

Rethinking Tactical [& tactile] Media for Artists and Activists

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[N.B. This paper is a draft, my actual talk will show and demonstrate some projects that practically represent and open up some of the issues discussed in this paper].

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0.0 Intro:

We stand in a paradoxical age, a time of deep change in the fields of Art and Science where practices are being inherently influenced by many things, including the ubiquity of computational media. For those of us in the metropolises, are we becoming unable to discern with any clarity the manner in which our memories, perceptions and thoughts are being shifted by our sensory involvement with consumer electronic technologies? Is humanity in great danger of losing its diversity? For it has never been so possible to speak so convincingly of global civilisation as it is today.

Companies make defacto decisions on the software we use everyday, more than often creating an inegalitarian or one way system where the vast majority of us have no control over what is now an indispensable means of expression and communication. This situation is aggravated when the source code used to write software in is not only copyrighted but closed. As computers begin to take the centre stage of many of our daily lives, we emphasize we may want to be aware of the consequences of the decisions that we are (perhaps not) making, in our choice

of electronic tools and operating systems [OS] as our main communication apparatus.

Due to the scope of this report I will avoid going into the manifold histories of the *nix Operating system, and spare you from comparing and contrasting the models of GNU/Linux, free software, open source software *per se*. But one question still remains is how subjective perception can be treated systematically, and the conditions for an effective collaboration between arts practitioners, interaction designers, engineers and researchers.

My main concern in this paper is what are the tools that can instigate, as well as create, represent and respond to a broader community? And most importantly how and why do we need to develop artistic tools according to our own subjective experience? Kristina Anderson explains,

By using our crude and clumsy hands to make aspects of *computational machinery we are re-inserting ourselves into a process that we are otherwise excluded from*. We make technological objects in an attempt to glean understanding, to see if our naïve intuitions still functions in a world of current and solder. Maybe we can say, we are making technology in order to understand it, and understanding technology in order to make our own.[my italics]ⁱ

What are the systems and projects that encourage collaboration and extension by others, as opposed to proprietary knowledge bases and tools that are closed? What interfaces give us the ability to speak for ourselves, the ability to define ourselves and the space to represent ourselves based on our own needs and experiences that rather than on an externally prescribed idea of us that serves a consumer marketplace? How may we be surer that the objects of our embodied thought are shifting in tandem with the technologies that in return engage our senses?

This essay aims to reintegrate the role of perception and challenges the restrictions brought by dominance of closed interfaces (hardware and software) in mainstream media culture. I hope it will provide directions to transform that narrative role in the process. Hence, it is speculative and has an intermingling of different agendas (artistic, autobiographical) and discourses (scholarly, polemical). I have taken an opportunity to dream about how media design can eclipse to the challenges posed by classification, systems analysis and copyright polemics by looking towards more

collaborative practices of knowledge retrieval and other more inclusive notions of selfhood brought about by such an approach.

This paper is essentially a more fundamental discussion around mediality, human embodiment and language. My actual talk at MIT6 will provide a similar series of questions, concerns and possible directions, but will ground these speculations in some practical examples of projects that use human interconnection, and this aliveness of Internet as a dynamic network a public domain to share, store and transmit information.

Along with the work 'BagLady2.0' which I elaborate upon below, I will also share about other projects with which I have been involved, who also focus on putting human embodiment and social justice back into the technology. Such as:

*Genderchangers.org a bunch of women working with Free software and open hardware. Whom are focused upon technology and the freedom of information, but not necessarily formally trained in computer science or engineering.

<http://genderchangers.org/>

*Dyne.org a cultural movement and organisation where among other activities free software multi-media projects are developed. <http://dyne.org>

*EngageMedia, an online video sharing platform focused around Asia-Pacific:

<http://www.engagemedia.org>

* Free Tattoo (never get a girls name) a collaborative work organised by Scot Cotterell who states, "A project where people post digital photographs to freetattoo@scotcotterell.com of tattoo's and any other anecdotal info about them. What they are, Why you got them, What they Symbolise, Who they are for/remind you of. This group forms part of an ongoing artwork that gathers photographs and information about people's tattoo's in order to build up an archive to use in a public artwork. The archive is specific to people I know, the location I reside in and the place the exhibition will take place. The archive starts with my tattoos and then gathers outwards from this point. The images will be 'freed' through various means into the public space, (never get a girls name) refers to an early piece of manly advice given to me by my father in relation to tattoos."

These projects are all in a sense nomadic but exist simultaneously on a local level in the fact that they stimulate local knowledge development, gathering and sharing. Moving towards a more transparent of usage of resources, they also reveal the real need for open technologies and structures that in-turn allow users to re-program devices and interfaces and therefore, acknowledge the complexity of the human organism.

1.0 Baglady2.0

Recently I was especially moved when I read an article in *Artforum*, "Domesticity at War", in this text Beatriz Colomina and Homi K Bhabha discuss how the mediations of public and private in the context of war are domesticated and inform developments in fashion, design and architecture. They discuss the project 'future home' and how we are almost returning to a Mumified state of being.

As an artist and media designer I like to stretch new interfaces and technologies into the realm of dream and the imagination, ripping them from their function of a commonplace commodity or military inspired tool, allowing creative reflection and critical intelligent play with something as yet largely inaccessible.

One of my projects in development is 'Bag Lady 2.0' it consists of a small bag that holds an antenna, an embedded board 500mhz with a 8gig flash card, a small numeric keypad programmed for live wireless broadcasting of sound, digital image for an online and live performance event. It is an electronic performance tool. Via automated audio scripts, it allows an image and audio feed to be broadcasted live and 'on the fly' from a first person Point of View [POV]. This custom built interface sends video/image and audio feeds and it uses the internet as a platform to pipe through this data. As soon as the files are uploaded and double checked for errors they are deleted on the hard-drive.

Fig:1,2# operating auto script with number keypad, *bag in action recording and streaming audio/ uploading .jpgs to the server.*



The operation of device is a performance in the street via the external numeric usb controller. See **fig.#2** I am using a series of audio prompts and a small numeric keyboard that are trigger auto functions i.e. Scan for net work. Start recording audio/images. Stop upload. Etc. to a server.

Fig. #3 Screen shot of Image series testing at 1 frame every 5 seconds taken by the the bag camera interface and uploaded to a server and viewed on the the www. Here the audio is also captured via a cordado player.

live images from bag Lady, to diviate into Her recent Activities click here --> [Archives](#)

Time / Date now Mon 16 Feb 09 :: 1:45:30pm



bag lady2_0 was last seen here --> images/2008-07-29_19_12_40/2008_07_29_19_15_44_picture_000000101.jpg

Therefore the character sister0 goes forth, finds and share meanings from found objects, gestures, signs on the street, or the land, and makes connections with them and through them via the nomadic tool. This is not hi-res graphical standard, but it aims to show glimpses of a person capturing aspects in motion and unfolding in time.

'Bag Lady 2.0' Scenario:

After 'the crash', a nomadic bag lady, sister0 lives in the wreckage of the new dark ages. In the true spirit of a bricoleur, she tracks and inherits neo-liberal capitalist waste, wanders through its discarded wardrobe, transforms it and plays with it.

Instead of collecting material items, she is a hunter-gatherer of ephemeral moments that cannot be brought or sold. She finds it vital to collect and share signs, omens from the everyday, seeing the beauty in the banal, validating the fragile and shifting world made up of temporary autonomous cells and spontaneous aesthetic subcultures.

She travels light, carries around with her a bag with an antennae that allows not only allows her to capture audio / video she broadcasts this on the fly, but she probes the aeather and pirates open networks...

Although this can be used as a grass roots tactical tool, the bag and the character was influenced by the film 'Gods of the Plague/Götter der Pest (1970)' by Rainer Werner Fassbinder, where as we can see in **fig#4** the character noiry underworld woman Carla Aulaulu sells information out of her wicker handbag.



Fig#4 still from 'Gods of the Plague/Götter der Pest (1970)', Rainer Werner Fassbinder, featuring the character noiry underworld woman Carla Aulaulu.

'Baglady 2.0' is first and foremost a live performance with an networked object, a customised electronic performance tool, a bag with an antenna and an embedded board, programmed for live wireless broadcasting of sound digital image [motion jpeg video] and text for an online and live performance platform. Along with the element of an ongoing a/v broadcast, I want to highlight how such ephemeral oral or folk histories on the street can be played out on the world wide web [www], being such an inhabited and ubiquitous place at present.

In the article '*The Bag Lady: Trading secrets, spreading news*', media theorist, historian and critic Mirko Tobias Schafer notices how this tool was made from an iterative process, that allows for many levels of tactical functionality and extension:

Originally conceived as a modular tool for performances, sister0's bag can serve many different uses. Using open source software and providing a documentation of design and technological specificities is a crucial and deliberate aspect in sister0's work. As an artist and a designer she forges the raw materials of her art to fit more than just the work of art itself. Basic research, appropriation of electronic consumer goods and applied technological design constitutes a work of art that consequently questions the apparatus of production and opens a range of unknown possibilities for others to employ and extend upon. Instead of creating yet another black box that just blinks, sounds or does something funny, sister0 provides a literally open bag full of possibilities. The bag can also serve as personal recording device to capture one's daily life, to record conversations, log geographical data, and take images. Or it can even be used as a tactical medium in urban space, this is not symbolic. Imagine the bag as a tool for grassroots journalists operating under the conditions of repression. They can record images and audio files, and send them immediately to a remote server, while deleting the compromising data from the bag's memory. Once the server received files from the bag, the files on the bag are deleted automatically. The flaneur roaming the city to collect impressions for personal memory is now equipped with a tool for sharing them in realtime. Random trainspotters, information gatherers, and media activists alike can inconspicuously record events, and collect evidences. The Bag Lady project anticipates a media practice of perpetual recording and sending. ⁱⁱ

'Baglady2.0' also aims to invigorate a discussion about the meaningful contexts in which live acts can take place in the age of global ubiquitous media. Because what matters to me is that it is only at the scale of our direct, sensory interactions with the place around us that we can appropriately notice and respond to the immediate needs of the living world.

I also wanted to open up how technology based art performance can help us understand relations between material and embodied sensory experience and code based practices on a tactical level. In the 'Tactical Reality Dictionary', Konrad Beckers describes the term *Senso-Linguistic Infiltration Programs (SLIP)* to be;

'Similarly a trap is a *device that by design hides its function...The transcendence of the human condition in stylised relations creates a desire to happily make sacrifices for work, war and enforced leisure in exchange for a Weltanschauung, luring the bedazzled into the graceful existence of slavery, the self-centred freedom of marionettes, and the eloquence of automatons.*'ⁱⁱⁱ

I also question practically how prevalent there is a strange and vacuous sort of vanity based on identity and form, gimmicks, or *Senso-Linguistic Infiltration Programs [SLIP's]* remove us from the actual unfolding of the living human organism and its complexity. High end graphics, and devices as Konrad Becker above states "*luring the bedazzled into the graceful existence of slavery*" which are becoming more and more removed from the human organism. Perhaps over the years the long-term presence in Graphical environments, or SLIP's one may see end-users becoming like the pathetic monster's of Mary Shelley's '*Frankenstein*', their walk staggering and jerky, their reach clumsy and inaccurate, reflexes spasmodic; unaware of his labyrinthine space of the middle ear, careening about the environment, every movement a source of danger to himself and others.

Peter Matussek tells us that 'the metaphor shift in the neuro-sciences goes hand in hand with corresponding changes in the ways we speak about computers'. He continues that 'in the wake of advances in interactive applications, the function of digital technology is no longer described merely in terms of "storage and retrieval," but rather in terms of the performativity of images in motion.'^{iv} As our story telling forms are changing, as Mirko Tobias Schafer writes 'instead of creating yet another black box that just blinks, sounds or does something funny;'^v how do we continue to share intimate gestures and subtle signs found in our everyday routine, how to we continue to highlight the sort of silent conversation that we carry on with our proprioceptive facilities, a continuous dialogue that comes from this proto-linguistic state? For instance, proprioceptive facilities are when: the hand readily navigates the space between the fingers and the keys on the computer, or reaches out to touch the luscious cheek of a child; or how we fleetingly relate to a spray-painted sign on the street as we go about our daily routine.

By taping into these signs, various 'other' knowledges in circulation, it is only at the scale of our direct, sensory interactions with the place around us that we can appropriately notice and respond to the immediate needs of the living world. Historically traces are left on stones, plants, rocks, or by rivers, or mountains, would be *read*, nowadays this can be extended to graffiti, public monuments, found objects in the street, as texts, responses and silent protests. Isn't it vital that we continue to read and share such subjugated knowledges, encrypt their secrets, relate it to their interiority and even seek them for such wisdom? An instance of

this is clearly seen in the massive boundary between two very different kinds of bedrock formed by some cataclysmic event, collisions and battles of a continent. We can also see similar, analagous reverberations on a micro level in our own personal lives. How can such ecological inscriptions could be played out on the world wide web [www], being such an inhabited and ubiquitous place at present? How are we able to go forth, find and share meanings from found objects, gestures, signs on the street, or the land and make connections with them and through them without being a victim of *SLIP's*, which perhaps are a 'harnessing the user' telecommunications ploy? Can we highlight our sweaty imperfect embodied attempts to connect and reconnect with each other virtually over a distance, counting our time lap carefully? What devises allow us to explore the different ways that data, can seep to and from site-specific spaces and very physical places into a virtual space, via poetic encoded data fragments.

2.0 Knowledge economy & Knowing thyself: encoding sensory perception.

You said it, my good Knight! There ought to be laws to protect the body of acquired knowledge. Take one of our good pupils, for example: modest and diligent, from his earliest grammar classes he has kept a little notebook full of phrases. After hanging on the lips of his teachers for twenty years, he's managed to build up an intellectual stock in trade; doesn't it belong to him as if it were a house, or money?
Paul Claudel, *Le soulier de satin*, Day III, Scene ii^{vi}

I will, for a moment begin at the end, which is of course a new beginning; new containers for information, code, knowledge and narrative in culture, one world inside another, the future in the ancient past.

'Know thyself' was a famous proverb that the Oracle of Delphi would frequently respond.^{vii} A message the priestess uttered who probably found hard to explain, as came from a far deeper source than conscious thought. (Without a large conversation about the narcotic gasses that seeped up through the cleft in the earth that she sat above to impart such knowledges). Can we begin to understand the conviction that the body holds larger truths which through sensitising practices, could be reached and should be sought? No wonder such a practice did not last, since one cannot commodify or control this type of knowledge, as it is out of the grasp of the Church, and the intellectual property Laws that we see reverberations of in present times.

An overabundance of patents and agreements attempt to strip human of all civil freedoms; including ownership, privacy, sharing, what plants to grow, what seeds to use and cultivate and even the actual understanding the human body being and molecular living matter.^{viii} This is confirmed for me when one attempts to contain the content of collective databases such as dance, dialect, graffiti etc. and the impossible, ultimately reductive, even dangerous outcomes that occur when someone attempts to codify them as a system or re-appropriate them without permission of the particular sub-culture or clan^{ix}. This semiotic information is ephemeral and very often this elusiveness is the intention for various social and political reasons. Besides, this fact rings ultimately true when you come to realise this these craft knowledges evade the common modalities of Rationalist Logic. Nor are they privy to intellectual property laws as Phillipot states,

Human will, ingenuity and creativity can extract rare and precious elements from the basest and most unlikely ores, which is why censorship is doomed to fail, other than on a superficial level, unless every text and image is eliminated...The effects of reading texts and images are unpredictable, which is why today's rampant would-be censors are so pathetic (1991: 9).^x

If the internet is providing such a fertile platform for the rapid diffusion of all manners of transversely propagating memes, I also wonder what kinds of apparatus, operating systems and software are best for cultivating individual freedom, and human well being?^{xi} If a huge insurgency is happening *now* the type of people currently funding, developing, shaping the tools and ultimately controlling the information, archives, media and technologies of the future must be addressed.

I hope to open a pathway for a larger proposal that asks what are the ways in which a media designer can engineer interfaces including sets and settings for shared knowledge areas and experiential communication, that include and validate spaces for the circulation of subjugated knowledges outside the current context of a smear campaign or a corporate-consumer perspective. Here, I specifically refer to the term defined by Foucault, who explains that formal systemization is not necessarily the most viable route to take with information retrieval;

by subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on the one hand, I am referring to the *historical accounts that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence of formal systemisation*...On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledge's one should understand something else, *something's which in a sense is altogether different*. Namely, *a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task of*

insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledge's, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity (1980: 78-9).
[My Italics]

If we come to realise that formal systemisation is only allowing particular well sedimented histories, how then can libraries be designed, informed and changed by the inter-penetration of the specific semiotic action of anthroposemiosis?^{xii} Walter Benjamin reminds us about these proto-linguistic archival systems;

To read what was never written, such reading is the most ancient: reading before all languages, from the entrails, the start, or dances. Later the mediating link of a new kind of reading, of runes and hieroglyphs, came into use. It seems fair to suppose that these were the stages by which the mimetic gift, which was once the foundation of occult practices, gained admittance to writing and language. In this way language may be seen as the highest form of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of non-sensuous similarity...(1978: 336).

Many humans feel locked out of the time-honored structures and institutions created by the orthodox or are treated as suspicious if they attempt exist within them and in their own idiosyncratic manner not obeying the implied social rules and protocols. Here, I gesture towards the immersive, encoded language of the street: as a sight it is a symbol for poverty, the abject and human remainders of with no clear lineage, or father land, a textual centre which usually contains victims of habit, generally consisting of the poor, imperiled, terrified or the supposed dangerous.

It is here, in this nonetheless marginalised territory that it is not a matter of choosing to struggle, but it is the inevitability that here some people born out of the fold the establishment, are doomed to exist. I specifically point to human existence outside the peripheries of dominant culture where I find it important to acknowledge that there are other collective laws and regulating systems for example the laws of the street, that do not involve the police or the government in their affairs and deny its very existence. For instance the most tangible examples is the tattoo which is regarded as a part of a universal 'tattoo text' according to Plutser-Sarno who writes 'Any deception here is considered blasphemy, a violation of the true sacred language. The intimate corners of the human body are transformed into a forum for the 'pubic politics' of thieves (2003: 31)'. How can it once again become a common practice to look upon phenomena of the world including, leaves, human bodies, stones, spiders and graffiti as a part of the information landscape to be read as a system of signs. Or should I be considered

insane and unworthy of serious consideration if I listen to messages typical of utterances that emanate from an unknown source. A very simple instance of this is that if I see a spider inside the house it is a sign it is going to rain. I do not need to turn on the television or check the BBC weather forecast online nor the newspaper, if I know how to read the environment around me. I also take this moment to disarticulate the improvised graffiti database, from the contemporary mainstream stencil art branding.

In contrast, I believe, graffiti is a subliminal communication channel, these individual, autonomous acts are slowly evolving self-organizing fluid series of fragmented conversations where as the other is simply marking territory, drawing lines. As signs, they can be clues, symptoms, movements or omens of the nature of reality in the situation of the moment or the one I am to explore. Resonance's and voices from those who, usually from an inability to articulate their experience, reach the public domain diluted, manipulated and in many cases they have not yet reached us at all.^{xiii} Philipot elaborates upon the overdue deadlock in information mechanisms including classification;

Time marches on: a classification system designed in the nineteenth century...does not deal easily with...some of the norms of contemporary expression. Thus, purposeful exploration of a library structured in this way is not unlike trying to analyze the workings of the mind of a person living one hundred years ago (1991: 8).

Indeed to open out the confinement of disciplines upon the received genres and taxonomies would not only be helpful for the expansion of archives in the libraries but would also be helpful in every day situations and humanitarian border politics.

As the well-rehearsed story goes, since the era of print literacy we have forgotten the presence that comes from living in narrative relation and reciprocity with beings that perceptually surround us. I believe the task of the media designer is to renew that reciprocity, grounding our capacity for literate abstraction in more haptic and oral forms of experience; only then will the abstract intellect of our future libraries will find its real value.

How can we understand information systems as consciously designed public spheres that reflect the dynamism of social patterns and relationships. I propose if this human inter/tra subjectivity and embodiment is considered in a serious

manner by the information society then intellectual property laws are mooted. By truly considering all of these elements, what could this mean for the concrete practice of the way information is staged in the future?

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NOTES:

- i http://www.digitalartists handbook.org/?q=node/18#note_9 [cited 6th april 2009] Without going into ethical hardware, the argument for making ones own or recycle also off the shelf production has another more serious aspect. Are we so far from being materially productive to delegate the production of tools to another world? For more information: <http://www.nlcnet.org/article.php?id=613> [cited 6th april 2009]
- ii <http://www.mtschaefer.net/entry/bag-lady> [cited 6th april 2009]
- iii For the full dictionary term please go to <http://world-information.org/trd?trdid=S> [cited 6th april 2009]
- iv See Peter Matussek 'The Computer as Theater of Memory ' http://134.99.170.80/~pm/Pub/V_26.html#_ftn1
- v <http://www.mtschaefer.net/entry/bag-lady> [cited 6th april 2009]
- vi (The Satin Slipper) 'Le Soulier de satin' by Paul Claudel, Antoinette Weber-Cafilisch, Annales littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, n° 334, Les Belles Lettres, 1987.
- vii http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oracle_of_Delphi#Oracle
- viii A local example is when I went to the dentist and got my wisdom tooth taken out, I wanted to keep it, it had a strange curl like the bone like my curly hair and I was simply curious about it, but the dental institute would not let me keep it. A more broader example of how artists (especially in the USA) are vulnerable the PATRIOT Act which has made freedom of speech questionable is discussed. For instance in the ongoing debate about Critical Art Ensemble who by simply communicating corporeal experience in a performance installation settings, are persecuted to be involved Bio-terrorist acts. There are many discussions and articles about this event for instance see: http://www.furtherfield.org/displayreview.php?From=Index&review_id=102
- ix One example of the ultimate danger of such codification is in the ancient artform of Dance, where lived experience is diminished it speaks primarily of a certain kind of achievement and mastery, and other resonances, other meanings are excluded. An extreme example is how Rudolf Laban's work was expediently used by the Nazi regime for purposes other than the pedagogical function they had originally been established, the most immense scale was the choric performance in Olympic Youth at the 1936 Berlin Olympic's opening ceremony.
- x Here I would like to briefly mention 'The Poetics' by Aristotle. (Inevitably, there is a certain degree of conjecture from this existing fragmentary text from, 335 BC. The surviving text breaks off at a crucial point with the inescapable result that interpretation has become contentious. Either way there is no question that this is the first significant work of Western theatre theory that still exerts huge influence in audience expectations today both in theatre and television apparatuses. It seems in Greek tragedy the dramatic poets saw the world as an object that is both imminent and ungraspable which they attempted to harness in their work. To clarify, when 'The Poetics' was made accessible to the masses it gave new life to Western Theatre, so I am proposing that perhaps the Internet is as significant as this with its archival impulse which, we witness in the 'deep web'.
- xi As memes infuse themselves within a broader population, information that is shared, believed or recognised in the 'public sphere' is often severely distorted. For an account Social theorist Émile Durkheim's collective consciousness see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_consciousness, in juxtaposition to knowledge society http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_economy.
- xii Regarding this arduous term of anthroposemosis, I specifically use it because Augusto Ponzio (1999) states "We are now in the more specific sphere of anthroposemosis where being, understood as the human being, is not only a living being but also a historical-social being. This is where language comes into play (speech or verbal language being only one of its many expressions). Language implies that the human being is not only a semiotic being, like all living beings insofar as they communicate, but also a semiotic animal, one capable of semiotics, that is, of meta-semiosis, of reflection and thus of consciousness. Language is the characteristic prerogative of hominids, making their past and ongoing evolution possible; the evolution of the semiotic animal is, accordingly, not just biological evolution, but also historical-social evolution." Augusto Ponzio. Paper delivered at the 7th International Congress of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (I.A.S.S), Sign Processes in Complex Systems, Section: "Semiosis, Community, Sociality", Technische Universität, Dresden, October 6-11, 1999. <http://www.augustoponzio.com/communitariness.htm>
- xiii To give a prime example of another notion of more radical (or anachronistic) ways of accessing particular knowledge's is Yage (ahayesca), one of the most important medicine in the Putumayo. It comes from the forest and one might obtain insights and visions via initiation ceremonies and ritual events. However it is not my intention to lamenting for an imagined past since that is not my point. My point is here to mention a historical example given by Michael Taussig who writes about the 'subjugated' other histories that are not circulated in the public sphere, but only accessed by visions from the plants themselves and is carried on this way outside of print and mainstream media (the collective consciousness of dominant culture). For example he writes, "The Spanish threatened the Indians with the whip and that's how they carried those stones and set them in place...For my old Indian friend, at least there was no mystical secret of ancient Indian technology. To the contrary, the mysticism lay with the need the wider world has to monumentalize the pre-European, Indian, past. For him these glorified ruins were monuments to racism and the colonial authority to wield the whip. And in so far as his yage` inspired dream-image of the ruins was a curing image- as it most definitely is for the world at large- it is probably because of a deep seated complicity of his part with that authority, using rather than simply resisting it." (1998:42). Taussig, Michael. (1998) 'The Nervous System'. Routledge: NewYork