

## CHAPTER ONE: FIRE AND WATER.

### 1.1. Tears in Breytenbach's work.

Breytenbach, the painter and writer of pain (which often leads to tears), wrote this prophetic poem, *breyten prays for himself* in 1964. It is as if he already knew that he would endure great pain in his life. In this poem Breytenbach seems to be aware that the pain of politics would enter his life and that this would be one of the ways to become more conscious and aware of his own processes.

#### **breyten prays for himself**

**That pain exists is unnecessary Lord**

**We can live without pain**

**A flower does not have teeth**

**Death is the only fulfilment**

**But let our flesh remain fresh like cabbage**

**Make us firm like a fish's pink body**

**Let us charm each other with eye deep butterflies**

**Favour our mouths our guts our brain**

**Let us taste the evening air frequently**

**Swim in tepid seas, may sleep with the sun**

**Unhurried the shiny Sundays ride on bicycles**

**And gradually we will rot like old ships or trees**

**But keep pain far from me my Lord**

**That others may bear it**

**Be taken into custody, Shattered**

**Stones**

**Hanged  
Lashed  
Used  
Tortured  
Crucified  
Interrogated  
Placed under house arrest  
Made to slave their guts out**

**banished to obscure islands till the end of their days**

**Wasting in damp pits down to slimy green imploring bones**

**Worms in their stomachs full of nails**

**But no *Me***

**Never give us pain or complain** *Die ysterkoei moet sweet* (1964).

Galloway (1990:41) writes that as early as 1968, Breytenbach wrote poetry [and painted art works] to break down the hierarchical value system. The poet/painter prefers an open and full life compared to the fulfilled and fixed life of the bourgeoisie. The preference of this kind of life is accompanied by pain and death while the bourgeois ideal is characterized by the need not to experience pain. The bourgeois tries to stabilize their way of life and are against change. While they prefer remaining in the status quo, the human being who prefers a life of growth is subject to change. By being disruptive, the poet/painter can bring about change in society. He must challenge fixed values. This is the way of pain and tears.

The poem was written in 1964. Forty-four years later Breytenbach writes of his country of birth in the memory book, *Dog Heart* (1998:9):

**But no, when I look into the mirror I know that the child born here is dead. It has been devoured by the dog. The dog looks back at me and he smiles. His teeth are wet with blood. It has always been a violent country.**

Breytenbach, who had chosen to be the “war machine” right from the start of his mission as artist, engages in a dialogue with the whole legacy of art and art history. Jacques Derrida’s (1930 -) book of tears, *Memoirs of the Blind* (1993), is a moving reflection on the (in) visibility of things, the inability of the eye to see, blind eyes, eyes whose ability to see is concealed by tears. Antoine Coyppe’s (1661-1722) work, *Study of the Blind*, is concerned with blind men. Like all men, they must advance or commit themselves, that is, expose themselves, risk themselves to run through space. They are apprehensive about space. They apprehend it with their groping, wandering hands; they draw in this space in a way that is at once cautious and bold. Yet, it would seem that most of these blind men do not lose themselves in absolute wandering (Derrida 1991:5).

There is the history of Christ healing the blind. Fredrico Zuccaro (1543-1609) drew *Christ Healing a Blind Man*. There is *Tobias Healing his Father’s Blindness* attributed to Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn (1606-69), the moving painting of Odilon Redon’s (1840-1916) *With Closed Eyes*, and Gustave Courbet’s (1819-77) *Self-portrait* called *The Wounded Man* (these works are all in the Louvre). In *Memoirs of the Blind*, Derrida (1990:5) writes in his book of tears, that deep, deep down, inside, the eye would be destined not to see, but to weep. Weeping is the pathos that appears in Breytenbach’s art. What else is he doing other than continually trying to wipe away his tears? What is he concerned with, other than eye-centeredness related to the weeping “I”?

Breytenbach has no sense of belonging to the Afrikaans society when he leaves his country of birth. Sensitive and informed, he also has no illusions of living in a paradise on earth. He works and lives in Paris, a city, at this time, permeated with the thoughts of the Existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) – a city seeped in notions of Albert Camus (1913-1960). And the country is at war with Algeria. Breytenbach is one of those *angry young men*, who echo the outsider’s experience of the Absurd. He is already an “islander” who has departed from the fixity of the mainland when he paints blind men: *le Conquérant de Byzance* (F&W-1), the



man with the hydrocephalic head, and others. He does not live in society but has acquired spectator status or operates as a “pack”. He is alienated and exteriorized from the world he lives in. In *Portrait of a Colleague* (F&W-2), he begins to shift the eye deliberately around the canvas, probably a commentary on the shiftiness of the “I” – or the pain experienced by the outsider (nomad) who is not from society, which is fragmented. Camus and Sartre create the characters, *Meursault and Roquentin*. As prophetic nomadic outsider, Breytenbach creates the blinded self in *Self-portrait with a White Ear* (F&W-3). Like the Russian ballet dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky (1890-1950), Breytenbach is the outsider of the body. Like the writer, Kafka, Breytenbach is the outsider of the mind. And like the painter Bacon, Breytenbach is the outsider of emotions. In *Horse Gallops on Post-haste* (F&W-4), from *All One Horse* (1990a), he presents the weeping horse of the self and the blindfolded man treads on the head without a body.

There are the drawings of incarceration: *espèce de (the Specie)* (F&W-5) and *dans une (Within)* (F&W-6), where the prisoner is blinded by isolation. The art object, *The Buddhist Fly* (F&W-7), a blinded doll, is cradled in a wooden coffin with a grotesque penis between the legs, maggots scattered over the wooden lid of the box. In Montagu, during a personal conversation with Breytenbach, in his studio, located next to the house *Paradys*, a construction similar to the low-roofed white-washed houses of Central Africa and overlooking a dry but reeded riverbed with the backdrop of a magnificent mountain range, he mentioned that the work had been made in anticipation of a period of probable incarceration.

Breytenbach (1990a:101) writes a fictional piece called *Bathed in Tears* and selects a painting, *Personnages avec oiseau (Figures with bird)* (F&W-8), a work depicting three figures, to accompany it. There is the eyeless figure with a bird perched on his shoulder, folding his small vulnerable bird-clawed-hands on its breast. The figure on the right has protruding eyes and the third figure on the left is the blinded one, the one with multiple ears.



We leave. We go to the airport. There is an old wind in the empty trees. The flight is announced. ‘Oohh’ my mother moans. ‘Bebebebe ... Don’t leave me. ...’ But she doesn’t recognise me. Her old black face is bathed in tears (Breytenbach 1989:101).

The eyes (‘I’) of Breytenbach are filled with tears. Tears blind them. He paints the three-blinded men, *Untitled* (F&W-9).

## 1.2. The dog of pain: *Dog Heart*.

Painting tears is one step away from writing about and painting the *Dog of Pain*. If Breytenbach conveys carnivalesque moments in his art, his images also point to the tragic moments in human life, that side of us testifying to our vulnerability in the face of traumatic events. Choosing Kahlo’s and Nietzsche’s “Dog”, or the embodiment of pain, as his constant companion, he paints and draws Dog.

In 1966 Breytenbach painted *La joie de Peindre (Joy of Paintinh)*(FW-10), the “dog-man” lying next to a man who is sitting in an arm chair, a figure which is repeated in a similar ‘dog-man’ lying on a mat in front of the bed of another “dog-man” posture, lying on a bed. The image in this watercolour is taken up again in *All One Horse* (1990a:44). In *T/14* (F&W-11), in which Dog is standing in front of prison bars with the two-bodied rooster, one decapitated, we have a reminder of the place of incarceration. The rooster is holding the noose of the gallows in his hand. In *Yellow Dog* (F&W-12) an emaciated Dog is part of a studio still-life with a mannequin.

In *Hovering Dog* (F&W-13) a painting of pain and movement through water, the viewer sees a basset-hound hanging on two strings in front of a swimming figure, and a white black-

masked man seated with a black white-masked woman on his lap. Both figures have blue tongues. The masked figures can be interpreted as interplay with the novel *Black Skin, White Mask* (1967) of Fanon's, the father of the Black Consciousness Movement and one of the *un-citizens* (outsiders or nomads or the pact, etc.) living in Breytenbach's Middleworld (the place for the outsider). The senseless "word-strings" written on the canvas are an excruciating inscription of pain. Pain can also become senseless; thus, it cannot be expressed in words.

Words written on the left string read:

"woordstring tjestjies tussen sou 'n getjieswoorde tussen jou en my naelstringetjies woorde soms moet jy die woorde kak soms moet jy hom baie ver gaan haal en dan moet jy hom soos ei ver gaan haal soos vlieë wat orals bly kakkies tussen jou enmy ook sal daard ei woorde vlieë wat oral by kak met 'n kleinwit kwassie daar isaa woordstringetjies tussen jou."[sic]

Words written on the right string read:

"soms moet jy daardie ding ver gaan haal jy daardie dig ver".[sic]

And words written on the dog:

"met klein kwassi offerhande goete te skrywe ksê tjom met klein wit kwassie allerhande goete te skrywe van die worrd stingetjies tussen jou en my wat jy soms baie ver moet jy die woordstin es baie gaan haal om werklikheid aan te verkeer kleinwit kwassies die ding tjom"[sic].<sup>19</sup>

In the prison drawing, with the inscription, *par ses mouvements (kali) redonne la vie au cadavre de Shiva/Shava – d'après une pienture tantrique du dix-huitième siècle de Kangra, (The movement of Kali on the cadaver of Shiva/Shava – a Tantric painting ...)*(F&W-14), we have the dog howling at the decapitated head which Kali holds in her hand. In *les gens de la rose noire (People of the black rose)*(F&W-15), we find the big fat dog of pain and also in the graphic work, *in dog we thrust* (F&W-16). In *le Pêcheur (The angler)*(F&W-17), the

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The words on canvas of this art work are misspelt. This can be interpreted as a challenge of the "stratified space" of the linguist, who experiences the correctness of words as "holy".



masked carnival figure fishes for an image in the moonlight, while a dog is wandering through the universe. *Autoportrait masqué (Self portrait with mask) (F&W-18)* is a self-portrait of Breytenbach as the artist, holding a palette while a masked woman flies through the window. Again he has included the snarling dog of pain.<sup>20</sup>

### 1.3. The consciousness of masochism: *The Bat (F&W-19)*.

**Consciousness is the go-between, the begetter, and the matter of consciousness is image or metaphor (Breytenbach 1996a:46).**

Nietzsche's view that man finds himself somewhere between good and evil has far-reaching moral implications. One cannot expect correctness, truth or total lies, badness from anyone in the position of the in-between. Man is the halfway house (between heaven and hell) who is caught in the tyrannical in-between position. But the problem of the outsider is in essence a problem of consciousness. For the outsider there is a constant interaction between consciousness and unconsciousness. He is aware of being different and knows why he is different. The outsider is intensely aware of the tragedy. Each situation in itself carries the alternative. Outsider consciousness is terminal and this results from the collective experience of the tragic. The outsider becomes terminally ill, three times ill. Because he is aware of occupying the regions outside society, the outsider recognizes the possibility of the recurrence of the tragedy. There is a close link between Camus' notion of the Absurd and the Tragic. For Camus existence ends in a series of endlessly recurring events. Then the question arises – why? At that moment consciousness becomes terminally ill – two options remain, suicide or

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Sienaert (2001:80) states that the mask as archetypal African image has also become synonymous with Breytenbach's work. For him the concept of identity is closely linked to the concept of masking: not only does it embody identity as something which cannot be fully revealed or understood, it also suggests a constantly transforming "I" – a perpetual shedding of identities which evoke the mysteriousness of being. This is indeed the traditional African point of view, exemplified in the initiation masks from Mali with which Breytenbach is familiar. The more secret the association of the initiate, and the deeper the knowledge involved, the more ambiguous, abstract and metaphoric the visual language of the masks becomes. The unfamiliar effect of a ceremonial masks glimpsed in semi-darkness conveys fathomless depths of being (Sienaert 2001:80).

an investment in a deed of belief (Schoeman 2000:150-163).

If Breytenbach's work is typified by an abundant play of images both on the canvas and in his drawings, it is at the same time a focus on the traumatic, characterized by the experience of vulnerability, fragility and of transience. The backdrop of his work illuminates emotions of loss, shock and experiences of mourning that cannot be silenced. These are also the grotesque moments.

In the essay *The Long March* read in New York during 1990, Breytenbach (1996a:49) quotes Deleuze.

**An individual only properly acquires his own name after a severe exercise in depersonalization, when he or she lays himself or herself open to multiplicities and the intensities which may run through him or her. ... You become – have become—collection of singularities cut loose, of names and pronouns and fingernail and things and animals and small happenings: the opposite of a star or an expert or a preacher.**

Breytenbach is then also the masochist. The masochist is the one who has left “mainland,” which is inhabited by the star, the expert and the preacher. Through the act of depersonalization, Breytenbach uncovers the image captured in the painting, *The Bat*. Opening himself up to pain and thus becoming more conscious, enables Breytenbach to produce the image of the mutilated man.

There are instances of masochism in Breytenbach's work: dismemberment, decapitation, fragmenting and wounding. The painting, *The Bat*, which is housed in the collection of the *Nationale de France Musée de Dôle*, is an expression of mutilation in the extreme. The naked



emasculated man is placed in an empty space. A crumpled pair of trousers and a dildo has been painted on the floor. The hand of the left arm is an iron claw. In the midst of its extreme vulnerability, this work reveals elements of masochism and could be an opening up of consciousness to the identity of erotica.

Then there is the meaning of the dildo, the instrument of transgression, that the viewer has to take note of. Here one moves to the field of sadism. Lo Duco (1992:4) writes about the ecstasy of the great sadists, Gilles de Rais (1404-1440) who is connected with Bluebeard, Erzsébet Báthory de Nassady, Doña Catalina de los Rios and the flagellates of Christ as witnessed in traditional paintings and sculptures (Luis Borrassa [d.c.1425], Hans Holbein [1497-1543], and the Breton Calvaries). In short, he writes about the permanent taste of the crowd for the cruellest spectacles of death – the Circus, the Crucifixion, Place de Grève, Red Square, or Nuremberg. The dildo is the sadistic instrument of domination over the female psyche. Its violence, power, sadism and its slogans, typify the Western ego-aggression: Hillman (1983:15-17), the American Psychotherapist (who actually opposes psychotherapy) writes:

**Go ahead, get ahead, do it. It's only when that breaks down, when depression comes in and you can't get up and do it. When you feel beaten, oppressed, knocked back ... then something moves and you begin to feel yourself as a soul. You don't feel yourself as a soul when you're making it and doing it. Where violence and power and domination begins to crumble, where the psyche itself undermines, and where fantasy begins to show. When you're in the middle of domination, you don't feel yourself in a *fantasy* of domination. When there's failure, dejection, and you are cast down thrown back on yourself, left alone, wet, in one way or another – then you are cast down, thrown back on yourself, left alone, then you begin to feel. That is the great Western Will.**

Masochism is also a sort of destruction from the inside, like irony. In a sense masochism

could be an ironic mode of reflection. This is something that a modern contemporary theater, shows. One needs masochism, a masochistic touch, for deepening – it is a mode of deepening into one's pain, which is almost mystical. Which doesn't mean that one is in any way sadistic. Awareness itself hurts. There's a joy in that hurting, because the insight hurts and makes you more sensitive. You have to be masochistic to become aware. The other aspect of the masochism of consciousness is that it enjoys becoming conscious through pain. It is usually thought that masochism is the opposite of sadism but, in line with Breytenbach's sense of obliterating pairs of opposites, masochism can be seen as having a world of its own. We could then speak of the masochism of consciousness. In the story of Eros and Psyche, Psyche suffers terrible torments. At the same time she has a child in her belly called Voluptus and she is the servant of Venus. Pleasure and pain can be very complicated, very intertwined (Hillman 1983:18). Georges Bataille (1897-1962) (1992:6)<sup>21</sup> knew that the pleasure of going beyond oneself through self-annihilation is a masochistic pleasure par excellence, and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) (1953:50) wrote the following:

**When there is physical pain, a high degree of what may be termed narcissistic cathexis of the painful place occurs; this cathexis continues to increase and tends, as it were, to 'empty' the ego.**

Breytenbach extends this argument of experiencing awareness. It is one of the building blocks of consciousness, which leads to an exceptional relationship with both life and death. Thus it becomes the dialectical and constant movement between life (the future) and death (the conversation with the ancestors). By donning the shoe of the nomad, and by constantly carrying the mirror in his hand, he shapes the opportunity to reach out to the Other and to the storehouse of the unexpected. By looking into the mirror, he captures fragments of moments flowing between life and death. These are set down as an image or a poem, and by looking and reading we recognize ourselves. In *Cold Turkey* (1992) Breytenbach (1996a:94) writes:

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Georges Bataille was a French philosopher and novelist with enormous influence on Post Structuralist thought.



**Part of the civic poet's responsibility is to recognize the interstices - to be the thin wedge that could split the cracks to seize the distaff elements and the moment of disequilibrium.**

This is frontier consciousness, or recognition of the fragmentation of the moment. Pain is the deepening into vulnerability and the opening up of the process of awareness, which is the mirroring of (un) reality. Pain is a rite of passage into the deeper layers of a consciousness of the void, of the self and society.

### **1.3.1. A critical comparison between Donatien Alphonso François de Sade (1740-1814) and Breytenbach.**

The Marquis de Sade, the greatest creator of pornography and the one who gave his name to “sadism”, was born in 1740 in Paris and died in 1814 in the asylum Charenton, in Paris. He was incarcerated for nearly thirty of his seventy-four years. He landed in jail on account of his mother-in-law, who pulled some strings, which landed him in prison for thirteen years. There was no trial.

After Napoleon was crowned, and after he read de Sade's work, he banned *Justine*.<sup>22</sup> De Sade was taken up in Charenton, where he spent the last thirteen years of his life. According to Aireksinen (1995:26-46) de Sade was not involved with pornography. It was his aim to please the reader. His style was that of a police report (according to the French writer, Bataille, de Sade's work reminds of prayer books rather than amusement literature), wherein he on grounds of own experience of cruel behaviour, portrays the human as one focusing on violent

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According to Aireksinen (1995: 101) de Sade published his novel *Justine* as well as *Juliette*, in ten sections. These works were published after the French Revolution. Even during the sixties, de Sade's work was kept behind locks and could only be read with special permission. France banned these works, also *Hundred and twenty years of Sodom*. De Sade used utmost forms of obscenity, blasphemy and received sexual delight from any sort of cruelty.

gratifying of lust. De Sade was in collaboration with the most prudent moralist. De Sade did not succeed in advocating amoral erotica; his resistance was merely a reflection of the church's morality. De Sade was not concerned with challenging the high priests of morality. His main aim was the shifting of barriers, sexual, spiritual and political matters. He was interested in delving into his own psyche. If there were no borders, there could be no meaning.

The film which deals with De Sade's life, *Quills* directed by Philip Kaufman (director of the film *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* based on the book of Milan Kundera [1929-]), portrays de Sade, who sees dying as the crossing of the utmost barrier. Breytenbach sees death as a continuation or passing over to another state. According to Bataille (1992:105), de Sade's intention was to show that death could only be confronted after the screen of lust has been completed. This viewpoint concerns the reckoning with the self. This is a death wish. Breytenbach's artistic work on the other hand is a continual interplay between Eros and Thanatos. His numerous love poems for Yolande are juxtaposed by his constant writing on aspects of death and dying. Only a few of his early drawings and paintings transgress to de Sade's level. In *Untitled (F&W-20)*, two women use a shoe to masturbate. This is a depiction of a violent act of erotica.

Both Breytenbach and de Sade are interested in the paradoxical qualities of language. On the one side is the unrestricted possibility "language", but on the other side it is also a demonstration of the soul-destroying pathlessness of language and a way of living which loses control. In the film, *Quills*, de Sade actually mutilates himself by cutting his fingers with broken glass and then uses the blood to write erotic details on his clothes. The clothes on his body, become the book. After being subjected to cruel torture and lying in chains, naked and raving, he used his own feces to write words on the walls.

Breytenbach at one stage chastised the South African Prime Minister, Balthazar Johannes



Vorster (1915-1983) by publishing a defamatory poem, *Letter from abroad to butcher*, in *Skryt* (1972:26-28). In one stanza, the poem adopted the agonistic viewpoint of a political prisoner, but in the next poem the poet addressed the Prime Minister directly:

**You who are entrusted with the security of the state  
What do you think of when the night reveals her  
framework  
and the first babbling shriek is squeezed out  
of the prisoner  
as in a birth  
with the fluids of parturition?  
does your heart also stiffen in your throat  
when you touch the extinguished limbs  
with the same hands that will fondle your wife's  
mysteries?**

In later art works like *Lappesait* (2000-2001)(a series of ten scrolls with images and poems), Breytenbach's involvement with the canvas and the act of writing, borders on the fetishizing of death. He expresses himself by writing on the canvas and describing it as a "winding death sheet"<sup>23</sup>. On another "death sheet" he actually writes a poem, informing a woman that he is already dead. In contrast to de Sade, Breytenbach's entering into forbidden areas of erotica is subtle. He uses the fetish to deepen, carry libidinal energy and express his sexual awareness (Moore-Gilbert: 1998:118).<sup>24</sup> The fetish is a deeper transgression than the normal sexual deed and could release deeply seated psychic energy (Breytenbach's image "*bird*" is also a fetish).<sup>25</sup>

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Scroll ten.

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For Freud the fetish is a means of expressing and containing severely conflictual feelings.

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Baudrillard (cited in Pirsig 1994:300) considers the void between the image and reality and comes to the conclusion that images are stronger than reality.

De Sade deepened and transgressed the accepted norms of erotica. Evil became transparent. His imagining of violent sexual deeds shattered his identity and thereby moved into deeper layers of consciousness. One could say that this is a horizontal deepening. With Breytenbach this is a vertical expanding of self-awareness. It is also the Watercourse way of the Tao and the nomadic way. Breytenbach's self-awareness comes "through the traversing of a thousand plateaux."<sup>26</sup> This is the smooth way of the nomad who is the pact and the war machine.

De Sade and Breytenbach's shattering of the self (the schism) which leads to a deepening of consciousness cannot be compared. The way they go about their tasks in a different way. Different ways cannot be judged. The phenomena that concern them take respective places in a world consisting of multiplicities.

#### **1.4. Schism and the watery basis of things.**

De Kock submitted his doctoral thesis, *'n Ondersoek na die nomadies-politieke moment: 'n Filosofiese lesing van Breyten Breytenbach* in 1999. In the thesis he reads Breytenbach's works as nomadic and political. The work provides a slot which introduces us to the void one should enter in order to become more conscious. Consciousness operates like a field of lightning in this void. Through sudden bursts and ruptures parameters are shifted and new insights are gained. De Kock has shown that the terrain of Breytenbach's thought has a watery basis, which gives it the smooth characteristics of the nomadic trail described by Deleuze & Guattari. For Breytenbach the movement of becoming more conscious, implies crossing the borders of that which is fixed. In order to become nomadic, many selves have to cross many plateaux.

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These words are the implication of Deleuze & Guattari's views in the book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987).



In the section of pain we have noted the implications of being depersonalized. To be depersonalized is to split. Schism means cleaving, cutting like a cleaver, the knife, severing. Consequently, it is bad for integration, for it is hardly a whole-making thing, favouring growth and synthesis and those other goals at which the psychologist looks. According to Hillman (1975:82-97) when we think of schism, especially that with theological interest, our minds reverberate with the great schism of Christianity. Our first thought of schism is in terms of religion, and that is how the word has come into usage. “Schizoid” and “schizophrenia” are much later, and weaker, terms. A schism may have to do with one God or three, with Protest of Popery, with Christ as man or Christ as God, with national or international communes, with kinds and times of baptism, or theories of the libido, of art, cosmology, education and economics. If we continue within our theological fantasy, then the word “schism” does, as the dictionary says, appear mainly in context of Christian thought. Schism reflects the inherent capacity any unified doctrine reinforced by a monotheistic vision to fragment, to reveal the many that are potentially in the one. Employing the psychiatric fantasy, schism means a latent psychosis (schizophrenia), reflecting the psyche’s potential for splitting into inherent components, losing its coherence and modes of communication between parts, ending the rule of a strongly ordered self. Within mythological fantasy schism refers to the absence of “Hermes-Mercury”, or his concretization. The interpenetrating of archetypal perspectives terminates, or has become concretized into self-isolating units, each promulgating its own doctrine.

In Christianity the word schism receives value not usual in earlier Greek philosophers, whose polytheistic psychology allowed them to take it as a fact of natural life, e.g., Plato (427-347 BC). According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (710), Plato’s work *Phaedo* (101), was the first dialogue in which Plato decisively posited the existence of the abstract objects that he called “Forms” or “Ideas”. Forms are eternal and changeless. Aristotle’s (384-322 BC) *History of Animals* is a comparative study of generic features of animals. He noted the cleavage of the hoof. Schism is not a threat, not an abnormality, when roads divide or hoofs are cleft, but within the cosmos of unity (that which is fixed) schism is indeed a

passionate dangerous issue, the very worse that can happen. In the early Church, the controversies of schism endangered the authority of the Bishop, Eucharist and sacraments as well as the role of Rome. The ghost of polytheistic paganism lurked in these disputes.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) sees schism in terms of multiplicity (Hillman: 1975:100). For Jung psychic structures are poly-centric. This schism can be compared to a field of many lights and sparks. Metaphorically spoken, the schizoid personality's energies scatter into constellations. Venturing into the deeper layers of consciousness becomes the representative of multiplicity, who splits and sows division, thereby reminding us of the complex of the totality. The reality of our wholeness is therefore not to be confused with the fixed singleness, or unity or a monotheistic description of totalities. We have to remember that the polycentricity of the psyche (its many constellations with their many *foci*), was once represented by a polytheistic pantheon and by the animation of nature through the personification of nymphs, heroes and daemons. Deleuze & Guattari (1986) refer to this complexity of the single person as "the pact". Breytenbach is the complex "pact" who has left the regions of fixed values, fixed borders, fixed ideas etc. behind in order to move to the "smooth" desert of consciousness.

Should we take a standpoint exclusively from any single one of these configurations and behave metrically to only one pattern, that is, should we act monotheistically, we have already performed an excommunication by cleaving ourselves off from communicating with the many forms. The goddesses in their variety, epitomized by the promiscuity of Aphrodite, insisting on plurality, embroil in situations in which other standpoints must be recognized, creating doctrinal divisions we refer to, after the events, as schisms. The quarrel concerning God is not about schism. But in any system whose stress is one unity, as the Church within some creed and one God (even in three persons), schism remains within the monolith.



By insisting on clarity of borders, proper definitions, we make divisions. When we insist upon concrete, literalistic enactment of the myth to which we happen to be standing closest, then, by choosing one pattern in our enactment, we become one-sided. We become psychologically monotheistic. This one-side choice can occur even in polytheistic religion, where it is called henoteism. One vision dominates systems of plurality. One concern should, however, integrate and allow many. In contrast, polytheistic attitudes recognize the polyvalent psychic structure, where borders are ill defined, so that connection between the consciousness and imagery stay open where imagination speculates rather than fix concepts. Borders dissolve into water. It is better to recognize a reality that consists of a multiplicity of things.

De Sade's deepening into the self and consciousness through the violence of erotica, and Breytenbach's fetizising of death belongs to the areas of schism which opens up into the cosmos of multiplicities. When things, signs, or actions are freed from their respective ideas, concepts, essences, values, points of reference, origins and aims, they embark upon an endless process of self-reproductions. This is not one identity, but many facets of the self, heading for the Watercourse way. Breytenbach (1983:5) has the following to say in this regard:

**Speculation: And would [self] consciousness be possible without exception and entrenchment? Is [self] consciousness *reduction ad*? And is [self] consciousness the result of such a process or does it imply the anterieur existence of an entity (anima), a necessary defining?**

**Nothing is watertight. It is the route, the Tao. Not the royal highway but precisely the low road. The recognition which comes when the limits are swept away.<sup>27</sup>**

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Translation by M. Grobler.

### 1.4.1. The Watercourse Way.

As the Zen outsider of many voices, Breytenbach is aware of the contingent character of things one is confronted with. In order to become more conscious, man is constantly doomed to reflection and structuring. He wrote a piece named *geraas by die venster* (noise at the window), where he describes the senses as interior decorators sorting out myriads' of impulses. He writes:

**You put a strait jacket on your senses and although you try to restrict your participation to a manageable, controlling, exclusive so-named nuclear-ego, the sorting out thus also becomes written, coiling and cracking black flashes of light. We know that suppression gorges on the edge of our arbitrary consciousness ( so also our desperate order), it seeps in, which anarchists are undermining and ridiculing the state. Nothing is water tight. We actually live in the without time explosion. On the slip-slide of the earth. The clamour always has to be eliminated again. And repression takes its toll. Ground is shifting continually, the delimitation relative, because we all try so desperately to absolutize it. We have to go with the unknown over and ever-changing landscape (Breytenbach 1996a)**

According to de Kock (!999: 15- 22) that which changes, that which flows, or which falls into decay, the ever-changing landscape through which one moves, is unsettling. This writer and painter, a thinker of movement, of the chaos machine, is undermining the instrumental reason of the stratified order and its fascistic grip on “reality”, which it manipulates to suit its needs. It is this way of thinking that underlies the Zen consciousness concerning the temporality of life and its transient nature. Breytenbach writes the following poem:



## Report (extract)

**I have also heard cocks crowing and  
the call of trains and voices in my  
bed and gods on the roof and I have seen  
dragons in the zoo and the beards  
of friends and I have smelt the sun  
snow in winter and grapes in summer  
but I no longer remember much of that ...**

The ever-changing terrain, on which Breytenbach reflects, does not leave the impression of a loss of control, but rather it implies being on the cutting edge of things. The poem or the painting are instances of this. Such is the poem, *Ver slag (Rapport 1964a:5)* where Breytenbach depicts the haziness of memory.

### **1.5. Fire Consciousness.**

It was Jan Provost (c.1465-1529) who painted *Sacred Allegory*, the third eye of insight, or the eye of God hovering over a landscape of two figures. In this work, the wounded Christ is holding a sword in his right hand and the Mother Mary, has an open box on her lap, while a dove hovers over the box. A lamb is standing on the clouds and, on the left, in the same position, is an open Bible. To contemplate this picture, the gaze must become Christian. This is a gaze of a man or woman who has been converted to Christianity and is searching for a revelation of the divine condition. At the bottom of the painting is an eye painted between two folded hands, which are lifted up imploringly in a gesture of surrender and resurrection. By blinding oneself to vision, by veiling one's own sight, through the act of imploring, one does something with one's eyes and conversion begins.

In a self-portrait, reflecting a slick, red-lipped man, titled *Vanité (Vanity)*(F&W-21), Breytenbach depicts his familiar mole between the eyes, which one could compare to a third eye. In a paradoxical way the French word, *vanité* implies conceit and emptiness. Thus, instead of the Christian veiling of sight, we find a veiling through the desires of the self. The Buddhist notion of non-attachment, where the gaze of desire is shut off in order to attain the realms of meditation leading to the experience of the void, might not be entered into when one succumbs to vanity.

Nevertheless, the self-portrait could lead one to contemplation of one of the pillars of the Sixth Zen Patriarch, Hou Neng's concept of *wou-nien*. *Vanité* is a shadow in the Jungian sense, an example of *wou nien*. During the time of his incarceration Breytenbach wrote a poem concerning *wou-nien* which enlightens Breytenbach's (1983:37-38) conception of this notion.

**Wash with words wou-nien**

**(" I am become Death/ The shatterer of worlds")**

**then (time sharpens/ time fades away)  
when the chilly winter was outside  
did I with nibbly hand take a bar of soap  
of the everyday patent handed out by the state  
both for hygienic ablution of the body  
and to drive the louse from the clothes  
weaker than sunlight, green and slightly fatty, opaline  
like general experience of insignificant quality  
cooked and pressed together in more or less opaque  
standard size brains  
to carve (out something) from it with the fingers  
a question? a fish?  
busy with *hsin-tsung*, or the tuition of the Intellect**



I cut a manikin in and out of one rib  
with the straight back  
the hands cupped and the legs knotted in *mokusho*;  
to sit desireless but like an open pomegranate for ecstasy of  
fulfilment

to sit, so said Hui-neng, when no thought  
comes to bother the intellect, is merely to sit (*za*)

also thus

and to reflect on the inside of your 'own' nature is meditation (*zen*),  
violent disintegration movement – is

the promise of the fish

not to be allowed to piss one with the water,  
the question to melt still with the silence?

Beware! Chao-Chou's states a statue:  
when all things towards the One where  
does that One return to?

my green manikin, the insight of a lifetime  
(even if the head was like a clumsy cranium)

I made sit on the bed cabinet next to books filled with wisdom  
until, inspection on hand, the officer with a stiff back  
and the stiffer blue eye handles the 'thing'.

"you know of course this is a charge ... damage  
to state property?" (aside to the Boer: "make work of it")

"seeing that soap is issued to wash yourself  
and not to make dolls of ..."

(the state)" (besides: and you will have no other  
images before my countenance)

let that now be a deeper lesson, Brother Bebe –  
if the old monk could cast a precious Buddha statuette  
in the fire to provide warmth against the winter's

worst bite

dare you not probably fruitful also with imagination

rinse the fish hands  
and let your metaphor bloom to One completion: foam  
and the wearing down of individual features  
in due course to a somewhat sweet-smelling cleansing, provisionally  
how wholly otherwise are you going to solve the question in/  
till/ the sit movement passes to/no thought/anymore...?

how not said, now or later?:

there's water!

In the process of becoming conscious which is the arising in timeless nothingness, Breytenbach (1987:103) stipulates the words posture, structure and texture. Posture – awareness, transformation and bastardization – is the *wou-nien* of Zen: non-thought, non-attachment or fire-consciousness. One of the pillars of Hou-Neng's teaching as the Sixth Zen patriarch (as if there could be pillars in the void) was the concept of *wou-nien*. *Wou* in Chinese terminology is said to mean "not to exist" or "not to have". The ideogram doesn't indicate "heart", however, but literally stands for "fire". *Nien* signifies "to think of", "to remember", better still: "present or actual thought". *Wou-nien* is thus rendered as "non-attachment". The word-picture of the sign is "fire-consciousness". How does a flame think of itself? How does thought burn: as the fiery heart?

In the essay *The Long March* (1990), Breytenbach (1996a:38) writes: "By *wou-nien* the unconscious is penetrated. And where does one find the unconscious? It is to see all things as they are and not to be attached to any of them. It is only maintaining the perfect freedom to come and go. This form of consciousness is not the consciousness of an "I" (the "I" dissolves in it)." Breytenbach (1992), during a radio interview expressed himself on the selflessness of the "I" in art and poetry; the fact that the "I" was merely a filter for observation as follows:



... an element of Zen that comes into poetry and painting [...] is the dissolution of the so-called “self”, the “I”. The “I” becomes an observation point, a point of passage, through which the images and the perceptions move. You become part of your work, the way the archer and target and the arrow eventually become one. Because, underlying Zen Buddhism, there is this notion of the non-being of the “I”, the non-exclusivity of the “I”. The fact that one is a changing collection of elements, and that what you strive towards, is to move through the exploration, through the deepening of perceptions, to the dissolution of that. To stop being, and be for always, as it were.

### 1.5.1. Suchness (*thahata*).

Dogen (1200-1253) (1992:95) writes the following:

**Bodhidharma said, “Each mind is like wood and stone”. Mind here spoken of is the *suchness of mind* (or *mind of objective reality*), it is the mind of the whole earth; therefore it is the mind of self and other. Each mind, of all the people of earth, as well as the enlightened ones in all worlds, the celestial and dragons and so on, is *wood and stone*. There is no other mind outside of this.**

Koft (Molino 1998:273-304) says the meaning of this becomes clear when Dogen sees the mind as a shared condition of all entities, of the self and the other. Suchness is not only a shared condition, more specifically is it embedded in the essence of things. The distinction between inside and outside, self and the other are raised probably at that moment when a thought or experience rises from the unconscious and gets caught up in the instant in which things are seen as they are.

Suchness is the highest possible concept. This concept is the *Sunyata*<sup>28</sup> and it must be seen in the light of temporality. All life is temporally, fleeting and changeable. Temporality in Buddhist and Zen literature moves in the direction of an experience of that which is called *anatma* (the non-substantiality of the self). Breytenbach (1977:75) wrote the following poem:

**in the trees above the rain trembles  
and outside the wind pours  
its heart out  
in the wind  
listen to the sound of sound**

The experience of the suchness of things suggests the nature of things as they are, without any interpretation or seeking of deeper meaning or scientific analysis. Accordingly, one has to listen to the sound of sound, and then one will experience sound as it is. When looking into the concept of suchness, one comes to a realization that there is no interest in conditions of fixity.

An experience of the world built on representative impressions and projections are formulated according to the categories of “inside” and “outside” (of the subject). There are numerous examples of paintings by Breytenbach which are related to this concept. Suchness also implies an inherent movement between one and another. The movement over borders between the “I” and the world also implies the entering of a dynamic field of tension and becoming. Here, there is no place for the fixity of ideologies, dogmas, state organizations or the comfort of the bourgeois way of life. In *Dog Heart*, Breytenbach (1998d:4) writes:

**When I’m young I woosh on a bicycle from the one town to the other ... When he  
is small his mother chucks him and his brother away. ... The world doesn’t really**

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28

Emptiness



have a past and a future; we live in a continuum (and a continuant) where there cannot be room for both guilt and expiation. ... When he is young he spends long periods in the desert, painting and drawing the Bushmen, but with the passing years, or maybe due to inattention at the last moment, because of a momentary lapse, one forgets to die. When he is dead the colour fades for a while the birds do not return to the garden.

These are examples of immediacy of past, present and future. Breytenbach's writing gives an important indication of the way we can think about the suchness of things: one is merely a knot, which constantly, through memory, mediates experiences. Projection toward the future is being brought into an unfolding presence.

De Kock (1999: 73) says that Jean-Luc Nancy in his book, *The Birth to Presence*, (1993:1) directs his thoughts in the direction of the grains of representation and how those are flushed out and inundated by the arrival and the birth of things. He says:

**The characteristic of representational thought is to represent, for itself, both itself and its outside, outside of its limit. To cut out a form upon the fundament, and to cut out a form of the fundament. Thereafter, nothing more can come, nothing more can come forth or be born from any fundament.**

The condition of existence is a process of constant unfolding. This flowing process that which is seen as watery<sup>29</sup>, implies the flow obliterates any hope of fixity, any sense of representation. What one must be aware of, is the radical otherness which it suggests, a suggestion which places things and humans in the path of non-substantiality and flow, in other words of the

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Breytenbach's thoughts can be read as a movement over a constant changing terrain. The terrain thus does not deal with the fixity. According to him the 'I' is an open order, terrain shifting entity, the movement between life and death. It is a non-static world view and implies a nomadic consciousness. His work also points to temporality and a mutating consciousness. There are numerous images and metaphors of water in his art work. Water is a metaphor of non-fixity. It is in this light that his thought is described as having a watery basis.

presence announced by a continual process of birth. In the collection of poetry, *Soos die So* (1990b:53), Breytenbach wrote a watery poem and painted a water colour.

**1 February 1974.**

**Looking back over the thus far-verses drifting-verse  
it is as clear as a sextant reading  
that a continual motif is that of 'going on a journey'  
but that the chap could not set the sails properly  
to arse waltz beautifully like a ship  
from the oily harbour  
(from reality thus, the embargoing) –  
therefore I have decided rather to follow  
the sotto voce motif as compass needle  
to lift the anchor once and for all  
to drift over the ocean to a dream-break  
and to wiggle these words like oars  
in the water: where a boat moves  
a wind might come close in due course  
and I lurch ashore.**

The experience of temporality, the rhythmic coming-and-going of things, can also be seen as a nomadic movement. Fleeting and intense is all experience: no more organisms will come forth this summer (even if it is still summer) and the birth of the nomadic is when you sit upright, trembling in silence with eyes hovering toward the skyline. Then we find the eluding skyline of the nomad: a shifting perspective, which day by day becomes more uncertain and less easy to pin point (de Kock 1999:43).

This rhizomatic potential, which flows from non-representative thinking, has various political implications. Fixed identities, social, economic and political, which are used to structure and



give meaning to reality, give way in the face of the “watery consciousness”, which proposes that things, thought, the human being and the world can only be seen as temporal knots in a network of constant birth and becoming.

If one sees things in terms of their suchness (*thahata*), one will experience them in terms of their essence. Suchness and temporality lead to a certain experience of the world beyond all dualities, beyond a need for permanence. The reflection of this statement implies a state of living in flowing or watery space. This moment of awareness is an absolute present, the point of intersection of time and timelessness, of the conscious and the unconscious. The moment of intersection, which is the rising moment of an *ekacittakshang*, that is, the moment of no-mind or no-thought, refuses to be expressed in language, in words of the mouth (Humphreys 1949: 148-149 & Cheng 1991:121).

## 1.6. Water and fire as an essence of the void.

This section will deal with the aspect of the void. For Breytenbach the labouring of the void is important. He also provides certain concepts with which the void can be laboured. He writes:

**When I look at my own journeys, I can see that I have been walking in circles but guided by “*the book of mutations*” I have, over the last few millennia, devised a motto. I subscribe to only one: walk on! And to one task only: *laboring the void* (Breytenbach 2000).**

**The beauty Hoang Lien asks what this lecture is going to be about. Traveling, I say, to get out of this town where everybody is waiting for a murderer or a rapist called Godot. It will itself be a journey and the reflection will be in the passing landscape, thought will be its own illustration. But it cannot be a lecture in the proper, coherent sense; I intend to stop at some tents along the way of migration. Many memories, notions, concepts, echoes ... present themselves during these stopovers. They insist upon sponsorship, or more humbly ask if they may wash**

my car.

Creativeness, transgression, transcendence, transformation, responsibility, metamorphosis, bastardization, light. Creolization, hybridization, identity, hegemony, centre, extinction, nomadism, settlers, language, ethics, the landscape of memory, dialectics, motherland (as opposed to fatherland), chaos, humanism, posture, empty and full, belonging, possession, compassion, revolution, poetry, harmony, pictures, borders, breaks and ruptures, creativity, wind ... [Or the void].<sup>30</sup>

Ah, wind, she says. It sounds like it. Hot air. Haven't you spoken about all those things already in the Middleworld? You are repeating yourself (Breytenbach 1996a: 70).

To understand the nature of the void, we have to begin with the Tao. The *Tao* is that which encompasses the whole universe and everything existing in it. It is the Watercourse Way or the cosmic process. This view suggests that the universe consist of polarities, which are in constant interplay with each other, and thus function as a process of constant transformation.

... seen as a whole the universe is a harmony or symbiosis of patterns, which cannot exist without each other (Watts 1957:51).

Molino (1998:100) says that the harmony of the Tao as creative power comes from the balanced interaction of the Yin/Yang polarities, which are inherent in the Tao. Verse forty of the *Tao-te-Ching* (Book of reason and virtue), the only written document of Taoism – the path, the right way of life, the source of the universe – is examined. It is attributed to the legendary philosopher, Lao Tsze (604 BC) reads:

**All things in the world come from being**

**All being comes from non-being**

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This list includes notions of non-fixity and fixity.



Here we find the main characteristic of Taoism: the universal source of life is not an entity, but non-being. The Tao is also the enormous empty space in which things come to life, interact and then die. The void is static though endlessly re-sounding.

**As spaciousness, the Tao is undifferentiated, but the two together – that is, the space on the one hand, and the collection of the ten thousand things interacting on the other – are the world process (Molino 1998:44)<sup>31</sup>**

Sienaert (1993:25-45) states that it is as a result of the human effort to conceptualize and the nature of language that the world is experienced as unchanging or permanent.

For the Taoist<sup>32</sup> the universe (or the Way, the Middle Way) is not an entity, but rather non-being and some world-process. The self and the world also interact with each other: there is a transitional relationship between our consciousness and the universe in the way they create each other. In the Taoists' way of life three principals are interconnected: *wou-wei* (no action); *wou-hsin* (no intellectual debating) and *tzu-jan* (spontaneity). Flowing water is mostly used as the metaphor to describe this point of departure. Life goes its own way and it is believed that the Tao is inherently positive and harmonious. The numerous water-related images in Breytenbach's paintings and poetry relate to the flowing power of the Tao: that is the *droomstroom* (dream-stream) of creativity (Breytenbach 1983:3,4, &134). Flowing water is the central metaphor used for the Tao as flowing and positive force. This aspect of the Tao

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31

In this regard Breytenbach in *Buffalo Bill* (1984) writes the following:

en dat ons 'n kennis van die stad had  
waarvan niemand anders wis  
dat die in waarheid/een aaneengevlegte ritme is

and that we have a knowledge of the city  
that no one knows of  
that this in reality/ is one intertwined rhythm

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Taoism is one of three religions of China, together with Confucianism and Buddhism; founded upon the doctrine of the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tsze.

is essential for understanding Zen. For the truth, in Zen-terms, is that all is one and simultaneously separate, a totality, which in human terms is continuously fragmented. This interlinking dependency and solidarity of all life is known as *jiji muge hokkai* (Breytenbach 1987:73). A beautiful Zen-image (one that is constantly used in *Memory of Snow and of Dust*) is that of the moon and water: without the moon its reflection would not have been possible; without water, nothing could be reflected in it. In this regard consider the following quote by Breytenbach from his book, *Memories of Snow and of Dust*.

*(Where I, Barnum, put myself in Meheret's position to write a reflection called 'A Touch of the Moon'.)*

I think I've written this scene before, but I'll write it once again. In a boat, midway upon a lake, sits a man and a woman. High above in the dark sky stands the moon. The night is still and warm, just right for this dreamy love adventure. Is the man in the boat an abductor? Is the woman the happy, enchanted victim? This we don't know; we only see how they both kiss each other. The dark mountain lies like a giant on the glistening water. On the shore lies a castle or country house with a lighted window. No noise, no sound. Everything is wrapped in a black, sweet silence. The stars tremble high above in the sky and also upward from far below out of the sky, which lies on the surface of the water. The water is the friend of the moon, it had pulled it down to itself, and now they kiss the water and the moon, like boyfriend and girlfriend. The beautiful moon has sunk into the water like a daring young prince into a flood of peril. He is reflected in the water like a beautiful affectionate soul reflected in another love-thirsty soul. It's marvelous how the moon resembles the lover drowned in pleasure, and how the water resembles the happy mistress hugging and embracing her kingly love. In the boat, the man and woman are completely still. A long kiss holds them captive. The oars lie lazily on the water. Are they happy, will they be happy, the two here in the boat, the two who kiss one another, the two upon whom the moon shines, the two who are in love? They are happy. The light in the window of the country house has been switched off. It's marvelous how the lover resembles the moon drowned in pleasure and the



mistress is like water lapping around the thighs of her kingly love. The bed is a boat midway through the night. No noise, no sound. A long kiss holds them captive. Their limbs lie lazily on the sheets as white as the blood on the moon. I think I've written this scene before, but I'll write it once again. 'Are you afraid?' the lover asks his mistress. Everything is wrapped in a black, sweet silence. Her lips tremble in the dark space above him and also upward from far below where an oar has penetrated the water. It is like putting the moon to the sword. The moon has impaled her trembling on the oar. The oar is the friend of the moon, it has pulled itself down, and now they kiss the boyfriend and the girlfriend, like moon and water. Water flows from her mouth. Slowly the boat of the bed is rocked into motion until moonlight drips from the oar. The dark pleasure lies like a giant on the glistening water. In the boat, the man and woman are completely still. High above the moon has been swallowed by the dark sky. Are they happy, will they be happy for ever, the two here in the bed, the ones who kiss one another, the two who have eaten the dark and soft moon of love? This we don't know; we only see how they both kiss each other. When they wake in the morning it is still drizzling outside. The empty boat floats on the mirror. Down by the lake rubber-clothed policemen are dredging the dark depths for the sodden corpse of the moon' Breytenbach (1989:30-31).

Abe (Molino 1998:92) describes emptiness as follows: In the Indian *Mayahâna*, Buddhism is *Sunyata* or emptiness.<sup>33</sup> Emptiness can be experienced through meditation. It implies that the "I" cannot be experienced as a separate, identifiable entity. The universe must be seen as a process and is in continual movement. Nothing holds from the one moment to the next. According to the *Sunyata*, each thing that exists, also contains a vast universe. By interpretation, every single thing is itself, a single limited thing, and each other thing besides, as well as the sum total of all. This is a paradoxical statement, which expresses the dialectical

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Mahayana Buddhism is literally "The great vehicle". One of the two main branches of Buddhism, the other being Hinayama. It arose as a reaction against the austerity and individualism of early Buddhism, and emphasizes universal salvation.

and dynamic structure of *Sunyata*<sup>34</sup> in which Emptiness is Fullness and Fullness Emptiness.<sup>35</sup> Breytenbach (1983: ix) expressed it as follows: “That which is form that is emptiness. That which is emptiness that is form.”<sup>36</sup>

### 1.6.1. Notes on the fire-like basis of consciousness.

During 1992 Breytenbach painted an aquarelle, *Brandende Hond (Burning Dog) (F&W-21b)*, a depiction of the burning dog of pain moving over the landscape in the direction of an ever-receding horizon. As early as 1965, Breytenbach had written in his debut volume of poetry, *Die ysterkoei moet sweet*: “Om die Groot Niet te vertrap moet die ysterkoei kan sweet”. (To trample the Gaping Void the iron-cow must be able to sweat). For him this became the essential aspect of the creative act. He writes:

**As a *nadaist*<sup>37</sup> and a nomad I have been luckier than most writers . . . You have to work through the layering of painting to attain the nakedness of non-being** (Breytenbach 1996a:8).

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<sup>34</sup>

Sunyata is the Void; the concept of the essential emptiness of all things, and of ultimate reality as a void beyond wordily phenomena.

<sup>35</sup>

The Chinese Tao and Indian Mahayâna Buddhism flow together in Zen (from the Sanskrit *dhyana* meaning ‘meditation’). The subject matter of Zen is *satori* – enlightenment or illumination, which is obtained (at least in the Soto school to which Breytenbach belongs, founded by the philosopher and poet Dogen through meditation, the process of *zazen* – the sitting with crossed legs. *Satori* is non-verbal and alogical; one does not reach it through words or concepts. The experience of the togetherness of man and the world, the things outside, in their essence their such-ness (*thahata*), this does not lie in the realm of the word. The whole purpose of the practice of Zen, in order to obtain enlightenment, is to obliterate polarities: (above/ beneath, beautiful/ugly, life/death, holy/profane). Zen is characterised by the paradoxical, by dialectics and contradictions.

<sup>36</sup>

Translation by M. Grobler.

<sup>37</sup>

The word is derived from the Spanish word, *nada*, which means “Nothing”.



This view could be linked to an important facet of *Sunyata*. It is compared to fire and Breytenbach formulates it as fire-consciousness (Viljoen 1998: 274-293). Again Breytenbach (1996a:28) writes:

**The work interacts with society. What we see, however, is not so much a thing isolated in time and cut off from the flow of cause and effect, but rather a depiction of the process of burning (maybe *thing* is also movement if we look closely enough).**

Like fire, it has continuity, but part of it has no permanence or identity. The words, “Om te lewe is om te brand” (To live is to burn), was chosen as a title by the poet for the closing poem in *Eklips*. In this poem Breytenbach uses the concept “fire-consciousness” and transforms it to an appropriate metaphor. Merely by living one becomes part of fire-consciousness.

to live is to burn – Andrei Voznesenski.

**altogether luminous and altogether still: to live is to be  
digested like this summers-day of splendour; ever  
and again to praise the rolling by of the globe, the sultry leafage  
of thickets, water-slips, tongues of stone, the feathered ones' heart-chips  
little chains linking the silence to silence; how altogether rich  
is the mountain, bright and naked – only one plume showing white already  
where in the evening the wind will bulge slender organ-sounds  
and streamers; and it is completed, spiraling the cycle of seasons  
has pushed out old wrinkles like worms from the lap –  
but look, we are ourselves the coachman of oblivion, sitting up straight  
with blanched hands round death-cart's reins. Prayer by prayer  
our way is cocked, cool, a skeleton chalice in day-dress of flesh ...**

**burn, burn with me, love – to hell with decay!**

**to be alive is to live, is living life to die.**

31.12.79

In order to experience the Void, different techniques, like the *koan* (the noise of one hand clapping), are used to dissolve categories. To burn holy icons, or to tear them apart, to ridicule those of importance or to carnivalize them, to laugh at fixed views or ideas or the stratified society, becomes a Zen way of transcending ideologies and thus obtain enlightenment. In Breytenbach's paintings, flowers and dogs, excrements and entrails, banality and loftiness are all part of the mystic Void. Labouring the void could also be a conversation with the self on a thousand landscapes.

### 1.7. But who is the "I" then? Network and pattern making.

The emphasis on the personal story on a deeper level, is already a form of being aside: no two stories are going to be the same. Engler (1985:471) writes that according to Wilson, the last encompassing theory concerned itself with the individual, Existentialism, as well as the experiences accompanying it, is not dead. It has never been. Rollo May (Engler 1985:471) is concerned with the diminishing space of consciousness and our efforts to use technology to fill and exorcize the vacuum that developed. Those who are not involved with modern networks are already on their own. That same technology or cyberspace disembodies man or woman. It limits that which is conscious and stands in contrast to the outsider who experiences himself as not being part of society. Breytenbach is also deeply conscious of his own bodily senses and his deliverance to static societal patterns. As the outsider, Breytenbach is acutely aware of the prison of surfaces, consensual lies and generalizations in which he continually finds himself. In society, repetitive patterns are the order of the day (Schoeman 2000:153).

When Breytenbach attended a performance of the Wuppertal Tanztheatre, directed by Tina Bausch, and wrote about it, his description echoed the words of Nietzsche as *he* was walking along Lake Silvaplana and writing on a piece of paper. Breytenbach writes:



What was striking (of the production we saw) was that the performers were formed and informed by a discipline, *dancing*, which they then did not make use of. It was the invisible matrix. It showed – or shone through – in absolute control of small movements. ... It left the spectator paradoxically in a total space. In such fashion was the alienating effect brought about. And that forced participation. Which is why the theatregoers became hostile. ... These are some of the techniques by which the results were obtained: the apparently senseless repetition and thus the making of patterns and thus a re-evaluation of ‘normal’ rhythms and meaning. The decomposition of the context. ... Increased awareness (Awareness staged). Breaking of pattern. The more patterns you make, the more you destroy pattern ... never does one listen as creatively as when one doesn’t understand the other. ... Contemporary sensibility moves into spaces unknown to the ancestors. It is now more and more a *looped* consciousness, dizzying, stripped of the skin of referential security which may be identified as ‘priorities’, ‘systems’, ‘judgements’, ‘ideologies’, etc. This consciousness doesn’t even want to be funny ... a man will draw on his cigarette, turn to face the audience, and let a nonchalant plume of smoke escape from his fly. ...

I conclude – that perception is a point of departure

that space is essentially paradoxical

or that the essence of paradox is space

which is why we fix (on) the surface

to exorcize space by the rituals of movement

that perfect pattern is the no-line

and meaning is (a) light.

(Also that one shouldn’t look at paintings: one risks losing part of oneself there.)(Breytenbach 1984a:158)

In the letter written at *Can Ocells* and addressed to Dr Alex Boraine, *Upon being Invited to a Conference* (1994), Breytenbach (1996:155) writes about prison and the static patterns he experienced during his time of incarceration. Breytenbach (1984:11) takes the event of

outsider-ship<sup>38</sup> even further when he writes about pattern forming, his experience in prison and the lifting of the self from static patterns. In this regard he states:

**In prison I found that man, like other animals, is a product and a spinner of habits. We live by smells, by the return to known places and patterns of reassurance, of not knowing, and we need to repeat the doodles. Our habits are obsessive, like mating and picking the nose and clinging to superstitions (and our morality and, also whistling in the dark while crossing the fingers); even our madness is but the need for *situating* and recognizing where we belong gone haywire (and being recognized, and our supplication for consolation), where obsessional habit-repetition can no longer hold the essential desolation flowing from our awareness of being.**

Dogen and Breytenbach have one thing in common namely, the potential of welcoming the “Other” and the disclosing of that which could previously have been the self. For Breytenbach the self is another aspect, where the notion of static patterns can be investigated. The self is a mixture of memories and sense-impressions: it is like a pot of soup or a small universe. He writes:

**But is experience then not a question of memory? A sorting out and a classification and therefore a choice? You travel through mirrors of previous journeys; you experience reflections of earlier experiences – and future ones too, because no experience is completed. A ‘you’ becomes, mutates, *mutatis mutandis*, according to the scorching and flourishing of previous and subsequent cutting points. This is the ego’s empty subjectivity. The objectivity is the life in the mirrors itself (Breytenbach 1987:12).**

If there is an interest in the concept of Breytenbach’s prolific use of mutation, the concept of

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The outsider becomes the “pact” when he exteriorizes himself. Breytenbach entered the fields of the stratified order when he entered the country without a legal passport. In this regard he was not fulfilling the true function of the nomad or the pact or the outsider.



the rhizome can enlighten the immense and powerful process-like network of transformations. The connection between things, the movement and changeability, introduces a network of becoming. Breytenbach's referral to the "ever changing landscape" in the poem *inleiding* (1993b:3) could be compared to the concept of the rhizome. There are also the innumerable mutations of the self-depicted in his art, which illustrate the concept of the rhizome. The horse as in *Portrait de Breyten* (F&W-22), the cow as in *The essence of his teaching* (F&W-23), the ape as in *Old King Breyten* (F&W-24), the parrot man as in *Epitaphe* (F&W-25), the bird-man as in *autoportrait pour plus tard (self portrait with turd)*(F&W-26), the insect man in *Head and Fish* (F&W-27) and the fish-man in *Hommage au Pinceau Décédé (Homage to the Paintbrush of the Deceased)*(F&W-28).

But now the self is not only a space of becoming, consisting of plateaux or an unleashing identity, which continually connects to a new machine of becoming, it is also an indication of his growing awareness of the importance of patterns. To Breytenbach stultified societal patterns are the embodiments of mediocrity. Breytenbach is satisfied with his discomfort when experiencing these fixed patterns.

The writer, Douglas R. Hofstadter, is a Professor of Cognitive Science and Computer Science at Indiana University. Hofstadter, is concerned with formation of the self. He wrote the book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid* (GEB)(1993), in the manner of Lewis Carroll. The work is a metaphorical fugue on minds and machines. Certain connection might be found between the Tao and some of Hofstadter's views.

The Tao is that which encompasses the whole universe and everything existing in it. It is the Way or the cosmic process. This view implies that the universe consists of polarities that are in constant interplay with each other and thus functions as a process of constant

transformation. According to Melino (1998:311) Dogen said the following:

**Seen as a whole the universe is a harmony of symbiosis of patterns that cannot exist without each other.<sup>39</sup>**

*GEB* (the acronym for *Gödel, Escher and Bach*) asks questions about the self, and how it evolves from stuff as selfless as a stone or a puddle. It approaches these questions by slowly building up an analogy that likens inanimate molecules to meaningless symbols, and further likens selves (or the “I” or “soul”) to certain special swirling, twisting, vortex-like, meaningful patterns that arise only in a particular system of meaningless symbols. These strange, twisting patterns that the book is concerned with, are filled with mystery. Hofstadter calls them “strange loops”, and he provides commentaries on such patterns in the work of the mathematician, Kurt Gödel (1906-1978), the musician, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) and the artist, Maurice Cornelius Escher (1898-1972).

Escher’s art is an illustration of strange loops. He drew them in a variety of contexts, all wonderful and disorientating. The creator of some of the most intellectually stimulating drawings of all time, many of Etchers work have their origin in paradox, illusion, or double meaning. But there is much more to a typical Escher drawing than just symmetry or pattern; there is often an underlying idea, a realization in artistic form. There’s the work, *Drawing Hands*, in which the one hand draws the other. The work, *Ascending and Descending*, in which the monks trudge forever in loops, is the best version of Escher’s work, since it involves so many steps before the starting point is regained. In the work *Print Gallery*, a picture of a picture, which contains it, is depicted. Or is it a picture of a gallery, which contains itself? Or of a town which contains itself? Or a young man who contains himself?

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According to Melino (1998:307), in the essay entitled, *The Fertile Mind*, the writer Bobrow explains Dogen’s view of the self with the following words: “To Study the Way is to study the self. To Study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be enlightened by all things of the universe.”



Linking the extraordinary phenomena of strange loops with consciousness (of the self), Hofstadter (1999:3) states:

As a matter of fact, there are still quite a few philosophers, scientists and so forth who believe that patterns of symbols *per se* (such as books or movies or libraries or CD-ROM's or computer programs, no matter how complex or dynamic) never have meaning on their own, but that meaning instead, in some most mysterious manner, springs only from the organic chemistry, or perhaps the quantum mechanics, of processes that take place in carbon-based biological brains. Such people feel that some kind of 'semantic magic' takes place only inside our 'teetering bulbs', somewhere behind pairs of eyeballs, even though they can never quite put their finger on how or why this is so; moreover they believe that this semantic magic is what is responsible for the existence of human selves, souls, consciousness, 'I'. ...

As I see it, the only way of overcoming this magical view of what 'I' and consciousness are is to keep reminding oneself, unpleasant though it may seem, that the 'teetering bulb of dread and dream' that nestles safely inside one's own cranium is a purely physical object made up of completely sterile and inanimate components, all of which embody exactly the same law as those that govern all the rest of the universe, such as pieces of text, or CD-ROM's, or computers. Only if one keeps on bashing up against this disturbing fact can one slowly begin to develop a feel for the way out of this mystery of consciousness: that the key is not the *stuff* out of which brains are made, but the *patterns* that can come to exist inside the stuff of a brain.

This is a liberating shift, because it allows one to move to a different level of considering what brains are: as *media* that support complex patterns that mirror, albeit far from perfectly, the world, of which, needless to say, those brains are themselves denizens – and it is in the inevitable self-mirroring that arises, however impartial or imperfect it may be, that the strange loops of consciousness start to swirl.

*GEB* was inspired by Hofstadter's long-held conviction that the "strange loop" notion holds

the key to unraveling the mystery that we conscious beings call “being” or “consciousness”. He was first struck by this idea when, as a teenager, he found himself obsessively pondering the quintessentially strange loop that lies at the core of the proof of Gödel’s famous incompleteness theorem in mathematical logic. In this regard he remarked:

**A rather arcane place, one might well think, to stumble across the secret behind the nature of selves and the ‘I’. The Gödelian strange loop that arises in formal systems in mathematics (i.e., collections of rules for churning out an endless series of mathematical truths solely by mechanical symbol-shunting without any regard to meanings or ideas hidden in the shapes being manipulated) is a loop that allows such a system to ‘perceive itself’, to talk about itself, to become ‘self-aware’, and in a sense it would not be going too far to say that by virtue of having such a loop, a formal system *acquires a self* (Hofstadter 1999:104).**

Dogen, Hofstadter and Breytenbach have the following to say about patterns and consciousness. For Dogen the landscape, which is actually the universe, is a harmony of patterns, which cannot exist without each other. Breytenbach confuses the reader when he writes the following remarks about patterns. He says: “The perfect line is the no-line. Or perhaps these patterns are merely mirror-writings.” For the poet/artist these patterns are the riddles of consciousness. He extends his views by remarking that images and metaphors are the building blocks of consciousness. Hofstadter again, views these patterns as strange loops; concerning the self and when pondering on the riddle of the self states that meaningless images and metaphors acquire meaning despite themselves. The inquiry there: what is the self or the “I”, the vessel carrying and forming strange loops. Meaningless metaphors and images – that which give rise to meaningful patterns (strange loops). Breytenbach continues – he talks about jumps and starts and fuck-ups. For him not all jumps from matter to pattern give rise to consciousness or soul or self. The pattern is the telltale mark of a *self*. Comparing Breytenbach’s notion of patterns, one could take it a step further and link it to Hofstadter’s views that “patterns” are indeed strange loop. Furthermore, when and only when such a loop arises in a brain or in any other substrate, a person – a unique new “I” – is brought into being.



Moreover, the more self-referentially rich such a loop is, the more conscious is the self to which it gives rise. Consciousness is not an on/off phenomenon, but admits of degrees, grades, and shades. Strange loops are an abstract structure that crops up in various media and in varying degrees of richness (Hofstadter 1993:4).

Breytenbach's work is in essence a proposal of strange loops (patterns) of metaphors and images and how selfhood originates, a metaphor/image by which to begin to grab hold of just what it is that makes the "I" seem, at one and the same time, so terribly real and tangible to its possessor, and yet so vague and so impenetrable, so deeply elusive. Strange loops with their philosophical importance, but also their aesthetic charm.

Meaning enters in despite one's best efforts to keep images and metaphors meaningless. When a system of "meaningless" images and metaphors have patterns in them that accurately track, or mirror, various phenomena in the world, then that tracking or mirroring imbues them with some degree of meaning. Indeed, such tracking or mirroring is no less and no more than what meaning is. Depending on how complex and subtle and reliable the tracking is, different degrees of meaningfulness arise. Consciousness during this process becomes richer and more varied.

Patterns from Breytenbach's work have been selected here (arising from consciousness, represented by the images of fire and water). Patterns of consciousness like the mirror, death and decay, movement, mutations, erotic, or the mandala of the self. But there are also numerous instances of paintings and drawings which are self-referential and thus form a "strange loop", or patterns which could imply the formation of a self.

## 1.8 . The (watery) nomadic way: Koyaanisqatsi and *Le Coucher de Soleil* (F&W-29)

Introductory works on postmodernism inform us that the era of the “great story” is no longer with us. The individual, fragmented story now addresses us. The outsider’s thought processes are fragmented and he or she is aware of his or her fragmented self. They find themselves in an outsider position. This, however, does lead to nihilism, or a blunting of creativity. In contrast to the burgher who builds his house on the rocks of the stratified order’s land or the one who lives according to the majority’s wish for reality, the outsider develops a sensitivity that results in a form of asceticism. This asceticism, however, will grow into a unique life in society. The outsider has creative and imaginative instincts, which turns against the boredom of ordinary life. The outsider in his artwork chooses an alternative. He is possessed by a will to something different. And the solution for the outsider lies in a life of the extreme, life on the border and a choice for the nomadic self of walking the nomadic way. The choice of this way of life is a most important critique launched by the outsider against the stratified order.

A comparison by de Kock (1999:250-260), between one of Breytenbach’s artworks and the music of the American composer, Philip Glass, reveals interesting aspects (de Kock 1999: 25-260). Breytenbach’s painting, *Le Coucher de soleil (To lie)*, reveals a red Buddha-like figure sitting in the *zazen* position on a landing with steps leading to it. The figure has a vaginal split reminiscent of that in other works, like *le Cheval (The Horse)* (F&W-30), in which the split appears on the back. The figure in this work is probably entering the void by concentrating on an endless range of mountains. The painter has put a cross in the middle of the landscape with the following words written on it:

On the cross going from left (down) to right (up):

**mmo tasso bhagavatto arahato samasambhuddasa nam.**

And on the side moving from right (down) to left (up):

**sa nammo tasso arahatto.**



On the side of the cross the following words:

**bhagava samasam bhudda.**

It is possible to say that the figure painted in this work of art is engaged in counter-thought. True counter-thought attests to an absolute solitude. It is however an extremely populous solitude, like the desert itself. It is a solitude that is already interlaced with people to come. This solitude invokes and awaits people. This thought is like a vampire. In the smooth space of Zen, the arrow does not go from one point to another, but it is taken up at any point, to be sent to any other point, and tends to permute with the archer and the target. The sound of Glass's music embodies the smooth nomadic space of the desert. This is the space that these two art works share. As one listens to the inter-rhythmic and polytonal nature of Philip Glass's music which accompanies the film called, *Koyaanisqatsi*, (1998),<sup>40</sup> by Godfrey Reggio, one should imagine you crossing the endless desert of consciousness. The image of crossing the endless desert of consciousness serves as a description of the nomadic way. The music is the acoustic embodiment or metaphor of the nomadic process. The film, *Koyaanisqatsi* has proved the most influential product of the cinema and music since *Fantasia* in 1940. It could serve as an example of Breytenbach's own "song-lines".

The 87-minute film is completely non-narrative, without a single identifiable character or a word of dialogue. A cavalcade of potent visions represented by clouds chasing across a new Mexican desert, the mass dynamiting of a failed housing project in St. Louis, hives of people swarming in and out of Grand Central Station, hectic traffic swapping lanes on the Los Angeles freeway and finally it evolved into a vast cinematic ballet, music and motion forever interweaving and intertwined. Both the music and the film were intended, at least in part, as an indictment of late-20th century Western society.

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(Ko. Yaa.nis.qatsi – from the Hopi language, meaning, "life is in disarray")

*Koyaanisqatsi*: the disarray of thoughts and ideas of both artists, stretches out as a horizon of meaning, opening to places that one not only recognizes as becoming, but also as the shifting of consciousness. It appears, disappears and slips away only to be captured at another point whereas the sonic horizons, the spaces of music and the network of interventions, are experienced through the ear. Breytenbach's images and metaphors, however, represent them through the weeping or blinded eye ('I'). The eyes of the "I", who does not accept at face value the interpretation of reality by the majority order, must be full of tears in order to open the third eye or the eye of awareness which continually peels off the layers of consciousness. Entering the void as he contemplates the mountain scenery while sitting in the zazen position blinds the Buddhist figure's eyes.

Both the images of Breytenbach and the music of Glass evoke rituals, rich textures of consciousness, which are from the in-between space of the Middleworld<sup>41</sup> or the Void. We return to Deleuze & Guattari's (1996:4) image of the "war machine". The images and metaphors and music of Breytenbach and Glass can be described as disruptive war machines producing nomadic results. The inter-rhythmic aspect of their work can be picked up at any point, and the series spread out over a horizontal space, where it is bundled together in rhythmic forms and repetitive units. One has to seek for the hidden beauty and complexity beneath the seeming simplicity of some of Breytenbach's images and Glass's music. Not only the art work, *le Coucher de Soleil*, but all Breytenbach's paintings and dramas and poetry, are part of the coming into being of a nomadic-political movement for the artist, the viewer and the reader, which could lead to such issues as ruptures in the socially unstable order of being an Afrikaner. These works of art are a resistance against fixity in some superstrata, order or state. They are social machines and energetic bindings into which man, woman and child are bound; whose limit is not attrition, but rather misfiring, operating by fits and starts, by grinding and breaking down, in a spasm of minor explosions. Paradoxically, this dysfunction is also

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The concept of the Middleworld is based on an essay written by Breytenbach.



an essential element of the stratified order. It's very ability to function depends on them (Deleuze & Guattari 1996:151).

### **1.9. *Ars poetica* – values of the outsider.**

For Breytenbach the most individual creative act is certainly an attempt to shift the frontiers of consciousness and with becoming aware of fixed structures in society. By becoming increasingly aware, the writer/painter can become a consciousness-expanding agent. Breytenbach takes on the task to introduce society to deeper levels of consciousness. Breytenbach (1996a:44) writes:

**The individual creative act is certainly to make consciousness.**

This must be the greatest form of self-expression and can only be achieved by men or women who are supremely alone. In an essential adult world Breytenbach – intellectual, prophet and “new realist” who writes and paints looks forward toward death. The outsider, on an intellectual and spiritual level, is cut off from the general shared communal life of those around him. Outsiders are usually not fully represented in what they do, but consciously expose the fixed values, endless repetitive behaviour and ordinary life of the burgher. The outsider's life stands in the sign of the exile; he exists in the margins of the societal text. Breytenbach, as the outsider, disclosed exile behaviour. According to him “an individual only properly acquires his own name after a severe exercise in depersonalization, when he or she lays himself or herself open to multiplicity's and the intensities which may run through him or her” (Breytenbach 1996:48). According to him, the average man or woman follows the agreeing majority's viewpoint. They drift aimlessly through life, rather than living it fully. His world-without-values consist of ethics which are derived from aesthetics. In the essay,

*Tortoise Step*<sup>42</sup> Breytenbach (1996:14) writes:

**Writing [painting], paradoxically, is not solitary creation. Of course it is finally the sound made by one hand clapping, but always the expression of a *lived* experience (even when in appearance the life of the mind only), of attitudes and positions and the absence of these, shared inevitably with at least part of the community. One may say that every writer lays his own egg but it is never a unique act. The hen is the consciousness, the conscience, the history (thus the experience); the egg is the product, the creation, the writing (thus the consciousness). And who is to say which came first?**

### 1.10. Summary.

In chapter one we have looked at the aspect of becoming more conscious and started off by the way Breytenbach depicts tears. Breytenbach is the writer and painter of pain. He experiences pain because he prefers to follow the way against fixity. Bourgeois values and options lead to a secure life and avoidance of pain. In contrast, Breytenbach exposes himself to an open life. The pain that he experiences during this process leads to an unfolding of consciousness. There are, however, tendencies of masochism in such an approach. Breytenbach was compared to de Sade. Masochism belongs to the regions of non-fixity. There is, however, not only a deepening into consciousness but also a process which leads to schism of the personality. It is the deterritorialization of the stable and secure self. Breytenbach is a practicing Zen Buddhist which is not part of the fixed dogma of the Church. He does not only delve into consciousness through exposure, but also through entering the void. This is fire-consciousness.

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<sup>42</sup>

'Tortoise Step' was a paper presented at an International PEN meeting in Lugano, Switzerland, in May 1987.



By reading Breytenbach one becomes aware of a watery basis. This is the characteristic of the nomadic consciousness. In the introduction we introduced the reader to the notion of smoothness. Breytenbach's consciousness is that of the "pact", which operates outside the stratified space of the State. An alternative model for the deterritorialized Self is investigated. Two art works are discussed to explain the aspect of counter thought. The *Ars poetica* of the outsider was also discussed. Breytenbach's world-without-values consist of ethics which are derived from aesthetics.