

## About to Happen

A sign or a mark involves the future.

"Future" is from *bheu*, to be and grow. *Phusis*, the physical body dies to give life.

Dissolution regenerates the life force.

In 1966 I named my art *Lo precario*—the precarious—for its dissolution. A few decades later I called my poetry performances *quasars*, "not-yet poems," quasi-events in the process of being born.

"Not yet" is a crucial concept of the Americas. In the *Popol Vuh*, the Maya Quiche creation story *Mahucutab*, "Not Yet," or "Not Right Now" is the name of one of the first four humans, reflecting a trait that can lead to disaster or potential. Today, we face the total destruction of Earth and yet, we are not yet ready to act in its defense.

The word "human" in its most ancient root is *guman*: "of the Earth"!!

Macedonio Fernández said: "Humanity begins tomorrow."

We may awaken at any moment now, remembering our death.

In the Andes, the energy of all potential, a form before form, is condensed in concepts such as *chancani* (Quechua) "to begin, to dwell in the unformed" and in ritual practices associated with unspun wool, *millma* (Quechua), a symbol of cosmic gas, the source of galaxies and stars.

In quantum physics, the force that transforms the world is the power of emergence, what is "about to happen" beyond the "edge of chaos."

*Lo precario* was born in Con cón, Chile, a place with no historical memory, and yet with a deep memory embedded in the land.

Con cón was an ancient ritual site, perhaps associated to the oracle of Con (Qon or Kon), the mother of life and the sea. Archaeological excavations in and around the oil refinery built in 1954 reveal 6000 years of human culture. María Rostorowsky de Díaz Canseco writes that Qon (or Kon, Con) is one of the oldest deities of the Andes. Pachacamac, the main Inka oracle site in Perú, was originally called Qon. Pachacamita, in Chile, three thousand kilometers south of Perú and just upriver from Con cón, still holds the syncretic pre-Columbian rituals of *sonido rajado* by the *bailes chinos*. (See essay by Macarena Gómez-Barris). The two oracle sites, Pachacamac and Pachacamita are a pair, or a mirror reflection of each other. (María Rostorowski de Díaz Canseco, *Pachacamac, Señor de los milagros, una trayectoria milenaria*)

The Andean concept of pairing, *yanantin* or *iskaynintin* (Quechua) "two together, doubling or pairing" represents "an imperative force that 'urge' the linkage of things" as Gary Urton says. "Man and woman are yanantin, partners . . . they work together because each is the reverse, or mirror image of each other." (Catherine J. Allen, *Foxboy*)

A "pairing" mirrored by the quantum view of the emergence of matter from energy and particle collisions, defined as "pair creation" by Frank Close: "In the first moments of the universe, matter overpowered antimatter, its mirror opposite."

When I think of the seventeen-year-old Cecilia drawing in the sand, it makes me think of the physicist John Wheeler who wrote of "the emergence of law from random processes." In his last blackboard (1979), he said: "A game is not a game until the line is drawn across the empty courtyard: complementarity and the distinction between observer and system observed."

The universe brought into being by acts of observer participatorship; the observer-participator brought into being by the universe (self-excited circuit).

## The Basuritas

Lucy Lippard wrote in 1990: "Vicuña's concern is to bring from her native Andean Chile into her art the concepts of popular art and religion that have provided a resistance to colonialism for five hundred years. The guiding metaphor behind the *precarios* series begun in 1966 is that of correspondences, or reciprocity, as reflected in the textile or weaving process. Latin America's greatest gifts are often treated by Europeans and North Americans as 'garbage' which inspired her *basuritas* (little rubbish)—fragile fragments of discarded beauty that she constructs and leaves in landscapes and cityscapes, evidence of humanity no matter how scorned." (Sourced from letters to the author from the artist in Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings*)

*Quipu*, or *kipu* ("knot" in Quechua), are knotted textile record-keeping devices historically used in the region of Andean South America, consisting of colored, spun, and plied thread or strings. The quipu recorded tax obligations, census data, calendrical information, as well as music, poems and historical narratives, encoded by knots in a base ten positional systems not yet deciphered. The oldest archaeological quipu is dated to 4600 BCE. Quipus reached their peak during the Inka era and were still in use until after the Conquest of Perú, but the Catholic Church prohibited them in 1583.

The quipu/kipu had a virtual counterpart: the *ceque* (line) system, a conceptualization of time/space composed of forty-one gaze lines radiating out of Cuzco in all directions. The ceque lines were not physical marks on the ground; they were lines of sight between points. Together they configured an imaginal quipu uniting all communities in the Andean world.

*Quipuni*: to tie knots.

## Palitos (Little Sticks)

The forest is the dream of animals and plants, the dream where we belong, yet we are destroying it fast. Each little stick speaks of a dead tree. For Lynn White, Jr. the destruction of the environment is a direct result of the Christian axiom carried forth by the Western colonization of the world: nature at the service of man. He wrote: "The victory of Christianity over paganism was the greatest psychic revolution in the history of our culture . . . By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects."

Indifference is the darkness of the soul.

"I say that they ingest indifference with distinct relish . . . they are death rattles dischords extreme unctious earthly mirages. ("Islands Only of Blood" by Oliverio Girondo, translated by Molly Weigel)

"One single injustice that goes unnoticed, received with indifference breaks the fabric of the rights of all citizens to a fair trial." (Terrence Rattigan, *The Winslow Boy*)

As I write these lines, at the Standing Rock Pipeline stand-off here in the U.S., indigenous tribes try to defend the water for future generations while the State protects polluters. But change may be coming. In the midst of the impasse, Episcopal clergy performed a ceremonial burning of the Doctrine of Discovery—the legal justification for the original taking of Native lands. ([www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org))

In a blurb for *In the Moremarrow* by Oliverio Girondo, I wrote: "An embodied critique of the grammar of hypocrisy may dissolve the current world order. Unbridled joy overcomes nightmares, unleashing the power of poetry to change the world."

## A Ritual Response

A collective ritual is an act of learning. Together we go into a phase transition, an invisible metamorphosis, a different state of consciousness, in order to see.

### “Collective Birthing” (Learning from Mold)

Camila Marambio: Sarah Lloyd says slime mold goes from being a spore, like a fungi, to being like an amoeba, and then to plasmodium. In each stage they are in a different kingdom! But you only see them when they go into plasmodium state.

Cecilia: Sarah said, in between stages they go through invisible states.

James O’Hern: That’s just like the butterflies, you don’t see them when they go from individual to group. The plasmodium is the group. The monarch butterfly creates a collective womb that is invisible: the creative capacity of collective birthing. Together they create the super butterfly that lives ten times longer than the previous generations. Their invisible metamorphosis is autopoiesis, the true source of creativity.

The according abysses of the sacred organs of orgasm . . .  
Joyciferating/I would lace/in the offspawned spring

(Oliverio Girondo translated by Molly Weigel)