the shore of your body. The air flowing in and over the surface of your body mixes with the wind gust. Your skin mixes with the air, and you get all mixed up with it. Clothes flutter and loosen from the form of your body.

Exhale. A long, relaxing exhale.

You exhale everywhere, only your left leg remains pinned to the ground, the wind somehow completely in. Tiny bumps form in a thousand places, starting at the calf, a bit like goose bumps, but these little bumps fill with oozing sap. As the sap gradually fills the thin space between skin and flesh, the leg gains volume; it gets heavier and heavier.

The upper part of your body, on the other hand, weighs almost nothing. It permeates the molecules of the fence you walked around a moment ago, packing on the moisture of the air, letting the air gusts carry it away.

Your leg hasn't walked in a while, it's heavy, full of water. There's no reason to walk anymore. It falls to the ground and splashes all over when it hits the concrete pavement. The drops seep into your now empty pants, a few stick to the weeds in the cracks between the tiles, and the rest fill your left shoe, which then slowly leaks out, absorbed into the concrete, and most of it runs down the drain and then on, out of the city.

You don't need to breathe anymore.

You are air and you are soil.

You look around you. There's nothing you're not. There's nothing that's around you.

You are you.

You are together.

My illusory body. Keep it together. I repeat to myself, keep it together. Hot hard. Fancy organs, fancy untrustworthy bones. I was born with a body that doesn't hold together. Forgetting my hands, unaware of my emotions scattered around, detached relationships. Under certain conditions, this illusion is the only one possible for me. I thought it was a little worse than that. This is me and this is us. That's a lie and not the real thing. But the body is made of weird tectonic pieces that don't fit. I'm host to many autonomous beings. I don't have to live under the illusion of power and control over anything. I live without knowing it. Maybe it's a new closeness I'm waiting for. Or the only one I can reach.

Who am I? Am I even here?

I'm more like a vague black intuition than a whole person.

Behind the curtain Filled with others It's like my person is a little bit not

Shamanic circle

We sit in an imaginary circle, the sides of which represent different aspects of the person. In the middle sits a person who lets himself be passively seen, letting himself be "scanned" by others. Around the perimeter sit people who "scan" specific aspects of the one in the middle.

To the north is the aspect of thinking and understanding. To the east is the aspect of vision and life's dream. To the south is the aspect of emotion. And on the west is the aspect of the physical body. One of us sits in the center of the circle. The one who sits on the north side is concentrating on the thinking of the one who sits in the middle. The one on the south perceives the emotions, the one on the west observes the images of vision, and the one on the east feels the body. For those on the periphery of the circle, it is enough for them to just simply be with what they are feeling or thinking at the moment.