



Helsinki, and Reykjavík, 24 June 2022, and 5 September 2022,

Dear Taru,

Thank you for the beautiful postcard.

My paternal grandmother was born in 1906 in Hendaye, in the Basque Country, on the French side of the arbitrary border that was negotiated by kings Louis XIV of France and Philip IV of Spain, cutting one people into two parts and two fates. This border is a river. Its name: Bidasoa. Its estuary meets the Atlantic Ocean, or, to be more geographically correct the Cantabrian Sea, in the Bay of Txingudi. Nowadays, the latter is also sadly subject to progressive silting, disappearance of beaches, retreat of the coastline, and acidification of the water... also overfishing has become a major problem for the river's fauna, with special pressure put on salmon and trout...

Estuaries, like forest edges, or other third spaces appearing through melange and friction have always fascinated me. I have often identified metaphorically with them. An ecotonal sense of identity? Identity probably not being the just word, moreover a fluent matter of aggregates, blends, and glitches, rather than crystallization, solidification, unity... That's the reason, I guess, why the word ecotonal is in the subtitle of my thesis *Reacclimating the Stage*, certainly bringing in the former biographical aspect - the cut, the trouble, and the melange - and then, above all, relating to the beyond-binary hybrid processes of inclusion between formerly segregated scenic spaces such as human proscenium and inhuman backstage... Gradient and metamorphosis, but also certain

incompatibilities, are often at play in my... ecoscenes? Never used the term. Maybe it works... ecoscenes like ecoclines or ecosystems? What do you think?

I didn't send this postcard from where I bumped into it when starting this exchange with you, in Reykjavík, last June. This is a postcard painted and sent by Dieter Roth to Swiss goldsmith Hans Langenbacher in the 60s. Is it a wave? Or a geyser? A liquid human face? Bursting out from a crater, or is it a human skull? What do you see (would ask Dr. Rorschach)? I've always had a soft point for pareidolia. While being suspicious of any form of anthropomorphism, I can't help but find it intriguing to see the illusion of a human form in clouds, waves, rocks, or canopies. Maybe we should take it the way around: maybe it is no longer a question of humanizing the environment, but perhaps of restoring nature within the human by reflection. A reset, through ecotonal parameters, recognizing the rhythms, the mechanisms, the metabolisms of plants, minerals, meteors, within the human-ness... There is a recurrent and dear concern at the heart of my re-ecologizing western theatre agenda: how to maintain the specificity of being human (and its inherent drama) beyond posthumanism without returning to the by-default troublesome anthropocentrism?

It was raining hard in Reykjavík then, it is already autumning in Helsinki. Hmm, I wanted to write about tears dropped on the screen of my mobile phone, and also tectonic plates as stages, it might be for another postcard...

Take care, Vincent