

Corpus Phylaca

Corpus Phylaca means Body Prison. I came up with this name for my production company when my first film, *Fire*, was almost finished. The name refers to the content of the film. Sketching the Indian society, “body prison” refers to the role man and woman are bound to play in life, especially in the very traditional Indian society. Because I chose *Corpus Phylaca* as the name for my production company, every film I produced under that name seems to be linked to this idea of “body prison”. It seems to become a symbol for the entire project. This is maybe somewhat strange because, as I will explain below, I try to enhance as much openness and freedom in my work as well. How these two – prison and freedom – meet each other in my work is a very important aspect.

We have many words to describe all that concerns us. We even consider these words, which have certain meanings for us, to bear the truth about the persons we love, or those we hate. Words often work restrictive. Groups of persons – cultural, ethnic, or social – can be pointed out as being such or so. Countries, regions, nature, animals; to us they are like “that” or “that”. We use sciences, or art to find the truth about things, convinced that we can. But can we? And does it really matter? Sociology, economics, physics, chemistry, psychology, philosophy; they are all trying to solve questions, solve problems, find new possibilities, solve new questions, solve new problems, find the truth? It's a circle.

In daily life, we use a certain language that is different from the language used in for instance the social science of anthropology; a science that interests me a lot as a film maker trying to catch certain truths about daily cultural and social life. This difference lies not only in the words used, but also in the way a certain explanation gets formulated. Often it is the intent of what lies behind the explanation that makes this happen. Being a science, anthropology has certain systems, a background, language and intentions. These have changed throughout the course of its history, with different academics posing new ideas or discrediting others. Although the science grows and evolves in this way, it also stays within its own system, its own

circle, since only critics who have sufficiently studied the science are taken seriously. It seems to be a close-knit world.

I find it interesting to compare this closed world with what modern philosophers have called “fragmentation”. This refers to a phenomenon of this world that, due to different parts of modern society that all have their own systems and languages, is unable to build itself on central, guiding principles. This is not necessarily a bad thing according to the philosophy of authenticity. Here, fragmentation is seen as different personalities encountering each other within a conversation in which mutual respect forms the basis of a firm relationship. The purpose of this text is not to formulate a preference towards one or the other; I just want to indicate that different points of view exist.

In my inquiry towards truth, there is one thing really important, as many will agree: the human brain. It guides us in many ways. Interesting is that its growth takes place for the largest part during the first years of a person's life. When studied, it became clear that there is not only growth. Some parts grow, while other parts disappear. There is a high probability that these growths and losses are connected to a person's very early experiences.

A very interesting sociological study took place in the Netherlands a few years ago. The study dealt with adoption. Through the course of the research, some very unexpected discoveries were made. One of the participants was a Korean woman who was adopted by a Dutch family when she wasn't even one year old. She grew up to be a Dutch woman, but when she wanted to express her feelings, she did it differently than people in her immediate surroundings. When she was twenty-one years old, she visited her biological family in Korea. There she encountered for the first time in her life people that would express their feelings in a similar way.

There are a lot of examples from different sciences on which I can build to reach a certain conclusion about our brain, and our life. The process of starting to understand a scientific theory is in itself interesting. I still remember the physics

lessons I had in secondary school. Some theories seemed to be very complex at first, until a certain breakthrough and suddenly that what seemed to be very complex became quite simple. I acquired a certain way of thinking, and from that moment onwards, it was even hard to see why I had not understood it in the first place. This is an example of scientific thinking, but does this also go for ways of thinking in our daily life? My gut feeling about this would be affirmative. We all acquire certain ways of thinking, and we become a part of that way of thinking. What is hard to pinpoint is how much these systems of thought influence us.

In Australia, an anthropological study was carried out in an Aboriginal community. To get a better view of the Aboriginal culture, they asked these people how they view themselves in the world. They could not answer this question. They were unable to understand it. They just lived within their world, and such an abstract question made no point at all. For the researchers it seemed to be a question that was quite logical and human to ask. To me this is an example of how far reaching a way of thinking can be. For me, it was this accidental insight that was important: the insight that out of cultural background, we build up an enormous set of thoughts that we take for granted.

All of the above is tied with my remark on my project being a search for a certain truth. Although not explaining necessarily everything, all the above makes me arrive at this conclusion. You might agree with me, or you might not, but as far as I see it; there is no truth. There is a lot that is truthful. I could write: “we are living beings, and therefore there is one thing that is primary, and that is we have the need to...” . As far as I see it, you can write anything, really anything on those three dots. But if you, my reader, could write down anything there, what would it be? Then start questioning what you have written, and then probably you will find those things that are, or that thing that is the most truthful for yourself. Then you can lead a life in which the choices you make are truthful to the answers found on all the questions you have asked yourself. This could lead to a certain freedom within your own life of which you have become conscious. It could even lead to a consciousness of freedom. What you just read is already restrictive, because I wrote it.

This text started with explaining the choice for *Corpus Phylaca* becoming the name of my production company. Body prison, as you might agree, has a very negative connotation that incorporates a poetic meaning of determinism. So, it seems to be quite contrary to a Philosophy of openness and freedom of choice. To me this is a logic that is not part of the logic of life. It is only a logic within thought. Life is filled with habits, thought systems, ways of expressing yourself,... A large part of the text was a comprehensive explanation of how these are formed and how they grow. Body prison poetically pinpoints the body of thoughts we have, the body of our traditions, the body of our abilities and ways to express ourselves, and so much more that gives form to our life. This does not mean that we do not have the ability to choose. We do. I could say it like this; “we can only choose what we know; all other changes in life are not about choice”. Coincidences give us the opportunity to see new possible choices we can make. Often, how we deal with these choices depends on our reaction to, and our interpretation of what we have encountered. Determinism and other similar ways of thinking seem to me to be insufficient to talk about and explain the life we live. Even fragmentation and authenticity have their restrictions, all because of their position, their specific point of view. It does not mean that all these ways of thinking are not interesting at all. That is something different. As I would say it, an idea is an idea, nothing more, nothing less.

Body prison, we are our body, our minds, our souls, our personalities, and these have their restrictions, and their possibilities, and probably so much more... . I'm writing down these last few words because these are the ones that pop up in to “my mind” first!