

# SCHIZOANALYTIC ESSAY WITH TEXTS AND IMAGES AND BODIES, FANTASIES AND PORTRAITS OR WHAT DOES THE MIRROR REFLECT BACK TO US?

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**LUANA G.**

No institutional affiliation, interdisciplinary par excellence.

To John Dawsey and Regina Müller, master and  
mistress of the anthropologies and arts of performance

To Dom Barbudo, godfather whose partnership  
allowed me to realize, at a certain point, what I had  
managed to condense as an *artistic-existential experi-  
mentation in ethnographic imagination*, without which  
it would have been impossible to produce the images  
of BDSM included in this essay

“in its fundamental use, phantasy  
is the means by which the subject  
sustains himself at the level of his  
vanishing desire”

*The direction of the treatment and the  
principles of its power, Jacques Lacan*



This essay encompasses diverse projections and collages (from earlier elements, published or otherwise), concepts, inspirations, and textual and visual hallucinations about BDSM (Bondage, Domination, Discipline, Sadism, Submission and Masochism) and cross-dressing.

As an experimentation, it certainly does not set out to construct a coherent line of reasoning, something close to the maximum, perhaps, that an article might announce/enunciate. Instead, I want to bring together elements and to awaken effects of proximity and vicinality in the process. Something very Clarice Lispector: “Coherence, I don’t want it anymore. Coherence is mutilation. I want disorder.” Here, therefore, “I don’t want to have the terrible limitation of those who live merely from what can make sense.”

### **INITIAL DELIRIA ABOUT METHOD**

Once in my already distant adolescence, when I was still rehearsing my first words within this academic space that converted into my own, appeared a professor, a reading, a discussion, a work. They became ideas that haunt my thought even today. The book was *Family Ties* (Laços de família) and the professor – what was she called? I search but can’t find her name! – drew our attention to the way in which Clarice subjectivized people by adjectivizing things and body fragments, parts of the body.

...richer still would be to hide the doe ears with her hair and make them a secret, but she could not resist: she uncovered them, pulling her hair behind her incongruent pale ears.

This is how I wish to proceed here. Experiment with a mode of constructing understanding (or perhaps affectation?) that unfolds less through the resolution of meaning and more through approximation and contagion. A magical procedure, therefore. In the first pages of *The Golden Bough*, Sir James Frazer, discussing the principles of magic, states that:

If we analyse the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion. (Frazer 1957[1890], 14)

In the words and images that follow, the impetus perhaps is, both precisely and openly, to pass from similarity to contact.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, contact is a fundamental part of everything in this universe. Multiple and varied contacts: drenched in sweat, dry or slippery, contact with the hard and rough surface of leather or the smooth and slick surface of latex, suspensive contact, immobilizing contact, human and non-human contacts – of the kind dreamt by Latourians and ANTians – a sharp contact with the point or tip of a shoe, a palatable contact of tongue and world, a tight, squeezing and overwhelming contact, a contact between pain and pleasure, pleasure and danger.

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<sup>1</sup> I have also thought about this passage as a transition from representation to evocation through my own idiosyncratic reading of *Partial Connections*, where Marilyn Strathern (2004[1991]) reworks the notion of evocation first counterposed to representation by Stephen Tyler (1986) in his text for the classic *Writing Culture*.





Homages to Mapplethorpe aside, it involves precisely this: a con-fluence such that “blood took a wrong vein and became lost.” A blood that animates organic and inorganic bodies, both inadvertently full of anima.

To rush ahead of myself slightly: to **deface**, then, emerges as a principle of method, a relational principle of the universes of desires and phantasies in BDSM and the cross-dressing that I seek to evoke in this essay without ever though resolving them. In sum, defacement as an ethical-aesthetic-existential practice.<sup>2</sup>



Discussing an English army officer’s ethnography of a Spanish village, Michael Taussig, in his book *Defacement*, observes that the oppositional pairs on which the research is built only function because they act out their ambivalence in the space between the oppositions employed by Augustus Henry Lane-Fox – who entered the history of anthropology as a founding father alongside the name of Pitt Rivers, I’m not entirely sure why – to outline what Taussig calls a structure. **Without the mediation of the space between, the entire structure would be unsustainable.**

What I present you with here aims to pursue a schizoanalytic procedure, since, as Félix sets out clearly:

Schizoanalysis does not thus choose one modelisation to the exclusion of another. Within the diverse cartographies in action in a given situation, it tries to make nuclei of virtual autopoiesis discernible, in order to actualise them, by transversalising them, in conferring on them an operative

<sup>2</sup> In my postdoctoral research, entitled *Terrorisms and bridges of local musicking: theoretical and ethnographic explorations of dissident genders and sexualities in music*, the place occupied here by defacement was occupied then by disidentification, a conceptual weapon forged by the Cuban-American academic José Esteban Muñoz (1999).

diagrammatism (for example, by a change in the material of Expression), in making themselves operative within modified assemblages, more open, more processual, more deterritorialized. (Guattari, 1995[1992], 60-61)

Both the idea of defacement and what Taussig and Michel Journiac conceive as the labour of the negative were analytically fecund in my efforts at textual-imagetic writing. Dissident sex-gender practices are not just produced in a “between space” constructed by sexo-generic dichotomies,<sup>3</sup> as they also appear deeply marked by defacement, since “defacement works on objects the way jokes work on language, bringing out their inherent magic nowhere more so than when those objects have become routinized and social” (Taussig, 1999, 5).

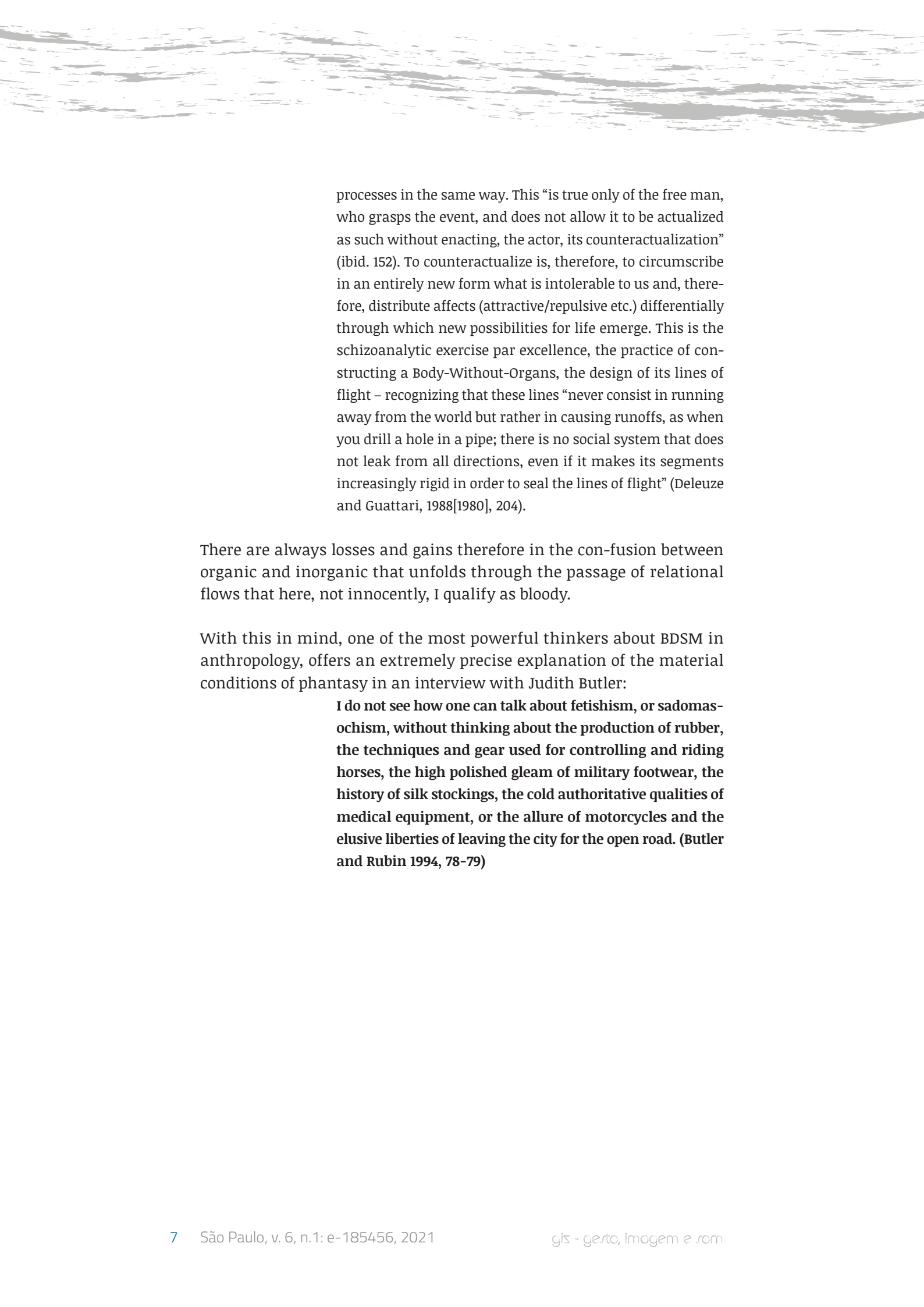
It seems to me that by defacing (the routine conceptions and affections relating to) organic and inorganic bodies – and, we should not forget, their relationship to pleasure, identity, realization and pain – both BDSM practices and cross-dressing acquire a certain specificity.<sup>4</sup>

*It is critical to note, however, that actualization and counter-actualization are not equivalent tasks!*

Every event unfolds into a present moment of actualization, in which a state of affairs becomes embodied, and a process of counter-actualization that points to its unactualizable side, where the event is taken in itself rather than being reduced to any specific present. “On one side, there is the part of the event which is realized and accomplished; on the other, there is that ‘part of the event which cannot realize its accomplishment.’ There are thus two accomplishments, which are like actualization and counteractualization” (Deleuze 1990[1969], 151-152). However, while every event can be said to be like this, it cannot be assumed that everyone carries out both these

3 The expression sexo-generic (*sexo-genérica*) is more common in the *hispanohablante* world. This is not mere posturing: all of us are aware of how certain languages emanate, like no other, particular specific meanings. The condensation of two words into one unit of meaning could not be more appropriate. Applied to questions of sex and gender, the term is a perfect transposition of what I have called elsewhere (Grunvald 2009b) ‘socio-natural,’ insofar as “man and nature are not like two opposite terms confronting each other – not even in the sense of bipolar opposites within a relationship of causation, ideation, or expression (cause and effect, subject and object, etc.); rather, they are one and the same essential reality, the producer-product. Production as process overtakes all idealistic categories and constitutes a cycle whose relationship to desire is that of an immanent principle” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983[1972], 4-5)

4 In her “livre docência” thesis, transformed into the book *Prazeres Perigosos* (Dangerous Pleasures), Maria Filomena Gregori describes in magisterial detail some of the anthropological implications of these specificities for BDSM. In relation to the territory of transvestic experiences, I have argued elsewhere (Grunvald 2016) for the existence of a categorical and territorial-existential heterodoxy that also processes these practices from the inside (and not as a constitutive exterior).



processes in the same way. This “is true only of the free man, who grasps the event, and does not allow it to be actualized as such without enacting, the actor, its counteractualization” (ibid. 152). To counteractualize is, therefore, to circumscribe in an entirely new form what is intolerable to us and, therefore, distribute affects (attractive/repulsive etc.) differentially through which new possibilities for life emerge. This is the schizoanalytic exercise par excellence, the practice of constructing a Body-Without-Organs, the design of its lines of flight – recognizing that these lines “never consist in running away from the world but rather in causing runoffs, as when you drill a hole in a pipe; there is no social system that does not leak from all directions, even if it makes its segments increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988[1980], 204).

There are always losses and gains therefore in the con-fusion between organic and inorganic that unfolds through the passage of relational flows that here, not innocently, I qualify as bloody.

With this in mind, one of the most powerful thinkers about BDSM in anthropology, offers an extremely precise explanation of the material conditions of phantasy in an interview with Judith Butler:

**I do not see how one can talk about fetishism, or sadomasochism, without thinking about the production of rubber, the techniques and gear used for controlling and riding horses, the high polished gleam of military footwear, the history of silk stockings, the cold authoritative qualities of medical equipment, or the allure of motorcycles and the elusive liberties of leaving the city for the open road. (Butler and Rubin 1994, 78-79)**







At first Lóri tricked herself into thinking that Ulysses wanted to transmit some things from his philosophy classes to her, but he said: “It’s not philosophy you need. If it were, that would be easy; you would attend my classes as a listener and I would converse with you on other terms” ... now that the earthquake that she had experienced would help her in her hysteria, and now that she was freed, she could even postpone to the future her decision not to see Ulysses ... But today she wanted to see him, and despite her being unable to tolerate his silent, unexpressed desire for her, she knew that it really was she who was provoking him into wearing down the patience with which he was waiting; with the monthly allowance that her father sent her, she bought expensive, always tight-fitting dresses because that was the only way she knew to attract him ... and it was time to dress ... she looked at herself in the mirror and saw that she was pretty only because she was a woman: her body was delicate and strong, one of the imaginary reasons for which she imagined Ulysses desired her ... she chose a dress made of a heavy fabric despite the heat, almost shapeless, her own body would give it shape ... but making herself pretty was a ritual that made her solemn ... the fabric was no longer mere cloth: it became transformed into a material thing and it was this stuffing to which she gave body with her body – how could a simple cloth acquire so much movement?

*An Apprenticeship or The Book of Delights, Clarice Lispector*

Indeed, my search is for a perspective that understands “body and image not as symbols or as symptoms but as vehicles for the transgressive” (Taussig 2006a, 162). In an article on “another theory of magic,” Taussig, returning to Maussian theory, argues that “clothing – that second skin – goes hand in hand with ‘corporeal techniques’” (2006b, 122) and proceeds to give examples of the construction of the sacred or holy with Islamic veils, the habits of priests and nuns, Orthodox Jewish clothing, and so on. What remains latent in all these cases is how the adornments foster and activate a differential relation with the body and with lived reality.



If clothing is a second skin, then the skin itself must be the first clothing.

Le corps est premier, il apparaît avec le sang et les vêtements.  
*Michel Journiac, L'Humidité, 1973*



**Michel Journiac, cursed and disowned father of French body art, is a vampire!**

At least the vampire image proves extremely productive to think about his artistic practices and propositions. In a text written by Journiac and Dominique Pilliard, published in the art magazine *artitudes* at the start of the 1970s, the vampire appears as a catalysing figure. On one hand, he is “the symbolic expression of everything that, in sexuality, is repelled by social morality”; on the other, the strength of the vampire is in the “effectiveness of his ritual, whose dialectic opposes a sexuality divested of sentimentalism and reduced to the consumption of the other through blood to a religion limited to formalism (cross, exorcism...), indeed, a fundamentally bourgeois society” (Journiac, 2013, 70).

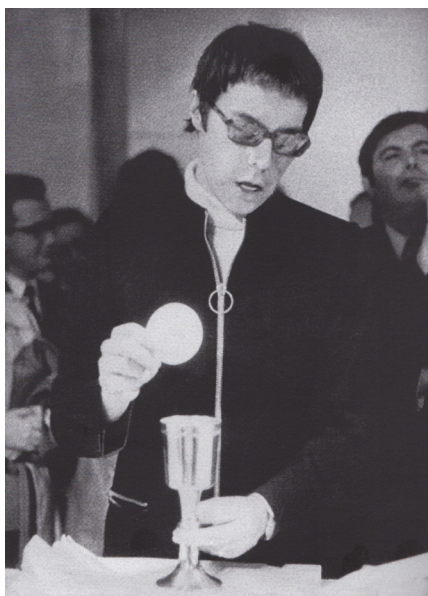
The inextricable link between vampirism and the corrosive power of dissident genders and sexualities is not an invention of Journiac. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir also turns to the image of the vampire to speak about sociocultural conceptions relating to women. “Woman is vampire, ghoul, eater, drinker; her sex organ feeds gluttonously on the male sex organ” (2011[1949], p.187).

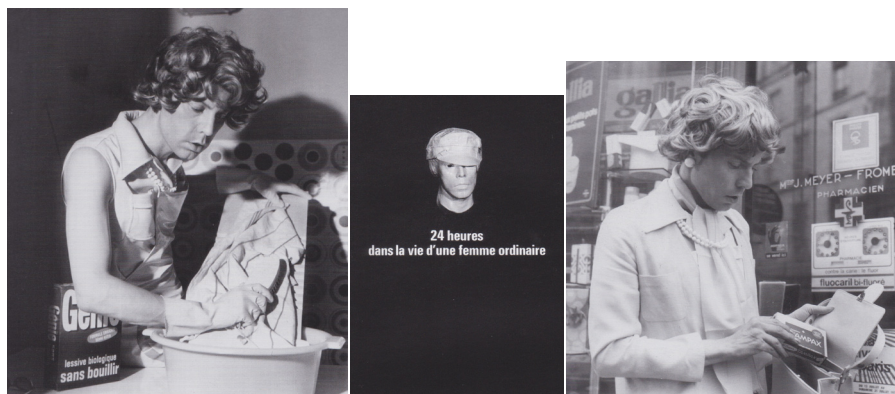
In his book on “Gothic horror and the technology of monsters,” Jack Halberstam analyses how blood is an overdetermined sign in both the rhetoric of vampirism and the discourses on race and ethnicity: “it signifies race as well as sex, gender as well as class and to have blood on your hands is to be implicated in the blurring of essential boundaries of identity” (1995, p.77).

As a vampire, Journiac was always fascinated by blood. From his first paintings in the 1960s to his later sculptures and installations, this vital liquid, the essence that gives life, was an omnipresent element. The vampire embodies the idea that life flows and can escape the body. It also expresses its precarious stability and suggests that the identity boundaries evoked by Halberstam are also boundaries marking the limits of life and death.

Journiac, following the vampire tradition, always proposed that the relation between death and life – including their absolute separation – is problematic. In his works, this relation, owing to its instability, is recursively doubled and gives way to a questioning within life itself about modes of existence and possibilities for transformation.

## Let us say mass for a body





“The travesti body is not configured as a epiphenomenon of gender identity, rather it is the very condition for its existence” (Bento, 2009, 19)

It seems to me that Rei Kawakubo, the famous designer of the *Comme des Garçons* fashion label, called attention precisely to this relationship of relative consubstantiality when she called her 1997 Spring/Summer collection “Body Meets Dress, Dress Meets Body.”

## And first, then, was the body.

Since as the immense philosophy of Pául Valéry forces us to confront:

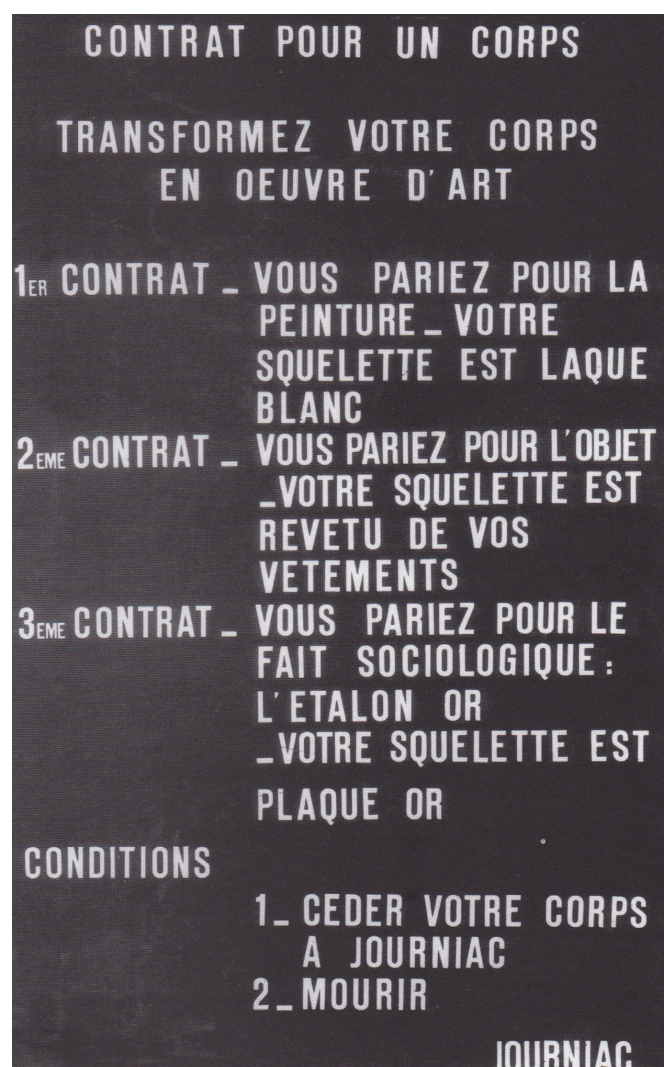
## the deepest is the skin.

In these scenarios, I hasten to add, the desiderative expression is dreamlike and hallucinatory, but not its functioning. This is somatic. “Everything seems like a dream to me. But it isn’t [...] It’s reality that is unbelievable,” Ulysses says to Lóri. In fact, believing in reality does not matter, because the issue is not belief, no!<sup>5</sup> but the world. Modes of existence and how we pass from some to others. Bordering the surface, via the skin.

<sup>5</sup> On this issue, see the kind of (mis)treaty against belief proposed by Latour (2002[1996]).



## Let us sign the contract for a body



*Throw your body into the battle*, wrote Pier  
Paolo Pasolini.

Defacement is the confrontation with death and dislocation whose meaning is irrecoverable by a more transcendent system. Why irrecoverable? Because it breaks the magic circle of understanding [...] where [...] contradiction cannot be mastered and only laughter, bottom spanking, eroticism, violence, and dismemberment exist simultaneously in violent silence.

(Taussig, 1993, p.41)

But no one could imagine what she was thinking. And for those near the door who gave her one final look, the old lady was only what she appeared to be: seated at the head of that messy table, with one hand clenched on the

tablecloth as if holding a sceptre, and with that silence that was her final word. With her clenched fist on the table, she would no longer be only what she thought. Her appearance had finally surpassed her and, overcoming it, she serenely grew in stature. Cordelia looked at her in terror. That fist, mute and severe on the table, was revealing something to the unhappy daughter-in-law who was helplessly loving her perhaps for the last time: "One must know. One must know."

"Happy Birthday," *Family Ties*, Clarice Lispector

It is as though different combinations of body and clothes – subjects and objects, or, to use a jargon widely used in today's anthropology, the articulations between humans and non-humans (Latour 1993[1991], 2005) – produce different modes of being-in-the-world. Journiac explicitly argues that "clothes are objects made body" (Journiac 2013, p.114). And if we take the body as something constitutionally related to how we perceive others and how we are perceived in the world, bodies are also, in a certain sense, clothes – as the Americanist ethnological literature has so well argued elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

In 1970, Deleuze, absorbed by the same political-social context as Journiac, published a book on Spinoza in which he reinforces the idea that what really matters is *what a body can do*, not *what a body is*.

It should be clear that, as this rhizomatic thinker and his accomplice Félix argue so insistently in *Anti-Oedipus*, it is not a question of representation. And this is just as true for the BDSM universe as it is for my own awkward endeavour.

As I wrote at another moment (Grunvald, 2016), I have no intention of lending visibility to anything. Hopefully it is clear that my desire is not to make something visible but to explore something that is not visible, nor even very thinkable as such. Even though I may speak (and a lot) about visibilities in the process. I do not wish just to focus on people made invisible and make them apparent, but to explore processes and moments invisible to the naked eye. And as real as gravity. (What isn't as real as gravity?)

My question is not to create representations. It is not to represent any of the people with whom I came into contact or whom I was. What I want (what we want?) is to free monsters, particles. Things that threaten us. Shadows that we presume are us/our own and end up gaining their own

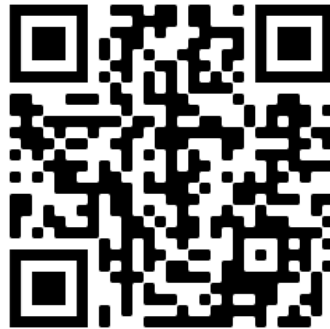
6 See, for instance, Seeger, Da Matta, Viveiros de Castro (1987) and Viveiros de Castro (2002).

life and pursuing us, as in the anthological scenes of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* by Francis Ford Coppola.

Ethico-aesthetic movements (Guattari, 1995[1992]) in which a body becomes the shadow of a body, which previously had been its shadow.<sup>7</sup>

Are shadows only the presumed (non-apparent) side of visibility?

[On Facebook, a friend posted the video clip of a child who, looking askance and seeing their shadow projected on the ground, begins to run away from this strange creature. The angle of their trajectory means that after running some distance and feeling herself free of the shadow, they discovers it once again projected in front of them. Startled, the child recoils and, stumbling as she moves backwards, falls, and the shadow again hides beneath her body on the tarmac. A false sense of security. As one day all adults did, or at least those considered normal, the child will eventually become accustomed to her shadow. But the custom that generates a particular framing, including affective, of our sensory perception will never be able to completely exorcise the fact that, as this child so wisely fears, a shadow is far from being just the void of our image.]



Perhaps my focus of attention is precisely on those processes that, to invoke Deleuze's formulation (1990 [1969]), are insinuations more than existences. Put otherwise, those "modes of existences that 'do not exist,'" "these beings [and processes] about which one cannot say with precision whether they exist or not according to the parameters and templates we have available," as Peter Pál Pelbart (2014, 250) wrote in a text published in the catalogue for the 31<sup>st</sup> São Paulo Biennial. And also the passage from insinuations to existences and vice-versa, in hallucinatory fashion: the production of events.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Carl Jung (1964, 81) also speaks of the importance of the shadow as something that threatens us, "the dark and shadowy side of our nature". As one of his disciples wrote in the same book: "This is the concept of the 'shadow,' which plays such a vital role in analytical psychology. Dr. Jung has pointed out that the shadow cast by the conscious mind of the individual contains the hidden, repressed, and unfavorable (or nefarious) aspects of the personality. But this darkness is not just the simple converse of the conscious ego. Just as the ego contains unfavorable and destructive attitudes, so the shadow has good qualities – normal instincts and creative impulses. Ego and shadow, indeed, although separate, are inextricably linked together in much the same way that thought and feeling are related to each other" (p.114). My thanks to Sylvia Caiuby Novaes for alerting me to this connection.

<sup>8</sup> The dynamic between existences and insinuations is seen to be necessarily linked to a topological thinking of the surface. Actual and virtual, existence and insinuation should

Bringing discourses that *insist* on the world to the centre of discourses that, institutionally, *exist* – such was the intention of the curatorial team of the renowned biennale.<sup>9</sup>

*Fieldnotes:* After the ramp located in the Park area that provided access to the first floor, one could see a large banner unfurled on the right-hand side (Figure 1). It read: “Tiago always wanted to be a pop diva dancer or even transform into a diva. Having no idea how to achieve this, he decided to study engineering and perform in front of the mirror.” A non-visibility exposed by a non-idea. Next to the climb from B1 to B2 in the Ramp area, another banner emblazoned with the phrase: “Henrique Cacique, at the age of 7, wearing his stepmother’s red lace knickers, had no idea how to escape his father who caught him in the act and even today, at university, must reconcile himself to going to class in underpants” (Figure 2).

Tiago performed in front of the mirror. But what self-portrait did the mirror reflect back? Certainly, not a replica. Like *Fresh Widow* by Marcel Duchamp. A alter-portrait of himself as an other.<sup>10</sup>

“But she felt a rush inside, a rush: there was something she needed to know and experience, something she didn’t know and had never known.”

An Apprenticeship or *The Book of Delights*, Clarice Lispector

Erving Goffman is the architect of the performance as façade. Indicative mode.

Victor Turner encounters the destruction/interruption of the façade. Sub-junctive mode. Richard Schechner reconstructs the façade. Restorative mode.

be understood through “the coexistence of two sides without thickness, such that we pass from one to the other by following their length. *Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs.* It turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition which expresses it any more than with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things. It is this *aliquid* at once extra-Being and inherence, that is, this minimum of being which befits inferences. It is in this sense that it is an ‘event’: *on the condition that the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs.* We will not ask therefore what the sense of the event is: the event is sense itself” (Deleuze, 1990 [1969], 22).

<sup>9</sup> The art historian Vinicius Spriggo, in his Flusserian works of “archaeological excavation” of exhibitions that by-pass the Euro-American canon, argues that, despite the attempt to construct spaces of innovation outside the sphere of institutionalized art, the field that was constituted as a history of exhibitions still operates through a strongly Euro-American-centric bias. Perhaps this can also be traced to the fact that the contemporary art biennales themselves, in their multiple functions and roles (Herkenhoff 2002), have also shifted from innovation to institutionality over the years, although the efforts are always directed towards the former.

<sup>10</sup> For a series of elaborations on the alter-portrait, analysed through the work of Duchamp, see Grunvald (2015).



But as my opening dedication makes clear, in anthropology, after Michael Taussig, nobody has taught me more about the mimetic dynamics of selves, non-selves and non-non-selves than the great master of the anthropology of performance, John Dawsey. Ê boi!

And his great accomplice of a thousand personas, Regina Müller: **Croquetta of queer Brazilianness!**<sup>11</sup>

“Once again, as customary in Winnicott’s psychoanalysis, having access to the negative field of being, to its lack of experience or dreaming, in a space that propels it within a symbolic movement towards the other human (in the case of self-analysis, to the reader of the text and to death itself), makes this field of absence revert to a kind of presence: a negative that on being formulated through the humanity of an other, a dreamt other, becomes the distinctive mark of a particular being that is constituted out of this history. This was how Winnicott treated the failed or faulty dreams of his little patients: the same dream that ruptured the evolutionary flow of psychic development under the weight of its specific anxieties, reconstructed – on being shared within the illusionary environment of the presence of the analyst – that humanity lost and rigidly constituted in subjective defences”  
O sonhar restaurado (The restored dream), Tales Ab’Sáber

“Of all the authors I know, Winnicott is the one who wanted to be dead. He had a profound notion of the importance of death in the continuity of life. There is a passage in which he laments the fact that did not have a son who could have killed him.”

Em busca da sagrada singularidade da natureza humana (In search of the sacred singularity of human nature), Gilberto Safra

In a text that examines the creation – which we could also call the production – of *her* queer and clownish Carmen Miranda, discussing the subject-character relation through Schechnerian ideas and her own fieldwork with the Asuriní of the Xingu River, begun in 1976, Regina explains that:

So it occurs with the shaman’s trance state, the result of dance and song (breathing and movement) whose aesthetic form makes present the metamorphized being. Along with the constitutive physicality of performance, this same form is the simulacrum of the self, the experience that elements that are ‘not me’ become ‘me’ without losing their ‘not me-ness.’ (Müller, 2013, p.29)

<sup>11</sup> Alusion to Regina’s participation in the groundbreaking queer collective Dzi Croquettes. See Lobert (2010).













John, in his digressions on what he calls the counter-theatre of the everyday life of rural labourers, and without a (pseudo)necessary recourse to contemporary theory on the relation between humans and non-humans, already highlighted, through performance theories, the instability of the poles of this relation. “In truth, in the relations between rural labourers and sugarcane plantations, it is unclear who fells whom, whether it is the cane cutters who fell the cane, or the cane fields that fell the labourers” (Dawsey 2005, 19).

In their “visceral experiences of a logical scandal,” the rural workers reveal an “extraordinary everyday or an everyday extraordinary” in which the “dream dimensions of the real,” expressed in the seriousness of jokes, as Turner would say, contaminate the denotative reality that many unbelievers – who are the actual believers, if we again take into account Latour’s explorations (2002[1996]) – call reality.

### **METAMORPHOSIS, MUTATION, TRANS-FORMATION, CONTAGION.**

In my doctoral thesis, it was the dyad Marcel-Rose, as well as Journiac, who enticed me to ponder some of these questions.

Who knows both artists would say, without blinking, that Marcel Duchamp produced Rose Sévaly. But if so, would it be necessary then to specify to whom this production refers and why on earth I talked about mirrors?



This fabrication certainly involves a performance and it is necessary, therefore, for us to clarify what performance this is. Firstly, it is not a representation of roles in Goffman’s sense (1959). Instead, there is a

conception of theatre in which the actor does not represent a role that pre-exists him or her, but fabricates a persona that acquires its own specifications through this fabrication.

In his book *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze contrasts theatre to representation and argues that “[t]heatre is real movement, and it extracts real movement from all the arts it employs” (1994[1968], 10).

The devices used by Duchamp in the fabrication of Rose Sélavy thus differ essentially from representative mechanisms. We can think of Duchamp and Rose Sélavy as actor and character only insofar as both form what Deleuze, in his book *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, calls a crystal image. Yet, “this was already the situation of the actor in himself: the crystal is a stage, or rather a track [*piste*], before being an amphitheatre” (Deleuze, 1989[1983], p.71).

By actualizing Rose Sélavy, it is Duchamp himself who becomes lost – that is, becomes counteractualized. Much is said about how an actor must enter into the character in order to live the latter as though he was it. What seems to happen in the great acting performances is that, as the character enters the scene – that is, enters into life with its anguishes and desires, its cries and gestures and its body – so the anguishes, desires, cries, gestures and body of the actor exit the scene. Or rather, they go to (and sometimes return from) the aisles. Undoubtedly, actual and virtual are two sides of the same coin: in this sense, the actor is virtual while the character is actual, and vice-versa.

Deleuze’s emphasis on the “double face of the actor” (1994[1968], p.92) constructs a type of performance also emphasized by dramatists like Bertolt Brecht and Richard Schechner. Duchamp never intended to pass as a woman, he never wanted to dissolve “the distance between character and performer.” What interested him was the dual composition, an androgynous and ambiguous corporality, masculine *and* feminine. Posing the question of body (de) composition in terms of consciousness, we could state that Duchamp sought a performance “in which the transformation of consciousness is not only intentionally incomplete but also revealed as such to spectators who delight in the unresolved dialectic” (Schechner, 1985, p.7). Even so, by giving expression to Rose Sélavy, it is Duchamp himself who becomes inexpressible, inaccessible to representation.

Being this *or* that is what Deleuze calls an exclusive disjunction, an identity model. Its counterpoint is an inclusive disjunction: this *and* that. Viveiros de Castro calls attention, through Deleuze, to the fact that the disjunctive synthesis



or inclusive disjunction, being a multiplicity, “is a modality of relation synthesis different to a connection or conjunction of terms”; a “relational mode that does not take similarity or identity as its (formal or final) course but as divergence or distance; another name for this relational mode is ‘becoming’” (2007, pp. 99-100). A becoming-woman of Duchamp and art.

If we consider that the identity produced by exclusive disjunctions is made through discrete entities or cuts, it follows that becoming, or inclusive disjunctions, correspond to the middle or medium, the between, the continuous. Alfred Gell situates precisely this idea at the centre of Duchamp’s artistic output.

Duchamp’s work is essentially *about* the notion of a continuum, insofar as it is based on the exploration of the ‘fourth dimension.’ This dimension, I should immediately add, is not ‘time’ in any ordinary sense, especially not time as a mere measure of duration or the time of physicists. For Duchamp – and certainly for his contemporaries – the ‘fourth dimension’ was the essentially ‘real’ but strictly *unrepresentable* domain beyond or encompassing the ‘ordinary’ world in which we live and which we normally perceive (1998, p. 243).

In discussing the problem of the individualized self, in her article “Notes on the index: Seventies Art in America,” Krauss recalls the work *Airtime* by Vito Acconci. In this film, the video artist speaks to his image reflected in a mirror for 40 minutes.

“Referring to himself, he uses ‘I,’ but not always. Sometimes he addresses his mirrored self as ‘you.’ ‘You’ is a pronoun that is also filled, within the space of his recorded monologue, by an absent person, someone he imagines himself to be addressing. But the referent for this ‘you’ keeps slipping, shifting, returning once again to the ‘I’ who is himself, reflected in the mirror. Acconci is playing out the drama of the shifter – in its regressive form.”

(1977, pp. 68-69).

Krauss goes on to explain that ‘shifter’ is the term utilized by Jakobson to refer to linguistic signs whose ‘meaningful content’ is empty. ‘I,’ ‘you,’ ‘this’ are examples of shifters insofar as their content is situational and thus variable: ‘I’ is only I when the utterance is made by myself; when



someone else uses the word 'I,' the content to which 'I' refers itself shifts. Now, if it is only in concrete and coeval situations that 'I' and 'you' acquire meaningful content, if the content depends on the existential presence of a specific enunciator, then these pronouns, Krauss argues, also form part of a special category of signs, the indices. Thus, with the use context of shifters in mind, Acconci allows us to perceive

“...a space in which linguistic confusion operates in concert with the narcissism implicit in the performer's relationship to the mirror. But this conjunction is perfectly logical, particularly if we consider narcissism – a stage in the development of personality suspended between auto-eroticism and object-love – in the terms suggested by Lacan's concept of the 'mirror stage.’”

(Krauss 1977, p. 69)<sup>12</sup>

The co-presence of (self)portraits and mirrors is not exclusive to the argumentation of this author and very often her ideas are treated as almost self-explanatory. The portrait is closely related to the idea of the double and, frequently, the mirror appears as a privileged element in this context, since, as Bonafoux argued with Alberti in mind, “the mirror is, must be, the criterion of every similarity, every imitation” (2003, p.24). Indeed, one idea leads to the other given that, as a sort of double, the portrait is a mirror that doubles the image. What, then, would be the distinctive mark of the portrait of Duchamp (cross)dressed as Rose Sélavy? Is Rose Sélavy the double of Duchamp? What play of mirroring is produced there?

In his analysis of *Las meninas*, Foucault (2002[1966]) considered the work to be the representation of classic representation; precisely the space that Duchamp intends to block and ban in his work. Speaking about Velázquez's painting, he observes that “[o]f all the representations represented in the picture this [the mirror] is the only one visible” and that “[i]t is not the visible it reflects” (pp.7-8).

12 I follow Krauss's reasoning a while longer since it will be relevant shortly: “Occurring sometime between the ages of six and 18 months, the mirror stage involves the child's self-identification through his double: his reflected image. In moving from a global, undifferentiated sense of himself towards a distinct, integrated notion of selfhood – one that could be symbolized through an individuated use of 'I' and 'you' – the child recognizes himself as a separate object (a psychic gestalt) by means of his mirrored image. The self is felt, at this stage, only as an image of the self; and insofar as the child initially recognizes himself as an other, there is inscribed in that experience a primary alienation. Identity (self-definition) is primally fused with identification (a felt connection to someone else). It is within that condition of alienation – the attempt to come to closure with a self that is physically distant – that the Imaginary takes root” (1977, p.69).

If, as Gell (1998) observes, Duchamp aims at the unrepresentable, the invisible, whatever is beyond our normal perception, could we not think of Duchamp's self-portraits as foregrounding whatever was behind the space created by the image?<sup>13</sup> Or, put another way, was Duchamp, in his artistic practice, not breaking with the classic representation insofar as in which he places the invisible and the unrepresentable, reflected in Velázquez's mirror in the foreground, as the centre of his own work? It is as though the mirror of *Las meninas*, this place of the invisible, was now the totality of the image itself, of what merits highlighting.

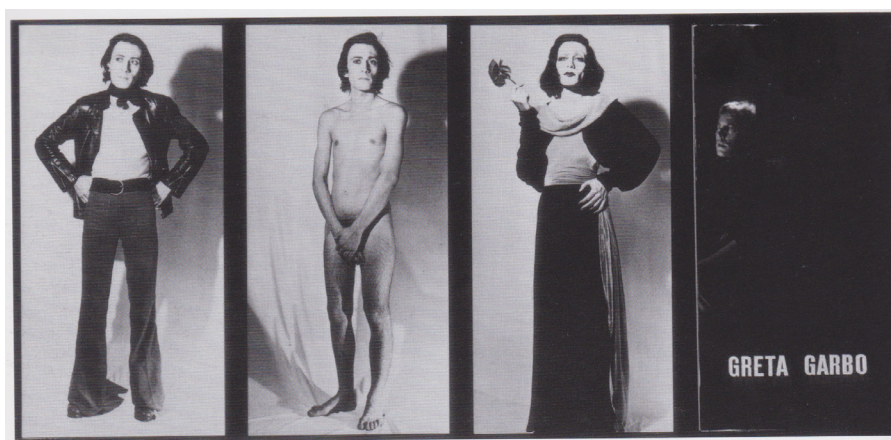
Krauss, inadvertently, sees Rose Sélavy's photographs as self-portraits. And as self-portraits, we can consider them as mirrors, doubles; but only under the condition of them being a mirror that does not possess any reality to a mirror and a double that does not respect – which in fact denies and deforms – the image of its original. The self-portrait of Duchamp dressed as Rose Sélavy is, in truth, an alter-portrait; a simulacrum rather than an identity.<sup>14</sup>

13 If I use the expressions 'foregrounding' and 'behind' it is, precisely, with Velázquez's painting in mind. The painting shows Velázquez painting in his studio. We only see the back of the canvas since the front faces the painter who, brush in hand, stares at his subject, which is simultaneously the painting's spectator. The invisible place presented by the mirror to the spectator is, therefore, the place of the eye of representation, which, in this case, is subsumed by the real perspective: it is the king and his wife who appear there reflected.

14 For a discussion of the simulacrum and its relation to identity, see Grunvald (2009a, 2009b). As an example of a master in the composition of alter-portraits, see the work of Japanese artist Yasumasa Morimura, including his *Doublonnage*, an alter-portrait of Duchamp as Rose Sélavy. On the question of mirroring – the 'renvoi miroirrique' or 'mirrorial return' – and the fact that "difference [...] is Rose Sélavy's authentic work," see Singer (2004).



Before the series *24 heures dans la vie d'une femme ordinaire*, in his initial experiment in cross-dressing, it was Gérard Castex and not Journiac who played with swapping clothes. *Trap for a travesti* presents a series of four photographs in which dressing, undressing and cross-dressing transforms a man with male clothing into a nude body and then into Greta Garbo or Rita Hayworth. Finally, in the last photograph, the viewer can see the name of the female artist into which Gérard had transformed, but instead of the image of the 'star,' Journiac appears, reflected in a mirror.



I wish to return to the trope of the vampire with which I began my evocation of Journiac's work and recall another aspect present in some versions of its mythology, namely the idea that the image of vampires is not reflected in mirrors. I take this claim to refer not so much to the vampire as the mirror itself, a recurrent figure in my reflections here on Duchamp and Journiac.

As stated earlier, if Alberti could claim Narcissus as the inventor of painting, it was because, according to him, "the mirror is and must be the criterion of all similarity, all imitation" (Bonafoux 2003, p.24).<sup>15</sup>

Another version of this same fable is the one that announces not the faithful reflection of the mirrors but the clear and transparent view through windows. Whether conceived as a mirror or a window onto the world, art is immersed in a model of relationality in which similarity is enthroned as a guiding principle.

<sup>15</sup> As discussed by Jones, Alberti's notion of artistic practice colludes with a particular conception of the artist as someone who "both epitomizes the centered individual of early modern European culture and acts as an exaggerated or special case of this individual (secured in his privileged access)" (2006, p.5).



A completely different model is offered in *Fresh Widow* by Marcel Duchamp, which I discussed earlier. The idea could not be further from a model of relationality based on similarity: no view passes through the window giving access to an *outside reality*, no reflection is offered to a *subjectivity within*.

I daydream that if the vampire's image is not reflected in the mirror, it is not because of some psychoanalytic absence – do vampires have a phallus? – but because the mirror, in the vampire's world, has another nature that makes it lose completely the quality of mirroring marked by similarity.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps, to recall the image evoked by the anthropologist Victor Turner (1987), the mirror here is a magic mirror that does not return an image of life save as a kind of function derived from the phantasy that makes strange and plays with the world itself. Dawsey uses the image of the magic mirror to speak precisely about the type of performance to which I refer here:

Experiences of liminality can arouse a feeling of strangeness in relation to the everyday. As expressions of these types of experiences, ritual and aesthetic performances provoke more than a simple mirroring of the real. In these moments, a subjunctive mode is established ('as if') of situating oneself in relation to the world, provoking fissures, illuminating the fictional dimensions of the real – f(r)ictioning it, one might say – revealing its unfinishability and subverting the effects of reality of a world seen in the indicative mode, not as a moving landscape, filled with possibilities, but simply as it is. Performance does not produce a mere mirroring. Subjunctivity, which characterizes a performative state, emerges as an effect of a 'magic mirror.' (Dawsey, 2013, 239).

The exchange of fluid between bodies through bites connects people and thereby creates an entirely different composition. What person should the mirror reflect? What reality is there to be analysed? Are we not presented here with the same premises that underpin Journiac's work when he considers tranvestism not as a secondary process that dislocates an original Self but as the process itself through which all and any subjectivity is created and recreated? Even his parents were travestized as themselves.

In his work, Journiac seems to propose a relational principle by which the positions of subjects are never assured, since there is no original model to stabilize them. Not even the human. This argument is advanced as early as 1974 – a year be-

16 According to Deleuze and Guattari, the same can be said of thought itself. "Thought is like the Vampire; it has no image, either to constitute a model of or to copy" (1987[1980], p.377).

fore 24 hours therefore – with the piece *Journiac travestized as God*. It is not a question just of crossings and transmutations that can occur between sexual and gender positions, but also between other types of beings, transversally slicing even the boundary between the human and the sacred. “The supernatural imposes itself,” Marcel Paquet (1977, 25) wrote.



*Journiac travestized as a corpse* and the entire body of work derived from his obsession with bones and skeletons leads to the idea that the investigation of modes of existence does not concern outer appearances alone but also inner compositions. Vampire, a composition of natural (human) and supernatural (a kind of God); a composition of life and death. Something in the middle.

On one hand, he dissects the body, opens it, invades it and subtracts it towards the bones. On the other, he ferments it, increases it and amplifies it through clothing. Interior and exterior no longer make sense. Clothes are the form of the body until putrefaction when just the bones remain...

To avoid any mistake: I am not talking about metaphorical events that manifest in eccentric cases – artists and degenerates.

“The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that ‘the state of exception’ is the rule” (Benjamin, 2006[1985], p.226)

The instability of being – as present and strong as it is sometimes imperceptible – attains, in the dissident sexo-generic practices that I evoked here, merely a *quantum* of liminality that carries with it the possibility of moving beyond or remaining before the human, since, as so well argued by Foucault, queer practitioner of BDSM and a disciple as he was of Nietzsche, humanity, as a form of being, did not always exist and will not exist forever.



It is entirely a question, therefore, of modes of being-in-the-world, their interchangeability and the impossibility of a solid and immutable meaning both of internal coherence (stabilized subjectivity as identity) and external consistency (stabilized world as reality).



*Lu, the woman who I also am, back in 2006, in one of her first public apparitions.*


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