

Alejandro Jodorowsky's Therapeutic Dreamscape. Blending History, Memory, and Symbolism in *The Dance of Reality*

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Abstract. After an absence of more than two decades, the octogenarian cult-movie auteur Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo* and *La montaña sagrada*) is back with a surreal cinematic memoir, *The Dance of Reality* (*La danza de la realidad*, 2013), a funny and bizarre feature that challenges categorization. Set in the 1930s, in the small coastal Chilean village of Tocopilla, *The Dance of Reality* is an eccentric autobiographical meditation on his painful childhood, in which the filmmaker himself takes on the role of both the narrator and the onscreen guide to his younger self: “For you, I do not yet exist. For me, you don’t exist anymore,” Jodorowsky whispers to the boy at some point. In this family memoir, the filmmaker’s shamanic presence follows his non-cinematic pursuits, namely psychomagic, a therapeutic method in which the principal weapon is his imagination. Using this idea as a point of departure, I will analyse the mode in which Jodorowsky uses the grammar of narrative cinema and a hyperbolic visual style to create a poetry of voices and characters who act as metaphors, suggesting or emphasizing some ambiguously conveyed mystical idea.

The key element of my study focuses on Jodorowsky’s cinematic poetry and on the filmmaker’s mode of filtering history, memory, subjectivity and magical realism, adding a critical dimension to our understanding of the politics and poetics of self-representation. *The Dance of Reality* is Jodorowsky’s most personal work to date, intentionally blurring the lines between past and present into oblivion, and consequently finding salvation through art.

Keywords: culture and identity; film memoir; cinematographic representation; autobiographical discourse; cinematic poetry.

“[R]eality is the progressive transformation of dreams; there
is no world but the world of dreams” (Alejandro Jodorowsky,
Where the Bird Sings Best)

Introducing a compelling mixture of European art-like theatrics in combination with Oriental philosophy and Jungian tokens, as well as esoteric traditions and enthralling depravity, the films of Alejandro Jodorowsky (b. 1929) have inspired over the decades an enthusiastic audience, equally scandalized and seduced by his shamanic presence and personal mythology. “He appears to have always been looking for guru figures,” Michael Richardson explains, “and to regard himself as one” (2006, 136). The young man from Chile, who in the early 1950s moved to Paris as a mime artist and theatre director, would soon become one of the most controversial figures in cinema, both in relation to the Surrealist Group, and for a broader history of film criticism. The filmmaker is considered today the initiator of the “midnight movie” movement, consequently establishing a cult reputation. His cinematic aesthetic can be described using terms such as “unsettling,” “grotesque,” and “psychedelic,” blending surrealist imagery with extreme violence, and yet, however self-centred and inwardly focused his vision might have been, “autobiographical” was never a characteristic of Jodorowsky’s films. Nevertheless, in 2013, Jodorowsky ended a twenty-three-year absence from the movie scene with *La danza de la realidad* (*The Dance of Reality*), a trippy but heart-warming reimagining of his unhappy childhood in 1930s Chile: “The meaning of something in a child’s consciousness changes when we pass on to the adult level of consciousness. In memory, as in dreams, we can amalgamate different images” (Jodorowsky 2014, 262). The octogenarian Jodorowsky revisits his childhood, finally finding the words to translate the things that were – “in a child’s consciousness” – “openings into other planes of reality” (Jodorowsky 2014, 24). It should be noted that the events depicted in the film “took place over a period of ten years. My relating them all together may make it seem as if my childhood was full of bizarre events, but this was not the case. These were small oases in an infinite desert” (Jodorowsky 2014, 24).

The Dance of Reality is a film adaptation of the first two chapters of his 2001 hallucinatory autobiography, *La danza de la realidad. Psicomagia y psicochamanismo*, translated into English in 2014, after the film premiered at Cannes Film Festival in 2013. Both the autobiographical text and its cinematographic representation reflect Jodorowsky’s world views, philosophy, psychology and fantasy, according to which reality is not objective but rather a “dance” created by our own imagination:

The past is not immovable; it is possible to change it, enrich it, strip it of trouble, give it joy. It is evident that memory has the same quality as dreams. The memory consists of images as immaterial as dreams. Whenever we remember we recreate, giving a different interpretation to the events remembered. The facts can be analyzed from multiple points of view. (Jodorowsky 2014, 262)

The mechanisms of memory are not constant nor invariant, and Jodorowsky genuinely embraced the impossibility of re-experiencing earlier and discontinuous states of selfhood.

In the study at hand I employ, as point of departure, the theory of adaptation – the translation from the literary to the filmic (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 2013) – to question whether the autobiographical “I” survives Jodorowsky's use of the cinematic medium and his hyperbolic visual style, and if indeed there is – as Bruss suggests – “no ‘eye’ for the ‘I’” (1980, 298). I hope to show that it is possible to characterize and exhibit selfhood through film, and that *The Dance of Reality* succeeds as both an expression of the autobiographer's personal vision, and a representation, albeit mystical, of that person. In the pages that follow I shall analyse how, in writing and in filming *The Dance of Reality*, the Chilean director is “living autobiographically” through the language of art. First of all, I focus on transference – in his attempt to re-create the first person narrator, Jodorowsky uses voice-over and appears “in person” in film, along the actor portraying his younger self. Secondly, through the auto/biographical demand, he must speak to and for the dead, trying to challenge an irresolvable dilemma, in which “demands of autobiography (to tell my story) and the demands of biography (to tell your story) coincide” (Gilmore 2001, 72).

But it is premature to speak of his autobiographical project, until I have offered the reader a brief look into Alejandro Jodorowsky's filmography. His first full-length feature, the surrealist fable *Fando y Lis*, incited riots during the film's 1968 premiere, challenging viewers with its shocking imagery, and eventually being banned from the movie theatres in Mexico. Jodorowsky then entered the wild weird west in 1970, with *El Topo*, a film drenched in blood, symbolism and philosophical posturing. In 1973, the filmmaker released his astonishing occult ode to sex, drugs, mysticism, and mostly anti-everything, *La montaña sagrada*. Both are considered foundational works in establishing the alternative midnight movie circuit (Olsen and Jodorowsky 2014), with their eye-catching visual style and allegorical storytelling. Following his ill-fated attempt to adapt Frank Herbert's sci-fi epic *Dune* for the big screen and a disastrous return with the 1980's *Tusk*, Jodorowsky was persuaded to get behind the camera, lured by the promise of creative control by producer Claudio Argento for the masterful Mexican horror parable, *Santa Sangre*. But his artistry was subdued once more in the film that followed, *The Rainbow Thief* (1990), which Jodorowsky has since disowned, hating working with the actors Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif, judging their chemistry on set and on screen as “[t]here is no poetry there” (Père and Jodorowsky 2013). Still, truth is always obscured when it comes to the details of Jodorowsky's life (Harrod 2015). He claims, for example, that the first thing he did after he got off the train in Paris, at two o'clock in the morning, was to visit André Breton, whose address and telephone number he knew by heart, demanding to see

him: “I’m Alejandro Jodorowsky and I come from Chile to save surrealism” but the writer, naturally, refused to meet him (Jodorowsky 2014, 184–185). Along the years, he has published countless comics and other books on tarot, philosophy and religion, held a number of art exhibitions, has been involved in theatre, and has given lectures on a form of therapy he calls “psychomagic.” Jodorowsky’s list of unfinished projects is just as captivating as his completed works. Critics will recognize many motifs that have recurred throughout Jodorowsky’s writing and filmmaking: “If you know *The Dance of Reality*, you will better understand my other pictures” (Nastasi and Jodorowsky 2014).

Perhaps this is why it took reviewing the making of *Dune* – one of the greatest movies never made – subject of the touching 2013 documentary, *Jodorowsky’s Dune* (dir. Frank Pavich), and a reunion with French producer Michel Seydoux to inspire him to pick up the camera once more. For this reason alone, his comeback turned out to be Jodorowsky’s greatest act of psychomagic – a fusion of therapeutic and symbolic actions intended to heal psychological wounds. *The Dance of Reality* was a true family affair, Jodorowsky is known to work with non-professionals, his sons have acted in his movies from a very young age (here, Brontis Jodorowsky is a real force to witness as he plays his own grandfather, Cristóbal Jodorowsky plays the mysterious Theosophist who introduces young Jodorowsky to the spirit of tolerance and love in religion, while Adan Jodorowsky, besides having an episodic role in the film, also created its hauntingly beautiful score); Jeremías Herskovits, the child portraying young Alejandro, is evidently not an actor, whereas Pamela Flore, playing his mother, is in reality a professional opera singer. The additional cast consists of other gender-bending actors, circus performers, limbless mine workers, as well as local people.

Living Autobiographically: The Convergence of Selves in Writing and Film

When asked how much of this film is autobiographical, Jodorowsky answered:

Everything in the film is true, but it’s explained with the language of art. It’s about a child who’s thinking, but at the same time it’s an old person who’s guiding, so it’s a mix. But both characters are me. And it’s all true. Even the place is true: I went back to the real town where I grew up. The town was exactly the same, because it’s a dead town. Everything was the same – except for my house, which had burned down. So I reconstructed that. And I give it to the town. It’s for the tourists now. It’s there. (Ebiri and Jodorowsky 2014)

The real, “dead town” Tocopilla is the birthplace of the characters who reappear throughout Jodorowsky's films – the circus performers, the crippled beggars, the blatant transvestites, and the cunning thieves are in truth the misfits of his youth. “The workers in my village were in misery, mutilated in the mines from dynamite” (Nastasi and Jodorowsky 2014), he reflects with sadness in an interview. “They lost their arms and legs and were treated like dogs. They drank alcohol meant for lamps while hiding in the backs of ships. I saw them. Every day. That is life. They are in the picture” (Nastasi and Jodorowsky 2014). In the way that the film echoes, “all things are connected in a web of suffering and pleasure” (Nastasi and Jodorowsky 2014).

If the first part of the movie is an adaptation of the first two chapters of his psychomagical autobiography, *The Dance of Reality: A Psychomagical Autobiography*, the tale shifts from his younger self to his father for a better part of the second half of the picture, inspired from another book, *El Niño del Jueves Negro*, in which he imagines that his father set out to kill president Carlos Ibáñez del Campo. This part is by all means imaginary. His father wanted to do it but he never carried out his plan. Jodorowsky Senior is here propelled through a Christ-like transformation. Likewise, his mother wanted to be an opera singer but, in truth, she never was. “In the film, I realize my parents' dreams and I realize my own dream of bringing them together again and creating a family” (Père and Jodorowsky 2013).

In reading and watching *The Dance of Reality*, I focused on the way Jodorowsky structures his narrative task as a combination of autobiography, biography, family history and myth. No longer positioned to tell simply “my” story, this “I” must struggle to organize, even contain his father's figure within the narrative, in addition to portraying his past and present selves – the “child who's thinking” and the “old person who's guiding.” A poignant episode in the book, masterfully translated onto the screen, is a tremendous illustration of how the past becomes present and beckons and secures the way to self-knowledge:

[I]n front of me, next to the bed, my imagination brought forth the apparition of an elderly gentleman with silver beard and hair, his eyes full of tenderness. It was myself, changed into my older brother, my father, my grandfather, my master. “Do not worry so. I have accompanied you and I always will. Every time you suffered, believing yourself to be alone, I was with you.” (Jodorowsky 2014, 27)

Here, Jodorowsky the writer is playing an identity game, placing himself further apart from the rule-governed autobiographical discourse. Its structure is that of an extended self, “stretching across time, and it is this temporal structure, apparently sustained by memory, which supplies the armature for the meaning of experience,

the content of a ‘life,’ of an ‘existence’” (Eakin 2008, 47). In the film, the scene displays as follows: the silver haired elderly gentleman, the director himself, embraces his younger self (Herskovits), alone in his bed, afraid in the dark, a metaphor for his future unknown self/selves and his yet unexplored life story.

However, Bruss suggests that

the unity of subjectivity and subject matter – the implied identity of author, narrator, and protagonist on which classical autobiography depends – seems to be shattered by film; the autobiographical self de-composes, schisms, into almost mutually exclusive elements of the person filmed (entirely visible; recorded and projected) and the person filming (entirely hidden; behind the camera eye). (1980, 297)

Jodorowsky is undoubtedly the creator of the film – or rather its author – controlling most of the filming and editing process, putting “nothing between camera and what is being filmed,” always careful not to make unnecessary camera movements, getting rid of all the “equipment and paraphernalia that normally clutters up shoots, stripping it” (Père and Jodorowsky 2013). This would address Bruss’s objection to the director appearing “in person” in film, creating a “flash of vertigo, an eerie instant when ‘no one is in charge’” (1980, 309). “This film represents a technical prowess,” Jodorowsky explains in his interview with Père, “because it was made in a very original way” (2013). The viewer does not perceive his disappearance from behind the camera – the “eye”, the person seeing – as alarming when he passes into view, giving his whole person over to “the side of the object” – the “I”, the person seen. The movement seems genuine, by means of preserving somehow the properties of classical autobiography.

What is more, the voice-over accompanying the events and images mimics the first-person narrator in the autobiographical text, and the cinematic subject seems much less shrouded in mystery than the speaking subject, thus recovering “identity-value” in film (Bruss 1980, 307). What strikes us as a genuine personal reminiscence is the fact that, in narrating his childhood, everything is manifested from the boy’s point of view. Furthermore, in regard to the autobiographical protagonist, “both characters are me,” Jodorowsky explains (Ebiri and Jodorowsky 2014). There is no denying that his old self is Jodorowsky the writer, director and – on top of that – a character in the film. The question Bruss asks, though, is as follows: “Does the figure on screen look like the artist as a young man or only behave like him?” (1980, 302). As to whether Jeremías Herskovits’s appearance on screen resembles or not that of his younger authentic self, Jodorowsky seems to have cynically solved this tension, in the book, prior even to filming *The Dance of Reality*: “I gathered all my photographs and watched them turn to ashes on those pieces of carbon lit up like rubies. Now no one would ever be able to

identify me with the images of what I had ceased to be" (2014, 56). The "child who's thinking" is pressed into the present through the film, the lost photographs are metaphorically brought to life by the continuous series of moving pictures. There can be no question whether Jeremías Herskovits resembles Jodorowsky as a boy, but he is the one that the director chose to impersonate his younger self, and we must accept it as a given within the autobiographical project.

Even though certain events the film depicts are entirely fictitious, a cinematic, albeit therapeutic, representation of his internal monologues, some episodes stand out as perfect examples of Jodorowsky's eccentricity of style and use of hyperbole. When the tall, silver-haired Jodorowsky steps in front of the camera, each time cradling the tearful younger Alejandro and consoling him – at one point even preventing him from committing suicide "Stop! Don't jump! You are not alone. You are with me" (*The Dance of Reality* 2014), the director is further heightening the meta-reality. While both of them sitting on the scorching cliffs of Tocopilla, Jodorowsky acts as a spiritual guide, and the installation of this guru figure – through its symbolism – at the threshold of knowledge about family, self, suffering and love testifies to its intimacy no less than its pervasiveness:

"Everything you are going to be, you already are," the Old Jodorowsky whispers. "What you are looking for is already within you. Rejoice in your sufferings, for through them, you will reach me. [...] For you I do not exist yet. For me you do not exist anymore. At the end of time, when all matter returns to its origin, you and I will have only been memories – never reality. Something is dreaming us. Give yourself to the illusion. Live!" (*The Dance of Reality* 2014)

In the manner that Jean Starobinski proclaims in *The Style of Autobiography*, "it is because the past 'I' is different from the present 'I' that the latter may really be confirmed in all his prerogatives" (1980, 78), in this spiritual experiment, the elder Jodorowsky masters his anxiety by submitting to it, hoping to anchor his shifting identities through time, while the child follows unceasingly the call of his own being.

Authoring Childhood: The Road to Self-healing and Redemption

When moving to Europe, Jodorowsky not only left behind his homeland and family, but he also shed his identity, the Alejandro he had been born as, and went on as a new self-created individual:

It was a form of suicide for me to disappear. To rid myself of emotional knots, to stop being someone born of painful roots, to change myself into someone else, a virgin ego, permitting me – by being my own mother and my own father – to eventually become what I wanted to be and not what family, society, and my country imposed on me. (Jodorowsky 2014, 184)

His new path was one of dreaming and becoming that dream. Through going back to Chile to film *The Dance of Reality*, Jodorowsky reconciles with this naïve innocent child-self. The adult Jodorowsky brings the little boy back to life, empowering him to tell the story through the cinematic medium. This “suicidal” act of disappearance is symbolically represented in the final scenes of *The Dance of Reality*: on the seaside pier, the young Alejandro passes by washed-out cardboard props – held by hidden figures dressed in black – portraying characters from the film, as he heads towards the tugboat leaving Tocopilla; in the next cut, the adult Jodorowsky is caringly holding his younger self, and behind them, in the purple-painted boat, there is a skeleton figure (a man garbed in a store-bought costume), implying the inescapable death of his previous self; in the closing image, the old Jodorowsky and the skeleton figure are alone in the tugboat, disappearing into the horizon. Where the child character is a fictional construct, the adult self is a cultural construct, and stands as a representation of the artist’s point of view, using the optical language of film to create a mirror image of his creative personality, the film thus being a powerful tool for self-healing and self-realization (Douglas 2010, 67).

The story of the filmmaker’s boyhood and who Alejandro Jodorowsky is today, cult-movie auteur, writer, performer, and “psycho-magician,” emerges in relation to this mosaic of the family, villagers, firefighters, cripples, and beggars, – dictators, anarchists and fascists even –, as the autobiographical film goes beyond the history of the family by turning to fiction and magic realism. Jodorowsky’s cinematic poetry casts doubt on the traditional representation of childhood and challenges the identities that are available for articulating childhood experiences in favour of constructing a relationship between the autobiographical child and the adult self onto the screen (Douglas 2010, 68–69). The adult autobiographer reconstructs his previous self, bringing the child back to life in this re-discovered boyhood, where the image of child self and the family relies mostly on Jodorowsky’s dreams, memories and ideas – the little pieces of reality are shaped into poignant inner pictures or, to use Mitchell’s typology, “mental images” (1986, 10). The unstable, shifting nature of his memories is reflected by the dream-like logic of most of the events portrayed in this overtly therapeutic film. They serve as rituals in overcoming psychological trauma. For this reason, despite having written the autobiographical volume, in itself a therapeutic endeavour, Jodorowsky felt the need to act out, to personally materialize his re-constructed version of the

childhood lived in the remote Chilean fishing town of Tocopilla, to completely redeem his past self through psychomagic or “shamanic psychotherapy.” This suggests that Jodorowsky’s representation of reality is unconsciously endowed with archetypal, symbolic or mystic meanings and attitudes, consequently being a creator and an observer of his autobiography (Douglas 2010, 79).

There Will Always Be a Father: The Auto/biographical Demand

In constructing his personal identity, Jodorowsky must also speak to and for the dead: “My memory is not only my own; it also forms part of the cosmic memory. And somewhere in that memory, the dead continue to live” (Jodorowsky 2014, 223). His task is structured through what Leigh Gilmore calls auto/biographical demand, which “entails an irresolvable narrative dilemma because it both divides and doubles the writing subject with respect to the task (whose story is this? mine? ours? how can I tell them all?)” (2001, 72).

Alejandro’s father, Jaime (played by Brontis, the director’s son), a Jewish immigrant from Ukraine, is a communist who has a picture of Stalin, whom he worships, hanging in his store. At the time, the right-wing dictator Carlos Ibáñez is bringing together opponents, while Stalin is starving peasants in the Jodorowskys’ native land. On the home front, Jaime is a macho disciplinarian who subjects his son to a series of punitive and capricious tests, including a dental extraction without anaesthetic, hoping to make a man out of him. Before the movie ends, his mother Sara (played by Pamela Flores) tells him: “You found in Ibáñez everything you admired in Stalin. You are the same as they are! You have lived in the guise of a tyrant” (*The Dance of Reality* 2014). The three-way resemblance among these moustachioed tyrants, political and domestic, is scarcely accidental. That is why, the burning of the three portraits – of Stalin, of Ibáñez, and of Jaime himself – towards the end of the film, is not only symbolic, but also necessary for his father’s transformative and purifying experience.

But the sensibility governing this film is as entirely and unmistakably Alejandro Jodorowsky’s as the experiences – dreamed and lived – that feed it. It is as much his father’s tale as his own, and though it is unsparing in its depiction of Jaime’s cruelty, vanity and cowardice, it is also profoundly compassionate, then implicitly political in its fury, undimmed by the passage of years, at the violence inflicted by the powerful on the weak. Jaime is a bully to his son and wife, but circumstances conspire to teach him a lesson. “The limit, then, between autobiography and biography,” Gilmore writes, “is stalked by the impossible stories of trauma, love, and family” (2001, 77). After Jaime leaves home on an

ill-fated mission to assassinate president Ibáñez, he suffers a series of physical and spiritual torments that both break and redeem him, which give the movie extraordinary moral force and emotional power.

The film offers Jodorowsky the opportunity to experiment artistically: the boy's mother communicates by singing, the actress portraying Sara Jodorowsky delivering her every line in an operatic voice, a peculiarity that becomes more and more comical as the story unfolds, especially in the sadder moments. The relationship between child and mother is no less difficult than the one he has with his father. Sara denies him her maternal love after Jaime drags the terrified boy to have his flowing blond curls cut off, and constantly confuses poor Alejandro by alternating chilly indifference with mild erotic provocation.

The Dance of Reality illustrates the extent to which autobiography and biography transpire through the demands the dead place on the living, as well as the ambivalence of speaking to and for them. "The dead stalk the unconscious," Gilmore remarks, "and wait for any opportunity to appear: dreams, current relationships, the writing with this book. They make demands on him, and he issues them pleas" (2001, 72–73). Jodorowsky at the outset wanted to understand his father, in the sense that *The Dance of Reality* has both this tyrant father and a loving father in his representation of the past, and this is the very line between his story and their story. There are many ways to tell the story of the father, and eventually acquire knowledge of one's self and the fact that life in all its complexity can be simultaneously gruelling and giving, making it not an enigma to understand but rather a moment to savour, for it is all but an illusion we should whole-heartedly give ourselves to. I would like to make reference once again to the "Give yourself to the illusion" highly poetic moment in the film, as an example.

Distilled through the filter of Jodorowsky's own stylistic and lyrical predilections, the writer and director allows his father a fictional opportunity to find himself. This is particularly evident in the second half of the film, which is irrational in the broad strokes (Jodorowsky has publicly disclosed that his father had not even attempted to kill Ibáñez), but which is nevertheless a powerful and deeply felt endeavour by an artist to become reconciled to his complicated relationship with the father figure, whom he undoubtedly hated and loved in equal measure. As Jacques-Alain Miller writes in his essay, "The Analytic Experience," one "would rather love than know, and it is the value of transference as obstacle: love, instead of knowledge [...] There is no desire to know. It is love, not desire to know, that is directed toward knowledge" (1991, 91). In trying to understand his inflexible, difficult father, Jodorowsky gains self-knowledge and a better understanding about selfhood. In bringing his father onto the screen and having Brontis interpret him, Jodorowsky cements his relationship with his own son, showing that the therapeutic dreamscape goes beyond the medium of cinematography.

The Dance of Reality is a quasi-autobiography enriched by Jodorowsky's humour and exuberance, his trust of the imagination and sense of hyperbole. His first impulse is to entertain, here he is foremost a comical storyteller, and a spiritual guru second. The film has something that both *El Topo* and *La montaña sagrada* lacked: the graceful harmony of fairy tales. One of the most impressive elements of Jodorowsky's autobiographic project is certainly the raw, unapologetic manner in which he communicates his ideas and emotions, without getting caught up in just usually eccentric techniques and style, such as outrageous, surreal imagery, and colourful, yet cathartic violence, which even today make it easy to see how *El Topo* managed to establish its cult reputation. Since his earlier cinematic endeavours borrowed themes and structures from different movie genres – the western for *El Topo*, the quest for enlightenment for *La montaña sagrada*, the psychological thriller for *Santa Sangre* –, *The Dance of Reality* makes no exception and draws on the language of “shamanic psychotherapy,” a form of therapy, derivative from tarot-card reading, which he calls “psychomagic.”

There might be critics and theorists who will find it difficult to accept Jodorowsky's version of reality: “I realized that so-called ‘reality’ was a mental construct. Was it a total illusion? This was impossible to know, but quite clearly I never perceived what was real in me in its entirety” (Jodorowsky 2014, 70). His self-styled “perpetual dance of reality” is a poetic act: “What is the definition of a poetic act? It should be beautiful, imbued with a dreamlike quality, should be above any justification, and should create another reality within the very heart of ordinary reality. It should allow for transcendence to another plane. It should open the door to a new dimension, achieving a purifying courage” (Jodorowsky 2014, 139). So for Jodorowsky, this dance of reality goes on: “If I die, it [*The Dance of Reality*] is my testament, if I don't die, it is my comeback,” he confesses, “I see it as the beginning of something” (Olsen and Jodorowsky 2014).

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