

# *Tales from the South*

## A Visual Essay

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### 1

A story

With no beginning and no end

A displacement

An uncovering of spaces

Existing within the one

I momentarily inhabit

### 2

I come from a place often described as long and narrow

("Like a sword", we were told)

Yet for me it was circular and chaotic ("Like a trail", I replied)

I'd find myself on dry Northern sands

After crossing a river in the rain of the South

Or after falling asleep on a hot city afternoon

I'd wake up shivering on a frozen island

When I thought life was beginning, they killed me

When I smiled, they hit me

And when I was loved, I hit back

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<sup>1</sup> Text and images from *Tales from the South* (experimental video, writer & director Antonio Traverso, 1997, Australia/Chile, 21 mins); dedicated to the victims of the dictatorship, Chile, 1973-1990

### 3

I don't know for how long I ran

I found myself in a prehistoric landscape

My location shifted independently of my wishes

I thought of Cortazar's characters

Passing from one city to another

As they step down from trams or walk through bridges

Such is this story, I don't know where or when it began

But it circulates between "there" and "here"

Between "then" and "now"

### 4

In her dream Magdalena saw herself walk

In a place that both frightened and inspired her

She sensed eyes everywhere looking at her

She felt something open to let her through

And then close behind her

A soundless voice summoned her:

"I am your *aleph*, Magdalena, come closer

Don't look, you may lose your mind

Come closer and fuse with me"

**5**

I was followed on the street one night and kidnapped in a car

I was isolated for 3 months, interrogated, tortured and raped

**6**

Electricity and hot cigarettes were applied to my body

I was forced to sign false statements

I was drugged and filmed pleading guilty to false charges

**7**

A call from the shore, a light too bright to be looked at

It was Pincoya, bringer of abundance and fertility

Magdalena didn't know of Pincoya's lethal look

But her eyes were not burnt by this fire

Nor was her skin consumed like burning coal

**8**

Magdalena, the silent one

Saw in her mind the image of two mirrors

One in front of the other

Reproducing her own image *ad infinitum*

**9**

The surroundings bend around themselves

Space becomes distorted

At times it's friendly, at times threatening

It becomes a labyrinth

Protecting a beast chasing you in dreams

**10**

This is my story

You may enter but please be careful

Everything here is distorted

Time and space interwoven

There are no visions, only fleeting glances

To that which is and is not

That could have been but was not

That could possibly be

**11**

This story is my struggle, my travail

My daily defeat, my Sunday's victory

**12**

This story burns, crushes, interrogates me

It rapes, plunders and conquers me

Then it finds my missing body when I had given up the search

**13**

Yet this story is also my self-defence, my liberation

My self-encounter, my cleansing

This story is my intimate rebellion

My invisible revolution

My returning, my moving on

















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