



People can approach each other from different directions.

If you're coming from the north, those coming from another direction—from the south, for example, or indeed from the east—appear at first as a small dot:

.

The closer you get to one another, the more you can see of the other person:

O

At some point, you can see each other properly.
And provided you've seen one another before, there's a moment of recognition:

O O

..

- (HELLO)

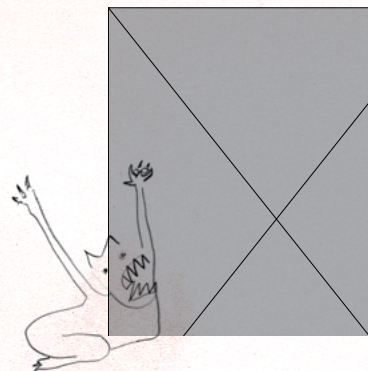
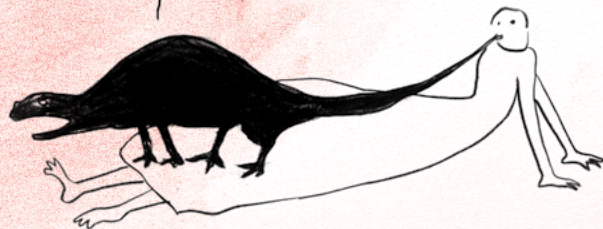
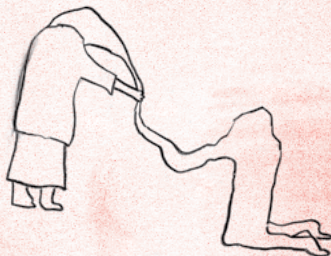
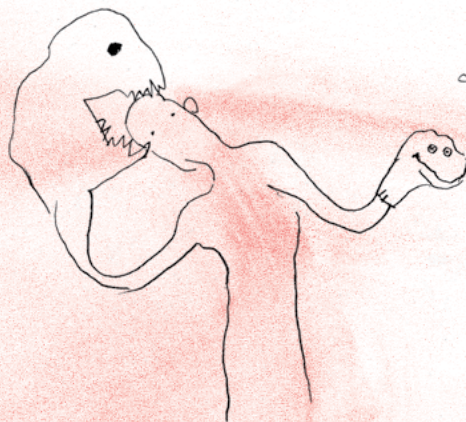
When four different people meet, it might look like this
from a distance:

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Once they've recognized each other and are standing together in a group, people usually start talking to one another.

Apart from the language of words, there are also other ways of communicating, other forms of exchange:





The Trip

At the end of the day, no one could say why we started at Bellevue and then later found ourselves on the mountain. The idea was to be somewhere at 6 o'clock in the morning when it was still dark, to have a coffee and eat a roll as all around people slowly streamed forth on their way to work. We observed that people don't rush around in the morning. They tend to move rather statically.

Then we climbed the mountain at first light.

Once there, we flew a lightweight kite, and its presence in the sky, which motivated and soothed us, was something we took for granted. We rescued the kite from a tree, as our legs turned to jelly.

When you're going up a mountain, your thoughts move differently than they do when you're sitting down. That much is clear. That day, our thinking was more gentle than usual. It reveled in the fresh air, the expansive view, and the acres of space above our heads.

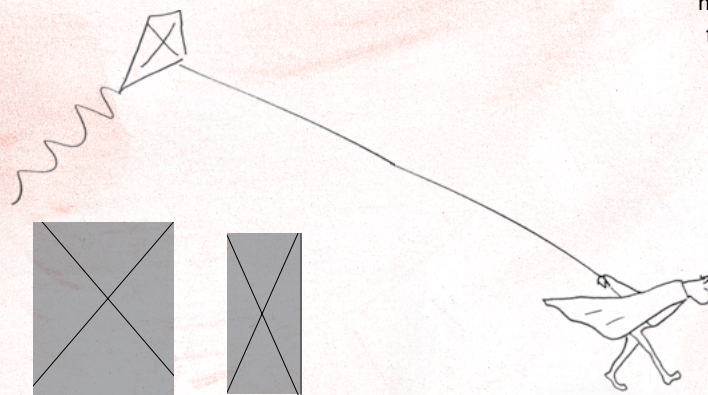
Our thoughts revolved around the definition of experts. The birds in the sky. Then fire. Then food. Then the possible outline of a poetics.

It is easier to be aware of what you say when you're moving. Uttered in a real setting, the words become embodied, they have a taste and smell. And the order they are spoken in becomes as cogent as the description of a route. There is nothing new about this insight; orators in ancient times used it as a mnemonic technique. But that doesn't matter. What's important is, we're obviously going the right way.

We let our thoughts fly next to the kite. We received an image, a color, a tang of the words that were spoken. Like, talking about the radical nature of the language I use in my second novel now smells like smoke to me. We sat by the fire, and I cut my finger with my Swiss army knife: that makes sense. Like, thinking about chimeras now smells like fondue.

Like, thinking of the experts and their headgear now takes on the color of the morning sky as the day dawns on the mountain. Kites soar in the mind.

At the end of the day, our legs were still a bit tender, just like our thoughts.



We put together the discoveries we'd made over coffee and cake. A child was asleep on its father's lap and people from other countries had come to Switzerland and to the Uetliberg mountain to eat melted cheese.



The "Trip" format also involves getting closer to people as you dip into their ways of thinking. The communal experience facilitates this process of give and take (the act of sharing, in other words). It's also easier to understand someone when you know how they drink their coffee, how they climb a mountain, how

Within the "Trip" format, thoughts can take on a new consistency. Things they react when they come is about enriching what we you experience together are across a deer in the forest. experience—the source of better for sharing. It's easier to All these things make com- our ideas and the wellspring distil a thought in the mind if it munication easier. And within of art—while at the same time has a smell and a relationship that, it relieves the language of discovering, sharing, and or- words of its weight. ganizing.

The Journey



A *Journey* is a big trip.
It can presumably incorporate everything the *Trip* can, but it makes some things easier. Like forgetting you'd booked yourself on it. And maybe forgetting where you

And orientation.

Or on showing each other how to deal with stuff that's unexpected. Or on bringing your own state of mind into line with other people's.

The focus of the *Journey* is on intensity perhaps.

Maybe we'll find
Maybe we'll find
Maybe we'll find
Maybe we'll find
Maybe we won't be looking for anything

chimera in Turkey.
a way of archiving things in St. Gallen.
a character for the novel in Darmstadt.
a Caribbean wind on Lake Walen.



at all, maybe someone will find something else entirely, something unexpected.



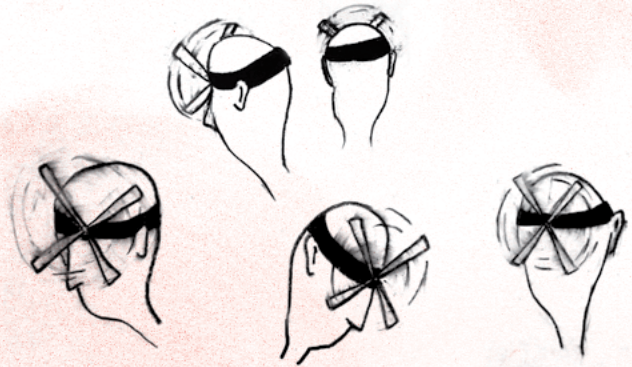
Putting Each Other to Work

Tell me what I'm supposed to do. Tell me what I can do for you. Tell me how I can help. Tell me where you've hit a brick wall, where you've got bogged down. Tell me what skills of mine you could use right now. I'd be happy to work a whole day for you. And I'm very happy that you'd like to do the same for me another day. Oh, what shall I ask you to do? Putting yourself at someone else's service for a day. Setting aside your own authorship for a day, not having to bear the torment of choice and of making aesthetic decisions but just being of assistance. And then on a different day allocating your own work to the other person. Taking on responsibility for them, being aware of their skills, giving them free play, and introducing them to your own artistic practice.

In each case we're part of the other person's work. And if I take on the form of a chimera for you, it's one you'd never have made, and maybe I fashion a being that can speak with you.

We partake of each other's work when we describe the circling of the wind for you—you, who have accompanied the wind for all this time, or the wind has accompanied you.

We partake of each other's work when we are men in this world and try to describe to a woman writer what it is to have to be male in this society, based on the way different men walk in their swimming trunks.



Meeting in the Studio

If we want what is to happen to happen more in our heads and to be more precisely gauged and to manifest in the smell and taste and consistency we desire, then we meet in a studio. Usually in Michael's studio, because it's Zurich and warm and there are planes back there in the window as a quiet distraction, and maybe even a view of the Alps too. And we're so far up the building that the distance from the window ledge down to Julia, who has just left, allows enough space to fly three to seven loops at least. Depending on the wind and weather conditions and the version of paper plane.

When we know which path we want to take, then we meet in the studio. When we need to talk about all the rather dry stuff, which is also important because it creates a framework in which we can let ourselves go and drop down into other winds and existences and consistencies.

Things we might discuss:

Meeting in the Studio is not to be confused with *Putting Each Other to Work*, which can happen in the individual studios too.



The Guest

A stranger's coming today from far away. There's the excitement of getting ready, preparing the place you want to meet in.

Making the food, clearing a table,
getting hold of a projector or sound system.

Inviting the people you're close to, the people you want to have there with you to greet the guest.

Then

she's there, and she shows us what she's brought with her.

She speaks and we listen, we ask questions.

What does her work have
to do with ours?

And who do we want to invite *next time?*

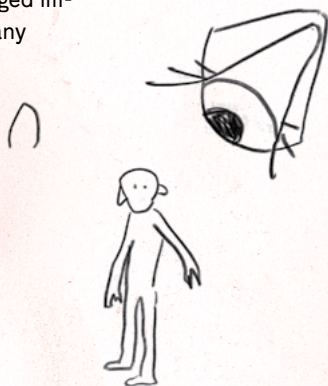


Zooming

At home At home in the studio, on your own. In the place where you usually work. In these viral times of virus, the linkup can only happen virtually. Videoconferencing. I can hear you, you can see me, but we can't smell each other. And then we get to work. I read out a new text that's still so fresh I don't want to hear any reactions to it. But I read it out loud. Actually, I do this with myself sometimes, but now I know there are three other people listening. A written and spoken text becomes one that's listened to. That triggers a lot by itself.

And then at the end, the others show me their drawings, the images they've found, the notes they've made—what they were doing when I was reading out my text. And there are resonances that don't make any logical sense, but which prompt a sense of cheerful bewilderment. And I take that cheeriness with me into the next day.

Out and about It's May 5. Three of us walking and one sitting in a boat. Lake Biel. Zurich North. Zurich South. Cologne. Seagulls flying low just above the water. Ida (Nadine's child) doesn't step on the lines on the sidewalk, between the paving stones, and if she does, the rules are changed immediately. I don't step on any lines either, and if I do, I'm not bothered. Spruce trees. Langstrasse, pretty much deserted, containers full of suits. Grayish water, and further off in the distance, St. Peter's Island. Places and paths overlap. Voices overlap. Winds overlap. Feelings



overlap. Feet walking one step at a time. "No wind," Florian shouts. "No wind, and I'm all alone in this little boat, and around me there's just water and the sound of your voices—so close to me, almost inside my head."

Me, who always wants to get inside everyone's head. "A writer," says Florian. And Michael wanders off, heading north-east. In good heart. We lose contact for a while in an underpass. Every time we lose contact with Michael, an outsize head of garlic appears in ZOOM. Ida doesn't chase the geese, though Nadine tells her it's no problem, she should chase them—geese are good to chase.

"No wind," shouts Florian. "You've got all that gorgeous weather in Cologne," he yells. "Here, there's not a breath of wind and no weather either. I'm just bobbing around pointlessly here," he hollers. His hair is the color of the lake. The lake and Florian overlap.

Michael, meanwhile, is in a cemetery and seems content. Behind the hedge, there's a dwarf leaping from roof to roof, and a general delight about the fact that we humans have fingers we can use to hold a phone and do other amazing things, just because we have ten fingers.

The dwarf, who we're not entirely sure actually exists.

"A spruce," calls out Michael.

"A wind," yells Florian.

"A stupid dad with a cargo bike," shouts Nadine. He joins us in the picture.

"Coffee," I yell, and there's the seventh fountain just ahead of me.

Florian disappears, the battery's empty.

Then I disappear.

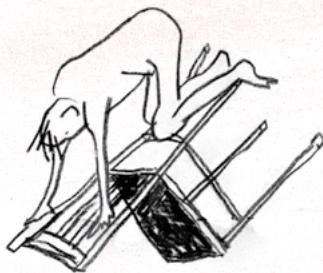
Gift-Giving



Cooking

When you, your lentils in the water, and me, the onion for you.
When we talk about the red wine, and also what's inside your head.
When your ideas then taste of red wine,
lentils, and onions.
And we find stones in the olives and something else in the warmth
of the kitchen, maybe even something more. An answer to the
tiniest questions.

And you speak.
And my thoughts are in motion.
They change their state of aggregation.
What emerges when we talk about headgear
while we're peeling potatoes?
What happens when a warrior
triumphs in my head while I'm washing
the pots?
What does it mean
if I think of chimeras while
I'm sprinkling saffron?
What happens when a warrior triumphs in my head while I'm wash-
ing the pots?



And in the end we are rewarded.

Talking

There's still the question of how the mushroom I've been looking for on the slope changes my words, the content, the meaning, the sense. If I need to shout because someone's standing way down the slope who's also looking for the mushroom.

"Bolete,"

we call.

And it echoes back, and the river is loud.

"Bolete,"

we call.

"And the art too that I need to do."

We call.

"What?"

We shout.

"What do you need to do?"

"Art."

"And the bolete?"

We shout.



The words that are balloons.

Or stones that are thrown.

And smell of roses.

The words that stick in the throat.

The words that are hot potatoes and fall to the ground.

Talking as the most conventional way of communicating.
We sit around a table. And drink tea.

"I love eating nuts,"
says Julia.

Florian says:
"Reference books that are reissued.
And updated by people and
their ideas, the process of change,
and new knowledge."

HannaH says:
"if you enter a room,
you find yourself
in this room."

"A commingling
of art and life,"
says Tanja..

"Parts for sharing
are like eyeglasses for me,"
says Michael .

Social
lubricants, says
Florian.

Esther says:
It's an endless fount.

No one can ask
us to produce connections so
long as they can be avoided.

You just
need to drink
some coffee, says
Michael.

Michael says:
Now I'll never need to
explain to them again how to
print a horse.

Nadine says:
Maybe we actually
ended up understanding
something.





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