

## Metalepsis Seminar • Virtual Session 14

[metalepsis seminar](#) / WAAC•PSU / 2 April 2014

### From Diana/Diana to Diotima to Beatr9 (BeatrIX) to Betty/Diane: C'est Rose Selavy

**METALEPSIS SEMINARIANS, 9-ERS, AUXILIARY MEMBERS, and OCCASIONAL GUESTS**



Rose Selavy, a.k.a. Marcel Duchamp — "Eros, c'est la vie."

### \* if this be error ...

If the master signifier of ideology, the reversed predication trick that leaves behind a gap ('a'), creates the famous "vanishing signifier" ( $\emptyset/\emptyset$ ) in order to calm the turbulence in the string of signifiers we experience as S2s (lists, catalogs, itineraries, course outlines, holy texts, daily conversations, advertisements ...), then we also know what haunts this stream from below: eros, or lest we forget Duchamp's clever parody, Rose. *La Vie en Rose*, to be precise. This demon from the deep should not be underestimated, and no thinker, from the shamans of ancient times to Vico to Lacan has ever failed to pay his/her respects to Diana, a.k.a. the personification of sexual difference, allowing relation.

But, the "language of love" is problematic. It must be "whispered," not voiced determinatively, indicatively. It resides in negation. Although taking a no for a yes lands some lovers in jail, eros's primary substance lands us in the center of the negation that sticks to subjectivity like (as we southerners say) "a chicken on a June bug." Negation, negation ... we have a ticket for the amusement park of the death drive, that Merry-Go-Round (*manège*), that *tourbillon de vie*, whose mantra is "location location location."

Shakespeare's dilemma was to show Diana's nakedness without profaning it, and so he stick to

the negative: a series of statements in Sonnet 116 that read like a check list of lies:

- ✘  Love is not love / Which alters when it alteration finds,
- ✘  Or bends with the remover to remove: / O no;
- ✘  it is an ever-fixed mark,
- ✘  That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
- ✘  It is the star to every wandering bark, / Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
- ✘  Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks / Within his bending sickle's compass come;
- ✘  Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
- ✘  But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

Anyone with the slightest experience in the matter knows love to be the most fragile of human commodities, constantly altering, bending, losing its way, is shaken, growing dim, becoming a fool with the slightest misunderstanding, cooling, changing, not holding up ... in other words, a coupling of pain and pleasure.

But of course, sad lovers also know that there is a NEGATION OF A NEGATION, that Shakespeare, good Lacanian that he is, realizes that there is no love without the hard-drive of the death drive being installed in the eros computer.

... If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

(... in other words, although you can experientially prove that these statements are false, their failure constitutes their very strength to survive!)

**SPECIAL PLEA: WEDDING PLANNERS, PLEASE STOP USING THIS SONNET IN WEDDING CEREMONIES, YOUR LITERALISM COMPLETELY HUMILIATES SHAKESPEARE'S SUBTLE SINGULAR TRUTH.**

Good for Will Shakespeare!!! He preserves the truth embedded in the "lie" that attempted to appear as truth but failed, and in failing sang its truth (note: the sing-song relation to blood, *sang*). This is metalepsis (and Minippean satire) at work!

Thanks to the demonic presence of Claudio Sgarbi, a convening of a mini-metalepsis seminar found its way to the current scientific thinking about blood and turbulence: namely, that the body "speaks to itself" *via* turbulence carried by the flow of blood from one part of the body to another, a "silent speech" that is "acousmatic" in every sense. The ego does not hear it. The ear can hear it if it tries, but it hears it like the eye sees an after-image. It is a truly remarkable account of the unconscious that "forgets nothing" and "knows without knowing," an EMBODIMENT OF MEANING. Note that this can be understood literally; it is not a utopian promise of phenomenology prophets. These messages are sent by the heart. We do not need to say "sent by the heart" (i.e. in scare-quotes). This is directly true, directly confirmable. It is the reason why cardiologists are collaborating with aerospace engineers. Our toes speak to our noses and our "no's" because in every denial our heart knows the truth. In denial, renunciation, and foreclosure we in effect eliminate the Absolute that energizes (falsely) the utopian ideal of "the perfect signifier" that predicates without reversing, that completes its task without creating a gap to refresh the search, the thirst and hunger, for knowing.

And, when blood falls ... We have the sacrament, the sacred ground. Blood has been shed and we have the spatial component of the consecrated city, the fatherland, the motherland ...). Blood must fall. We know that blood without gravity cannot survive (such has been proved with astronauts blood, which congeals without gravity). We also know that blood responds to the threats of weightlessness in symbolic ways: "falling" in love, the spiraling sensation of ecstasy, the vertigo of obsession. This is "understood" by blood in a way that involves all organs, all flesh.

And now, we have the LAMELLA, *the flesh that, neither dead nor alive, is the echo chamber for these messages of love.*

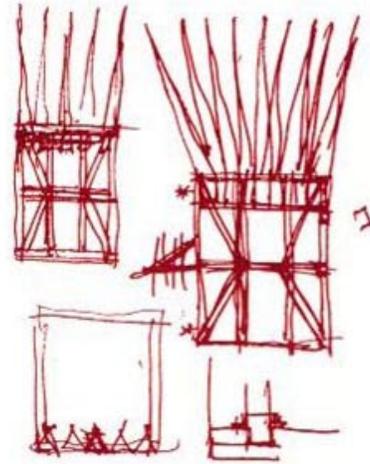
You know that the lamella is an "infra-thin" organ, an actuality of the human body, but in terms of a human body activated by the Rose of message written in blood, is nothing less than the death drive that is "in us more than us," an agent of extimacy. Got all that? This is "getting thick," as the astronaut might say on landing — please, do not "Fly Me to the Moon"! The lamella performs, biologically, the function of the gap in the gapped circle of the death drive. It comes out of the intervals of delay that have made the other drives what they are: (1) the delay between the infant's call of hunger and the mother's response, (2) the delay and conversion of the "gift" of shit in the anal drive, (3) the delay and reversal of the child's Œdipal love for the mother-father, the reversal that creates the "Ché vuoi?" This delay is our inner rhythm, our "claves" as Anat Cohen puts it. A tick-tock mechanism that takes Eros to flesh, the word made flesh, the virginal impregnation that makes it possible for the gods to speak through the body, literal word-made-flesh.

This is the body that resists ideology. "This IS the girl" (*Mulholland Drive*). Her name(s) is/are Diana. She is the  $1+1 = 1$ , the two 1's, the 11. Please, Alberto, do not trash mathematics in celebration of the phallic signifier! We "have your number" on this one! Listen instead to Alireza Moharar on this matter. This opens metalepsis to catalepsy, the coincidence of PERFECT MIND and DEATH OF/IN THE BODY — i.e. reversed predication as a *grand finale*. In [medical catalepsy](#), the body is paralyzed although consciousness is fully present. Without catalepsy materialized as the "worst fear ever," we would not have Edgar Allan Poe's *Berenice*, *Cask of the Amantillado*, or *Fall of the House of Usher*. Oops, forgot to mention, "The Premature Burial," a give-away title.

Why is catalepsy the true successor of metalepsy, its twin? Why are they in fact twins? We know that metalepsis is a framing operation. It allows ideology to "get away with it," with creating a stream of predications, a flow of chained signifiers. The signifiers chain because they do Dante's *terza rima* thing. They take one element that was "hidden" inside two rhyming pairs and create a twin on the outside, a kind of extimacy of sounds.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita (a)  
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura (b)  
ché la diritta via era smarrita. (a)  
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura (b)  
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte (c)  
che nel pensier rinova la paura! (b)  
Tant'è amara che poco è più morte; (c)  
ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai, (d)  
dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' v'ho scorte. (c)  
lo non so ben ridir com'i' v'intraï, (d)  
tant'era pien di sonno a quel punto (e)  
che la verace via abbandonai. (d)

Don't underestimate this trick! It is powerful. It is the basis of (shamanistic?) spells and formulæ from ancient days onward! It is the whisper in the blood, the acousmatic message of love from the ear to the genitals to the knees, the "psyche" of the Herm. Do you see how it gradually "curves" the rhyme around a central secret point? Do you understand how a mathematically-minded poet such as Dante would want to involve *terza rima* with the number 9, the *vita nova* of the Poetic? The death/eros of gravity that makes our bodies stand upright (up, "right") and enforce their strange chirality of left-right to the world and, in exchange, receive the messages of things as left-rights, here-theres, up-downs, high-lows, good-evils. Investigate this on your own, but do not leave out any essential element that, in connecting the framing of metalepsis to the freezing of catalepsy, the "Actæons" who have stepped into the *harem* (thank you Berrin) without knocking. This is the "claves," the "mother and father" as the clarinetist Anat Cohen puts and plays it. The beat. The heart speaking to our bodies, making it possible for our body to speak to itself, from the inside that creates an outside inside. Turbulence, demon,  $\emptyset$ - $\emptyset$ , *apophrades*, kenosis.



John Hedjuk caught on to the connection between Medusa, the death drive, and Eros in his project for the "suicide's house," which turned out tragically to have discovered its inner shamanistic power. The fabricator of the spikes (snakes) who worked on Jim Williamson's reconstruction of Hedjuk's design actually *did* kill himself. This was not the point (sorry for the cruel pun). Rather Medusa's snake-hair is like Actæon's horns. It combines the crown idea (*coronis*: crown, also crow, the bird, originally white, but turned black by Apollo) with the function of divination. The subject does not repudiate the divine, as Alberto says, but in fact becomes the divine through the agency of clairvoyance (divination = seeing the future). This is not utopia in some falsely promised distant future, but the future *inside* the present. The anomaly, the revelation, the epiphany!

The shamanistic trick aspect of *terza rima* is its ability to turn (trope, tropic, apotrope ["turn back"]), **MEDUSA!** What was probably just a mask, taken as a trophy (= trope, turn, object stolen to counter the curse of the dispossessed). What was a mask becomes a head behind the mask, the *haram*, or "that which should not be seen," specifically by the lover who would skip the ritual procedures, who would attempt to collapse the circumventive space of Eros and take a straight line to the *haram*, violating the *harem*. *Terza rima* allows no such straight line through an imagined curved space (Berrin! I hope I have got this right!). Rather, it shows that *space itself is curved*, i.e. charged by *Eros* into a labyrinth. The shortest distance between two points is the self-referential fractal curve, the 3x3x3, aba, bcb, cdc ... of Dædalus's most famous invention.

But of course it was possibly not Dædalus's invention. It was the clever nephew, Perdix, who after inventing the saw and the walking statue, also stolen and made famous by his uncle, realized his life was in danger. He was possibly the first "boy who knew too much," and after Dædalus threw him off a cliff, the gods, taking pity, turned him into a partridge. This bird presides over death of the ambitious binary signifier (Icarus — whose aim, to find a compromise between the heat of the sun and the moisture of the sea, failed as a proof of concept) in ideological flight from Minos's justified wrath. After all, Pasiphæe's *haram* had been most brutally violated! ... all because of "the wrong cow" — Minos's attempt to short-change the gods by offering a lesser sacrifice. Perdix thereafter mediated (reverse predicated) falls of various kinds: into the sea (Icarus, shown in Brueghel's famous painting, watching from a branch), falls into the visible (shown in Antonello da Messina's *St. Jerome*, guarding and explicating the idea of word made flesh in Jerome's translation of the Vulgate), falls and spills of the blood, in general: EROS.



Edith Piaf (1915–1963)

## \* la vie en rose

Even if Piero's demonstration of super-symmetry shows Christ reaching for a carnation ("incarnation") in the famous painting of Mary and the infant Jesus, Rose figures in as a flower of merit if we wish to re-insert "the acousmatic" within our various varied discourses.

*Il me dit des mots d'amour, Des mots de tous les jours, Et ça me fait quelque chose. Il est entre dans mon coeur, Une part de bonheur Dont je connais la cause.*

Edith Piaf's sentiments are captured indirectly by Louis Armstrong's lyrics ...

When you press me to your heart  
I'm in a world apart  
A world where roses bloom.  
And when you speak, angels, sing from above;  
Everyday words seem  
To turn into love songs.  
Give your heart and soul to me  
And life will always be  
La vie en rose.

When I found Anat Cohen's version of this, which magically inserted Satchmo's voice inside their jazz rendition, the words corresponded to the text about the role of Diana in architecture's discovery of its own sacred origins. This was not planned, but it informed the idea of Body Loading, Super Symmetry, Chirality, and the Pick-Pocket (*poché*). Luck, as luck would have it, provided a "divine" coincidence. Please, no Jungian

This is "insider stuff" (everyday words turn into love songs), the Rose of the blood, thanks possibly to the first color of the rose, present even when bleached out by cultivation. Wallace Stevens wrote: "A man and a woman are one / A man and a woman and a blackbird are one." Coronis = crown (Medusa's hair) and the formerly white black bird, scorched by Apollo's wrath because it sent its namesake Coronis, Apollo's lover, warning that she and her new lover Ischys were about to be discovered by the returning god. The signifying chain is haunted from below, the *objet petit a*, the *haram*, that "is not meant to be seen." This is what makes us radical feminists. It is in our blood! We cannot ignore the clues!

For more on the clues, see Godfried T. Toussaint, "A mathematical analysis of African, Brazilian, and Cuban clave rhythms," *Proceedings of BRIDGES: Mathematical Connections in Art, Music and Science*, Towson University, Towson, MD, July 27–29, 2002, pp. 157–168.