

When the TV program talked about Cazuza¹'s death because of AIDS I must have been around nine years old. An older cousin was sitting by my side. I asked my cousin "What is AIDS?" and he quickly replied: "It's a disease developed by fags." And so begins a trajectory whose flows, vigils, semens, dances and dreams indicate a path towards the end of stereotyped representations.

The unfolding of this first information on AIDS does not intend and could not create any kind of linear narrative, no cause-and-effect logic. What exists is a tangle of possibilities, of (dis)organizations in motion. The chaining of the facts has to do with that sentence today; I rewrite it on the same computer on which I have edited film experiments and through which I connect to *Kekeland* Wi-Fi network, named after a song by French singer and writer Brigitte Fontaine, one of the few written by her in English. *Kekeland* is a land imagined by Brigitte where cock suckers, assholes and motherfuckers coexist. Brigitte auto-proclaims herself the queen of *Kekeland* where she lives with the *Kekes*. Together 'they go to the market while drinking boiling liquids. They buy handsome poets and eat pepper. Kekes are always drunk 'cause they smell the finest airs and each of them keeps an old punk in a bed full of flowers. They have big eyes and red hair and they live in blue valleys where they travel in *montgolfiers*. The sea of *Kekeland* is always green and its palace full of sand.'²

While connected to *kekeland* network I try to scribble a relation of the events whose syntax may shatter the television room where "It's a disease developed by fags" was uttered.

I'm not interested in my emotions insomuch as their being mine, belonging only, uniquely, to me. I'm not interested in their individual aspects, only in how they are traversed by what isn't mine. In what emanates from our planet's history, the evolution of living species, the flux of economics, remnants of technological innovations, preparation for wars, the trafficking of organic slaves and commodities, the creation of hierarchies, institutions of punishment

¹ Brazilian singer and song writer who died of AIDS in 1990

² Part of the lyrics of the song *Kékéland* by Brigitte Fontaine and Areski Belkacem. From the album *Kékéland* released in 2001 by Virgin France S.A. "I know ten cock suckers And a little asshole A hundred mother fuckers So I'm never alone/ You know I am the queen The queen of Kékéland My sea is ever green My palace full of sand/ I wear veiled battle dress Covered with pearls and roses I'm the royal mistress Of the bodies and souls My subjects are kékés With big red eyes and hair They live in blue valleys Travel in montgolfière / They go to the market Drinking boiling liquors They buy a pretty poet Come back to eat pepper / Kékés are always drunk 'Cause they smell finest airs Each keeps an old punk In white bed full of flowers They have under their skin The beloved precious Lord That makes them laugh and grin When they go overboard / If one day the missiles Come for the big finish Kékés will keep their smile They know how to vanish"

and repression, networks of communication and surveillance, the random overlapping of market research groups, techniques and blocs of opinion, the biochemical transformation of feeling, the production and distribution of pornographic images. (Preciado 2013: 11, 12)

It is about creating space for an insistent, loose reverberation of unheard words, "murmur of dark insects" (Foucault 2006a: xxxiii). Invasion done by footprints, climbing and by touch, saliva. Rethink the imposed geography. When this other space, empty and populated at the same time, is found, perhaps, that which does not exist and which we do not know about, will be produced. The chronologies here serve only to sketch and diagram a corporeal-temporal map of the experiences, without the pretense of establishing any kind of qualitative hierarchy that would correlate duration to intensity. After all, "sometimes one second is enough while thirty years have not given anything"³ (Fontaine 2012: 23)

In 2008, I was living in Copenhagen. It was early summer, I was on vacation from the *Commedia School* and worked every day in an Italian restaurant located in Islands Brygge in the port region. There was a strait where I sometimes plunged into after work despite the cold water. The average Danish summer temperature is 16 degrees Celsius. The work in the restaurant lasted around 4 hours a day. My job was to clean. One night I finished working at "*Il Pane di Mauro*" and went by bike to a downtown pub. I ordered a glass of wine and sat down at a table to read. I'll make it up it was Virginia Woolf's "Orlando" that I read. Virginia Woolf's character Orlando makes me think of Christopher, the Danish guy I met that night. I lean on an excerpt on memory written by Woolf herself so as to put the book in my hands:

Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after. Thus, the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling the inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting, like the underlinen of a family of fourteen on a line in a gale of wind. Instead of being a single, downright, bluff piece of work of which no man need feel ashamed, our commonest deeds are set about with a fluttering and flickering of wings, a rising and falling of lights... memory is inexplicable.. (Woolf 1928: 52)

³ Parfois une seconde suffit alors que trente ans n'ont rien donné

From the place where I sat with the glass of wine and the book in hands, I saw the boy writing at a table. He had long hair, a fringe covered half of his face. Watching him writing on the small notebook became indispensable. I started creating strategies to walk past his table. We exchanged looks. At one of these strategic crossings he looked at me and said, "You're welcome to sit" and pointed to the empty chair in front of him. I sat down. We started talking and asking for alcoholic shots. Several. Of different colors. Suddenly he read me a sentence amidst his notes: "Everything chaotically falls into place". We talked a lot. No matter the contents, 'what matters are the compositions of relations that made us cross the world with certain gestures, accents, connections, sounds and vocal reactions, ways of looking' (*Amalio, Pinheiro*) We were a bit dizzy when he asked me: - Are you gay? I said yes and replied: - What about you? He answered: - No, but I want you to fuck me. We decided to go to his house. We went on my bike. He took the seat and I sat on the saddle. It was the first time I rode clinging to someone's waist. We stopped at three or four pubs before we reached his place. His bedroom was a mattress on the floor, a desk and a clothes rack. I woke up during the night and his hair covered half my face. We spent four days wandering around the city. A few weeks later, he invited me to a party. The room full of strangers. Christopher who opened the door. His friends approached. In a gesture, he exclaimed: "Guys, this is Ernesto, the guy who fucked me". I was surrounded by hugs, drinks and various exclamations ..

... I want to find ways to expose thoughts around an issue that allow the multiplicity of things to prevail, that turn the subject matter into some decomposable material, whose form is undone, refracted and modified at great speed. Ways that know objects have a previous and intense life to the eyes that find them forgotten in a corner. Object and subject never come to a final term, but constitute themselves simultaneously amid politics of touch through which

the body resists the state. Touch as reaching-toward foregrounds the unknowability at the heart of all bodies of knowledge, reminding us that we cannot know the body as the state claims we do, for no body is ever thoroughly articulated. Every body moves differently, in-difference to the state. (Manning 2007: 63)

I see the image of the TV room collapsing. It collapses to serve a reconstruction, that will make other rooms collapse, successively...

The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, both empty and peopled at the same time, of all the words without language that appear to anyone who lends an ear, as a dull sound from beneath history, the obstinate murmur of a language talking to *itself* – without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in its throat, collapsing before it ever reaches any formulation and returning without a fuss to the silence that it never shook off. The charred root of meaning. (Foucault 1960: 22)

I perceived my desire as different from my cousins and uncles. Not only in relation to the male body but also to my choices when playing superheroes. "It's a disease developed by fags" added to my doubts the fear that I might have AIDS. The kid in that TV room did not know anything about penetration, or the amount of virus in the semen, blood. I started to relate my desire as the possible causer / transmitter of such a disease. It was silently or sometimes babbling some words that I would talk to myself. There is no appeal to commiseration here. On the contrary, the aim is to expose the potency of body-environment exchanges; of the traces left by the encounters with other bodies that would help crumble that room where my desire had been tied to the risk of sickness and death. In 2000, I started studying journalism at *Federal University of Pernambuco* and enrolled in a philosophy course. The professor entered the room and before introducing herself wrote a sentence on the blackboard: "*Reality is far beyond understanding ...*" (*Lispector, Clarice*) .. She then gave a whole lecture on Clarice Lispector. In the end, I asked her which of the author's book she would suggest me to read. "*Near to the wild heart*" she replied. I went straight to the library and read the first paragraph still in the lobby:

Her father's typewriter went clack-clack... clack-clack-clack... The clock awoke in dustless tin-dlen. The silence dragged out zzzzzzz. What did the wardrobe say? clothes-clothes-clothes. No, no. Amidst the clock, the typewriter and the silence there was an ear listening, large, pink and dead. The three sounds were connected by the daylight and the squeaking of the tree's little leaves rubbing against one another radiant (Lispector 1990: 3)

I closed it. Something in that writing, in the title of the book and in the narratives I had just heard in the classroom, made me in a totally disjointed, confused way, glimpse 'my infinite degree in nature' (Spinoza).

And under the yellow sun, sitting on a stone, without the least guarantee - the man now rejoiced as if not understanding was a creation. This caution that a person has to transform the thing into something comparable and then approachable, and only from that moment of security, to look and allow themselves to see because fortunately it will be too late not to understand - that concern Martim had lost. And not understanding was suddenly giving him the whole world. (Lispector 1998: 34)

During our Clown studies at the *Commedia School* an English dancer came to prepare a choreography for the clowns. He chose the song "Steam Heat" by Jerry Ross for us to dance. We were invited to perform the dance at a clown festival in Assens, a small town on the west coast of Denmark. At the end of the presentation, a Danish lady came to me and introduced herself: "I am a witch. I am your Danish mother. And you have the heart of a dancer". I believe in witches. Some years later, in São Paulo, I began to study dance in *Communication of the Arts of the Body* and I came across the ideas around the *corpomedia* theory:

... the body is not a processor because processors do not changeshape when dealing with the information they relate to. A television does not shine more or less when it announces a bomb killing civilians in Egypt nor the birth of a panda bear at the zoo. A blender does not change its appearance when processing a potato soup nor a milkshake. But the body, yes, transforms itself into the type of information with which it deals precisely because it transforms it into body. (Greiner; Katz 2015: 9)

When information comes in contact with the body it stays, it spreads, it may change the breathing, the walking and cause tachycardia. What information causes in a body is a tangle of possibilities, of (re)organizations, dances. "One is space of relation: there is no unified body. There are skins, receptive surfaces, gestural movements, desires towards an other" (Manning 2007: 61) "It is a disease developed by fags" is the proof of the unstable and mobile quality of information-body-environment relations:

In 2014, through an online access to the laboratory where I had been tested, I got a positive serological testing for the HIV virus. If I write about it here, it is

because the experiences and readings and meetings of the last few months have allowed me to take distance from this fact, to take it in my hands as “my body becomes world. The senses translate the body not as the individual but as the relational exchange between worlds and bodies” (Manning 2007: 61). The fact is that I had an unusual relation to the virus. My CD4, which are the cells of the immune system attacked by HIV were already at a very low level, although the infection had occurred just over a year, according to my last negative test. I immediately started treatment with antiretrovirals. A few months later, I began to feel an insistent headache. I went to the emergency room at a hospital a few times, and although I reported on low CD4 and HIV, they would take some exams and send me back home. I began to get very weak inside my apartment. One day, on the phone with my mother, to whom I had not told about anything, I began to cry. She sensed something and without telling me she took a flight to São Paulo. The doctors did not know what caused the constant headache. I could no longer read. I spent entire days lying down, eyes closed. I tried acupuncture, massages and even psychoanalysis sessions. My mother and I developed a sort of Beckettian relationship inside my apartment in São Paulo. At one point, we did not turn to anyone else, she just went out to buy food. I could barely eat, I vomited everything. One night I started getting very dizzy, it was difficult to walk. We went to the emergency room for three days in a row and finally, on the third day, they asked for a cerebrospinal fluid test, which is done through a lumbar puncture. They found out I had meningitis. I was taken directly to the Intensive Care Unit.

I knew my friends and family were outside, but those relations were blur, they dissolved into the point where I became ... an any-body struggling to stand up and take a shower by myself. One of the strategies of the exhausted body to stay alive is to draw energy from its own muscles. The body starts to eat itself. I had lost 31 pounds which left my most basic support muscles very weak. "The exhausted are those who had the strength 'to produce holes, to loosen the tourniquet of words, to dry the exudation of voices in order to detach themselves from memory and reason" (Pelbart 2016: 43) There was a beauty in the possibility of observing, adult, the dissolution and reconstruction of my own body. The verb to observe can only be used by my body that writes today. In those early days at the ICU, nothing remained, everything "was pure image, an intensity that puts words away, dissolves stories and memories, stores a fantastic potential energy ..." (Pelbart 2016: 43) I vaguely

remember the faces that came into the room to visit me. I recall the feeling of not sharing the anguish they had in their eyes. Within that fragility, near-death, I experienced an extraordinary strength devoid of subjectivity. It was no longer Ernesto, son of Maria Helena, uncle of Leticia; at the same time that it was very difficult for me to walk to the bathroom, look straight, I felt intensely connected to an extraordinary force of everything that is alive ...

The life of the individual gives away to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens... the life of such individuality fades away in favor of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though can be mistaken for no other. A singular essence, a life... (Deleuze 1968: 27)

At the end of 2017, I went filming with some friends in *Chapada dos Veadeiros* in the State of *Goiás*. We arrived at the first waterfall. I was the first one to dive into the icy water and swim to the huge cascade that fell from the rock. As soon as I got under the waterfall I began to scream. It was the only possible reaction. The first images that came to me concomitant to the shouts and the sensation of the cold water on my head were the images of my hospitalization, of the near-death at the hospital. That waterfall was the proof that "the events that constitute *a life* coexist with the accidents of the life that corresponds to it, but they are neither grouped nor divided in the same way..." (Deleuze 1968: 28)

HIV made me experience a (dis)order extraneous to the coherence of the organs. It made me jump of joy in my living room as I understood for the first time what Judith Butler meant when she spoke of the drag queen's performance as cultural evidence of the mechanisms that produce the coherence of "sexual identity and ensure the link between anatomical sex and gender" (Preciado 2014: 91) It is actually HIV inserted in my choices, in the icy bay where I insisted on plunging in Islands Brygge; in the long hair Danish poet who now has two children and exclaimed to a room full of friends about the night on his mattress; in my astonishment to look at my mother and realize that we had spent nine months together, the time of a second gestation, despite my height and weight; in a belief in the world that "is about crafting the conditions to encounter the world differently each time" (Manning 2016: 93); in my attraction to the idea of performance as an "operator of destabilization of other artistic languages" (Greiner 2013) that made me realize that I do not have to be bound

nor belong to any artistic way of doing. No categories established a priori. A singular presence as a choice.