

## ***I don't write diaries: On Backlashes, Eggshells and Reverse Warrior***

**Yara Haskiel**

The *I don't write diaries* series is an open format. Found footage text passages float together with personal and shared experiences in a non-linear collage. It's an invitation to embrace an audio-visual and textual experiment on the notion of fragility and precarity in relation to micro- and macro-politics and the psychological symptoms of love and crisis.

### **1. Meta or Prologue**

She turns on the radio while an old e-mail appears on her screen, dated September 2015:

“My video-diary series in two parts titled *I don't write diaries: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility* spins around a question of fragility as personal and shared experience and attempts to localize the points that trigger these experiences. The points of departure were discussions that took place within the sphere of intimate relationships, as well as research into contemporary philosophy dealing with the problems of uncertainty and being powerless. An interplay of audio and visual methods is used to incorporate autobiographical and subjective elements into a broader perspective coloured by memory and experiences of my social environment.

In the current state of uncertainty, the connections to the people we love are becoming ever more a matter of existential urgency. The precarity that pervades the conditions of living is not just a phenomenon linked to the exploitation of labour conditions, it is also affecting and pervading our love stories and friendships.

Falling in love with someone, for example, catapults us into a state of dizzy desire that stimulates and changes our imagination of a possible future, but simultaneously produces and reinforces the feeling of uncertainty and fragility. At the same time, the overly repeated notion of 'crisis' becomes blurred by the ways of relating and belonging to the intimate context on the one hand, and the context of new forms of collectivity, arising from social movements, on the other.

We're situated in the 'backlash' of a new 'no future' generation. Disillusionment and dissatisfaction also trigger us to become resistant beings. They mark a psychological moment in society in which precarious existence as a norm is projected into the future. Do we have to actualize a love ethics in our everyday life in order to put the focus on care,

commitment, trust, responsibility, respect, and knowledge? This is one way of dealing with 'desensitization to the presence of the other', the loss of empathy as an autistic trend in the sphere of communication, and it is where Franco 'Bifo' Berardi finds the roots of contemporary precariousness. Do we have to rethink what it means to be committed and how existence means depending on one another? How can we get rid of the 'I' in the singular and start thinking the 'I' as multiple?

*I don't write diaries* is an intimate dialogue that touches on the concerns of daily life and is constantly interrupted by suggestions and visions of how to deal with these questions. Interjected short monologues aim to expose the inner voices of the filmmaker or to give small hints about the broader scenario that the two people in dialogue are entangled in.

Between the lines, sometimes concealed and sometimes directly, the following questions are raised: What role does (dis-)placement play in the production of desire? How is desire produced in relation to a possible future? Where and how and with whom do we want to live? Is the social bond that we have with others the grid that supports us in the struggle against the everyday exhaustion of life? How does uncertainty produce anxieties that affect our intimate relationships? What are the forms of commitment and models of support in reference to our social-political practice and to precarious life conditions? How can the position of fragility be transformed into a position of resistance?

## **2 Assembly of Goddesses**—An Episode from 2017–2018, Berlin

Dressed in her pajamas she crosses the street diagonally to reach the bakery. Rough roasted coffee beans, a cappuccino is 2,50 euro. The foam has no heart today, she thinks as she carries off the cup. She sits down in one of the chairs among three round tables outside. Cigarette. She gets up, crosses the street diagonally, stops at the next car, and slides down to the ground. What happened to her legs? Blackout. Gravity drags her down, in one millisecond. Her legs hit the ground. The warm leftover of coffee spills all over her. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. As she slowly regains consciousness, she thinks: is it my period? No. It's a general body strike. The street turned a blurry fluid grey, slow shadows and silhouettes crawl down the street. A Ghost Hero Girl passes by and helps her climb up the stairs.

Sweat. heat, cold, sweat. 12 hours of sleep.

Something follows her into the deep seas of her pillow:

Finally she created false papers for her mother and herself. This is how it started: she will be named 'Kapetanissa Stella' and becomes the head of the female platoon at one of the ELAS Regiments. But at this point she doesn't know anything about it yet.

The forced workers on the dusty streets are kept under surveillance by the Bulgarian army. Lucky ones manage to escape and get Christian papers or flee to the mountains to become partisans. The Rabbi from Athens disappeared. This is the sign that it's time to escape. In Thessaloniki tickets to Poland need to be paid for, to feed the lies about 'relocation' in the Ghetto. Someone buried potatoes as if they are a valuable stone or even a beloved one.

Kurukulla: Hekate called to this voice. Do you understand anything?

Ghost speaking through Hekate's body: I can't remember.

Kurukulla: What are you talking about?

Ghost through Hekate: No, it's a desert made of asphalt. Layers of bones are underneath it.

Hekate: You have been saved from forced labour, because they wanted to build this desert.

Kurukulla: Who?

Ghost through Hekate: Ancestors...

Hekate: Today this desert is called the University of Thessaloniki.

Lillith: Thank you for joining me and welcome to this reading for 19 to 22 October 19. I'm doing daily readings on Twitter and I have insights for you at the Archaeological Service or you can check in with the Eurodac Data System for more information. Sorry for the delay, but the Red Cross is currently out of order because it was hit by a serious virus, as you know that has happened in the past before.

Here is a tarot card for the central theme of your weekend, in the New Moon at 26 degrees of Libra. The Chariot. Okay, that's good, so this is all about overcoming, business, success, really coming to terms with things from the past and moving forward.

Kurukulla: Lillith is a demon. They banned her from the Talmud.

Ghost through Hekate: Are you talking about Kathy Acker?

## 2.1.

She wakes up in the dark. The half moon shines brightly into her room, the light crosses her sweaty toes, while a bus rumbles down the street. She stumbles out the bed, picks up a glass of water, and the radio mumbles:

“The subject of reparations has strained German-Greek relations for decades. Experts from the Greek Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank in Athens calculated the amount of reparations. The total claims are estimated between 269 and 332 billion euro. Especially in the acute times of the euro crisis, Greece repeatedly calls attention to these claims. The German federal government, however, thinks of the compensation issue as settled. An agreement made in 1960 by the federal government at the time provided for the payment of 115 million Marks....”

Lillith: An agreement that was avoided by strategic maneuvering and changed with the so-called 2+4 Treaty during the reunification process of Germany in 1989. Who was researching this?

Ghost through Hekate: I can see burned villages. Raids across Europe. Tears, pain and death.

End of Scene 1.

## 2. Backlash Episode 2016–2018, Barcelona–Berlin

The world has turned black and white. Grey shadows are everywhere.

She tries to remember what she read that day on the airplane. She was in a disastrous state due to the final showdown of a heartbreak, like in a stupid Hollywood movie. A flashback of this feeling, of this thought, as if it was a spell: please can you just crash, you fucking airplane?! She lost the marked passages of that day. She remembers that she tried to focus on the text, while angry tears rolled down her face. She secretly drank red wine in the airplane toilet, as the stewardess told her to be more calm.

It was 6 July 2016, while:

“Desire remains in a relation to the distantness of the star, entreating the sky, appealing to the universe. In this sense, the disaster would turn us away from desire with the intense attraction of the undesirable impossible.”

Maurice Blanchot

Desire just seemed an empty word. An empty vacuum-cleaner, sucking the last liquids out of her body until the fluid fluxes stop completely. Dry-out. Hangover from reality. Crash. Anxiety.

Ghost through Hekate: I can see neoliberal causes in everything, or is that too easy? I mean, what's the point of multiple and polyamorous relationships when they turn into something that creates pure exhaustion, pain and re-traumatization between the actors? Multiple lovers—multi-tasking relationships, having good conversations with this one, and this and that with the other one. When intimacy creates codependency and results in cycles of stress, exhaustion and sadness. Daily stumbling over the emotional perplexities and hunting for a broader common ground of easy encounters. Underneath something much deeper. But I guess that I'm just one ghost among many. We are in this together, but we're not the same- on- and off-stage and in between. What are the flight lines of these dramas, that are causing so much damage?

Hekate: Skip the question of love relationships and human capital.

Kurukulla: Real friends—adopted family, community. Putting the pieces together and rearranging them. Working through your own baggage.

Lillith: Kathy Acker taught us about the symptoms of female masochism within heteronormative patriarchal society, remember?

The now grumpy goddesses decide to leave the stage together.

### **3. Episode from the script of *I don't write diaries: On Love and Crisis and the Power of Fragility***

“Because love today is a condition of narcissism, because we've been taught possession or materialism rather than possessionless love. Those people in days of yore didn't have proper language, that is, correct Great Culture. They were just confused and loved out of confusion. Today, our teachers call this confusion 'poetry' (and try to define each poem so that the language's no longer ambiguous), but in those days poetry was reality. Today, only the knights who're mad enough to want to love someone who loves them maintain this order of poetry. I'm such a knight.”

Kathy Acker

“I had a good job and lots of money and then I lost it. I couldn’t pay the loan of my flat anymore and they evicted me. Actually that’s when my girlfriend broke up with me.”

X. (Barcelona)

Y: Vampires are seductive masters of the art of manipulation.

M: Aha, and full of sexual energy, or what?

Y: If you present yourself on a plate maybe the vampire loses his interest, or just swallows you up in a second, so a masochist wouldn’t even be fulfilled by the pleasure of getting sucked. Or is the vampire a parasite?

A parasite can be a metaphor for the systematic destruction, absorption and expropriation of people’s lives, territory and lifetimes.

(Sounds of sirens)

What kind of autobiographical story would you like to hear?

Maybe the one of the cat who went to prison after falling in love. She is also known as Myna by the ones she met on the Mexican border. She crossed the border using digital devices that showed her the tricks and water resources on the way. Then she took a bus and she found a permanent residency card on the floor with her name on it. She sold it on the black market when she married a Romanian Jew in New York. Some years later she met her Alter Ego on a trip to Paris and fell in love for the third time. She then decided to sell her books and went to Greece. On the way she lost her socks on a train and went back to find them.

### 3.1.

11 May—sounds from the television, sounds of messages  
her telephone stands still  
couples are everywhere  
they’re celebrating themselves with selfies

We need to reconnect with our experiences, now. Just a quick note:

“We’re writing an article about the Romas who are evicted and forced to move to the outskirts of Athens and we’re planning to write an article about anti-semitism in Greece.

Will come tomorrow, but I first have to work at the post office at the airport. Three hours to go and to come back every day. They pay 400 euro, the contract lasts one month. Wir sind Leiharbeiter.”

S. (Athens)

O: Yara, Nikos’ grandfather has been to Makronisos, these small islands that were used for exiles.

O: He was a communist.

Y: Prison island?

N: An island near Chalkidiki, yes, a prison island. But he didn’t stay, because he signed a paper right away, the paper that he had to sign...

O: The declaration! To denounce your beliefs.

Y: And then? He was freed?

Simultaneous voices:

Mantra

To keep your posture means not to lose your nerves

To keep your posture means caring about the people that surround you

Distinguish between the negotiable and the non-negotiable

To keep your posture means to decide on your limits

Don’t negotiate the non-negotiable

Negotiability becomes impossible within a status quo of social-political settings carried out by the participation of many to maintain the status quo as truth

To keep your posture means to be aware of a situation

To keep your posture means self-discipline

To keep your posture means disobedience of the everyday

To keep your posture means to get drunk and keep your posture

“Shut down my bank account two years ago. They are stealing every single cent, because of my debt. When I get my salary I go to the bank immediately and take out all the cash at once. Last time 13 euro was left, they just took it.”

X. (Barcelona)

### 3.2.

M: I think you're not really a filmmaker.

Y: You carry an image of me, I carry an image of you,  
I thought we started to make a movie.

M: Maybe you're doing something else, who knows...  
What are you doing? What are you working on?

Y: I don't know, maybe on bio-politics, love and crisis  
or just reproduction.

Or maybe just ways to escape various crises.

"You never know, how it's gonna go,  
How it's all gonna end up tomorrow  
You gotta try try try.  
Girl, you better get a job, oh girl, you need to work real hard."

*Get a Job, The Gossip*

MI: This is gossip and a 'yellow press', you don't find any other country with so many daily sports newspapers as in Greece.

Y: Eight daily sports newspapers?

Yes, this one is from Thessaloniki and supports PAOK, this one supports ARIS, this one PAOK again.

Then this one doesn't support anybody—it supports the system.

This one supports Olympiacos and has fundamentalist ideas, it's very fanatical.

Look at this headline, "Orthodox Truth", and here are four orthodox business newspapers offering books about the saints and DVDs.

Y: And which paper is this, with a girl in underwear on the cover?

MI: That one is for finding jobs.

Y: Finding jobs?

MI: And it has one section with naked girls...

Y: Finding jobs?

MI: You take this one and afterwards you're looking for jobs.

Simultaneous voices:

How does economy enter in our intimate relationships?

What role do time, place and economy play?

We always fall in Love with worlds, the world is turning all upside down.

What crisis arrives when we fall in Love?

Call it transformation, call it fragility, being entangled with the world.

Precarity makes the body frail

Precarious Love

How would one describe it?

#### **4. Aftermath**

She started to assemble pictures of abandoned mattresses. She felt these objects inhabit so many unimaginable stories of encounters, movements and/or loneliness, all at the same time. But for her these imagined stories were not at all about rest or restorative sleep. The fact that the mattresses are lying on the street marks a change or movement within the subjectivities of their former owners. Two years later she threw her mattress out onto the street, without taking any picture of it. The abandoned mattress disappeared the same night, as it was light as a feather.

Since then the old knots and memories sometimes appear and make their way through to another stage, made of eggshells, were she falls and holds onto a knot or two, while hoping for the inevitable transformation of the relationship between them. When trauma echoes back and forth through her body-memory and is pushing to reenact itself, she tries to sit still to embrace the sensation. The symptoms are not always transformative or different, but there are slow changes and that's what she holds onto, maybe just for one minute. To keep her posture means Viparita Virabhadrasana. The Reverse Warrior as a form of healing. A yoga pose for a peaceful and a focused mind that might have the power to connect with the body, to challenge vulnerability as the true courage. One flight line of healing. Although still in an economy that creates individualized Freudian therapies and/or isolated models of dealing with multiple- and trans-generational traumas, she believes that other practices like art and poetry are powerful tools to challenge the rigid borders and limitations within the system and the repressive machines and their symptoms of the madness of this time.

## Extended bibliography

Acker, Kathy, *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream*, London: Paladin Grafton Books, *Die Geschichte der Don Quixote (Ein Traum)*, Ravensburg: P.S. Verlag, 1986.

Berardi, Franco 'Bifo', *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance*. Semiotext(e) / Intervention Series, 2012.

Berardi, Franco 'Bifo', *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide*. London: Verso, 2015.

Blanchot Maurice, *The Writing of the Disaster*. Éditions Gallimard, the University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

Butler, Judith, foreword in: *State of Insecurity, Government and the Precarious*. London: Verso, 2015.

Butler, Judith, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso, 2008.

Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2004.

Colectivo Situaciones, 'Über den Forschenden Militanten'. *EIPCP: European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, 2003. Available at: <<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0406/colectivosituaciones/de>> Accessed on 21 May 2018.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix, *Anti-Ödipus: (Kapitalismus und Schizophrenie I)*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1977.

Federici, Silvia, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland: PM Press, 2012.

Garcés, Marina, 'El compromís / Commitment', in: *Breus Collection no. 64*, Barcelona: CCCB, 2013.

Goffman, Erving, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956.

Hardt, Michael, 'The Procedures of Love' in: *Documenta Series 068 (100 Notes - 100 Thoughts)*. Kassel: Documenta 13, 2012.

hooks, bell, *All About Love. New Visions*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2011.

Lorey, Isabell, 'Gouvernementalität und Selbst-Prekarisierung: Zur Normalisierung von KulturproduzentInnen'. *EIPCP: European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, 2006. Available at: <<http://eipcp.net/transversal/1106/lorey/de>> Accessed on 21 May 2018.

Lorey, Isabell, 'Gouvernementale Prekarisierung'. *EIPCP: European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, 2011. Available at: <<http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/lorey/de>> Accessed on 21 May 2018.

Lorey, Isabell, *State of Insecurity, Government and the Precarious*. London: Verso, 2015.

Tsianos, Vassilis, and Papadopoulos, Dimitris, 'DIWY! Precarity in Embodied Capitalism,' in: *Economy: Art, Production and the Subject in the 21st Century*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014.