

## Michel Journiac's Masquerades: Incest, Drag and the Anti-Oedipus.

See [www.journiac.com](http://www.journiac.com)

'Sex is worth dying for. It is in this (strictly historical) sense that sex is indeed imbued with the death instinct. When a long while ago the West discovered love, it bestowed on it a value high enough to make death acceptable; nowadays it is sex that claims that equivalence, the highest of all.'

Michel Foucault, 1976<sup>1</sup>

Michel Journiac's importance is decisive within the history of performance art in France in the 1970s: he was French, he was a Catholic. He was also a homosexual intellectual who contributed to 1970s debates and spectacles involving gender and psychoanalysis; he was Monsieur Venus, phallic woman and bride of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The dimensions of the sacred and the transvestite in his performances, and his provocative sculptures such as *Holy Virgin* (with erect penis), are contemporary with the writings of Michel Foucault and Guy Hocquenghem on sexuality and of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's promotion of a 'schizoanalysis' in *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* of 1972. Writing on Journiac, Marcel Pacquet declared: 'One shouldn't hurry to castigate the impotence of the decadents, for their convulsions and their inaptitudes are also our own.'<sup>3</sup>

Of course, homosexuality and gender-crossing had preoccupied the Romantics, Symbolists and Decadents: it is, however, the mirroring of nineteenth-century with contemporary preoccupations which defines this particular moment in French intellectual history. Let us recall that Roland Barthes's famous text 'The Death of the Author' (1968) opens with the collapse of 'voice' predicated on the cross-dressed castrato of Balzac's *Sarrazine*, of 1830, further explored in Barthes' *S/Z*, (1970).<sup>4</sup> In literature a whole new gay scene of writing was emerging; the veteran Jean Genet and powerful younger writers such as Pierre Guyotat created national scandals with their work.<sup>5</sup> Adding the fine arts to literature, publications such as Cecily Beurdeley's *L'Amour Bleu* (1977), illustrated the modes and manners of love from the ancient Greeks to Francis Bacon with arousing literary passages.<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault published his exemplary study of Herculine Barbin, the tragic nineteenth-century hermaphrodite, in 1978, two years after *La Volonté de savoir* was published in Paris.<sup>7</sup> Following this first book on sexuality, he continued his encyclopaedic history of the subject, despite a delayed publishing programme. It was in 1984 that *L'Usage des Plaisirs*, the second volume appeared, in which *aphrodisia* are defined as 'the works, the arts of Aphrodite'... 'the *aphrodisia* are the acts, gestures and contacts that produce a certain form of pleasure'. Foucault concludes, **however:**

Sexual behaviour was constituted, in Greek thought, as a domain of ethical practice in the form of *aphrodisia*, of pleasurable acts situated in an agonistic field of forces difficult to control.<sup>8</sup> Not only is no sexual differentiation involved - *eros* being developed, of course, among men - but a concept of *aphrodisia* is elaborated which is prior to the personification of Aphrodite-Venus, as a of the female body, which was 'autopsied' by Journiac in a sculpture which was sliced off at torso level upon a table, with head and loins draped in white, acrylicised material: 'white shrouds, figuring what Christian morbidity has conserved from the luminous flesh of Hellenism.'<sup>9</sup>

Born in 1935 to a relatively modest family, Journiac studied scholastic philosophy and theology at the Catholic University of Paris and aesthetics at the Sorbonne. His vocation as a trainee priest meant that he escaped conscription in the Algerian war, teaching French literature instead in Damas, Syria. It was here that he abandoned his calling to the Church. An intense and painfully repetitive letter to his superiors explains the discovery of his homosexuality at the age of seventeen, his discovery of Christ at eighteen. Branded *pédéraste* and *la fille*, he experienced the loss of his boyhood friends; he feared losing his parents' love. The letter is also a spritual and intellectual itinerary: his chance discovery of the homosexual writer André Gide opened up a world of acceptance, a God of love, ratified by the Catholic writer, François Mauriac's description of an Algerian battered by the crowd as Christ, hence Christ - despised and rejected among men - as love itself. Journiac relates his exultation at the discovery of Nietzsche's rejection of the morality of the herd and its commonplace definitions of Good and Evil; Teilhard de Chardin's poems also strengthened his faith, and he was comforted by the existentialist heroes of Sartre and Camus. How disconcerting for him later to discover that these authors were vilified by the Church! The seminary's discipline and communality became increasingly unbearable, as did the religious emphasis upon Thomism with its exultation of reason beyond and above the individual will: Journiac sensed the impossibility of reconciling his private beliefs and sexual being. He left the seminary; but religion and its symbols would eternally haunt his work: his art was first and foremost, a *vanitas*. 'Art appeared to me as a means of salvation, as salvation itself, the only salvation possible. It was the project which could snatch the world and mankind from the absurd, via which the universe took on meaning.'<sup>10</sup>

Journiac's earliest paintings, concurrent with his personal crisis, such as *Sacrifice*, or *The Neglected Wound* of 1963 seemed constituted of muscles and viscera: intimations of Egon Schiele met masochistic suggestions of self-mutilation..<sup>11</sup> Similar works with altar-like, wooden

framing devices, were arranged for his first exhibition 'Blood Trap' in the ecclesiastical setting of the cloister of the Billettes church in October 1968.<sup>12</sup> The mood coincided with what Guy Hocquenghem, the self-appointed theorist of homosexual desire baptised *l'après-mai des faunes*.<sup>13</sup> This nostalgically Mallarméan pun related to the paradoxical disappearance of an archetypal virile, proletarian, revolutionary, 'red' French male, on the barricades. Symbolically, the posters of the Comité d'Action Pédérastique were the only posters to be torn up and censored by those who occupied the Sorbonne. Hocquenghem prognosticated: 'with the downfall of revolutionary ideals (and this is surely not the least of the effects of May 68), masculinity as a whole as the real, day-to-day bearer of revolution vacillates'. In a state of 'hesitation and fear of feminism' sexual identity had become problematised. 'In some way, all these males have been buggered. Just at the moment when the *pédés* are discovering short hair and virile facades.'<sup>14</sup> The liturgical dimensions of the Catholic rite were responsible for Journiac's breakthrough from painting and sculpture into the performative, an art which addressed, like a priest, the spectator as participant, and the objects of ritual themselves as possible *pièges* or - traps. In 1969, Journiac presided over one of the most powerful and bizarre events of the 1960s, an apotheosis of appropriation as a strategy: *Mass for a body* was celebrated on November 6th in the Galerie Daniel Templon, with the assistance of the art critics Pierre Restany and Catherine Millet. Notionally blasphemous, the mass was conducted by Journiac with great solemnity, in Latin, and took place in an awed silence. Journiac had had his own blood drawn, in the presence of a photographer, in order to make a *boudin*, a blood-sausage which was to be sliced as the host.<sup>15</sup> The portable altars surrounding the main altar bore white sculptures of body parts in their recesses, like so many whitened sepulchres. The principles both of literality and reversibility were at stake: the challenge was to nothing less than the doctrine of transubstantiation itself. Christ made man, via Journiac's blood, became man made Christ.

The audience partook of the *boudin*, an event which acquired international dimensions when repeated, using a Paris-New York telephone hotline in 1970.<sup>16</sup> The phallicism of Nouveau-Réalisme's moustachioed he-men became Journiac's target in his more sculptural phase of parody. In April 1971, Journiac exhibited at the Galerie Imbert, coinciding with the first homosexual film festival at the Cinéma d'Olympic, and the newspaper *Libération's* day-by-day coverage of events - together with the scandal around Hocquenghem's manifestos for the

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Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire ( F.H.A.R., pronounced *phare* = beacon) `Adressed to those who believe they're "normal"' and `Adressed to those like us'<sup>17</sup> An ultra-erect, wrapped penis-package, *Christo parody*, mocked the Bulgarian Nouveau Réaliste; a shiny, flaccid, vinyl `soft-sculpture' penis, *Oldenberg parody*, mocked the American Pop artist; *Love machine*, *Tinguely parody*, created an anti-machine with an erect plaster penis placed ridiculously on top of the mechanism.<sup>18</sup> Following his `Great Wash' show of March 1969, at the Galerie Templon, which had attacked the same victims, Journiac's `Parody of a collection' was a phallic carnival. The masquerade of pop art styles was funny, cruel, but above all, valedictory.

Already so many fathers! Self-conscious Oedipalism was deployed in Journiac's first, parodic acts. In October 1969, the *Trap for a voyeur* placed a naked man in a cage made of neon tubes so bright that the peering public was blinded - the situation of the gaze reversed. An adjunct to the *Trap...*, *The Substitute* used the fairground device of a screen with two naked, photographed bodies and cut-out heads for the public to peer through, appropriating the opposite sex's body if so desired. This surely deliberate citation of Marcel Duchamp's naked pose as Cranach's Adam (with Eve-Brogna Perlmutter's naked Eve in Picabia's 1921 *Ciné-sketch*), invoked the possibility of a quick photographic sex-change.<sup>19</sup>

Homosexual liberation was promoted in militant debates throughout the 1970s. During the previous decade, the Beat generation, the Beatles, the hippies, flower power, psychedelia, sexually unconventional heroes such as Timothy Leary, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg all had their impact in France. An androgynous wave swept Western Europe and America. Now haircuts, fashion and sexual relationships were all profoundly modified thanks to the impact of feminism in conjunction with this new visibility of gay culture. In addition to Barthes, Foucault, and Lacan, French intellectuals read Herbert Marcuse's *Eros et Civilisation* (translated in 1968), and Deleuze and Guattari's *L'anti-Oedipe*, 1972, with its rhizomic model of proliferating desire. Androgynous rock stars such as Alice Cooper, David Bowie or Marc Bolan dominated the music scene. The international avant-garde shifted its boundaries from painting and sculpture to the performative.<sup>20</sup>

Following the artist Jean-Jacques Lebel's introduction of the American-style `Happening' to France in 1964, (Carolee Schneeman's *Meat Joy* at the `Free Expression' festival), François Pluchart initiated the performance-focused review *Artitudes* in October 1971.<sup>21</sup> The first issue on `the material body of art', involved international coverage, featuring Dan Graham, Vito Acconci, Denis Oppenheim, Joseph Beuys and Piero Manzoni.<sup>22</sup>

International performance art had 'arrived' in Paris; Journiac would be prominent within the context of the *Artitudes* debates.

In March 1972, he created what was arguably his masterpiece: *Homage to Freud. Critical Statement of a Transvestite Mythology*, a serial photopiece, which also existed as a poster, folded and mailed to many acquaintances.<sup>23</sup> Journiac's confessional letter of 1962 had described his reading of Freud, and the horrified discovery that desire was not merely a question of morals - his previous social and religious problem - but of malady. Is human freedom no more than a conscious registering of the biological laws of reproduction, he asked? Why should only proto-reproductive behaviour be defined as normal, even when reproduction is not desired?

The photographs which required several takes and all his make-up skills were captioned 'FATHER: Robert Journiac masquerading as Robert Journiac; MOTHER: Renée Journiac masquerading as Renée Journiac; SON: Michel Journiac masquerading as Robert Journiac; SON: Michel Journiac masquerading as Renée Journiac.' Here, one must distinguish between 'masquerade' and 'transvestism': in French the 'travesti en' and 'travestissement' has the sense of both, with a whiff of 'drag' and even of 'travesty', yet not quite the pathological aura of 'transvestism'.<sup>24</sup> Thus 'Michel Journiac travesti en Renée Journiac' may imply 'Michel Journiac in drag as Renée Journiac', while 'Renée Journiac travestie en Renée Journiac' retains more the sense of the female masquerade - the hair, the pearls, the pendant. Is Michel Journiac *in drag* as Robert Journiac? Is this a travesty? For is not Journiac *of the substance* of both his parents, rather than merely participating in a masquerade? The uncanny in these photographs relates as much to the genetic as the genital. While evidently the mug-shot format evokes the institutionalised policing of identity. The striking evidence of Journiac's photographic humour in particular negates both the idea of Freud's *talking* cure, and the body as a whole from the chest downwards: the places of disturbance and sites of lack according to both Freud and Lacan. *Homage to Freud* invites a gazing at a male 'lack' as well as a female one. Finally, reversing the work of Oedipal parody performed upon the Nouveaux Réalistes, appropriation of the parental image becomes an extraordinary work of acceptance, complicity, desire. While his exegete Marcel Paquet invoked the one-dimensional image of the Moebius strip to describe the relationship between subject and identity, Journiac himself called the work a 'statement of the failure of the ritual magic of psychoanalysis'.<sup>25</sup> Despite Deleuze's vituperations against '*papa, maman, moi*' - the reductive obsessions of the classical Oedipus complex formulated by Freud - one can interpret Journiac's *Homage* in two ways: as a statement of individual entrapment or

one of love. The great fear of the loss of parental love he had described in 1962 was surely resolved to no small extent in *Homage to Freud* where, astonishingly, his parents were coopted as equal protagonists.

Antipsychiatry, influenced by both R.D. Laing and the Deleuzian 'schizo' was, indeed, one of the liberationist tenets of Journiac's age.<sup>26</sup> In his passionate preface for Hocquenghem's *L'Après-Mai des faunes*, Deleuze elaborates: 'Against psychoanalysis, against the interpretation and reductions of psychoanalyses - homosexuality seen as the relations with the father, with the mother, with Oedipus... Psychoanalysis has never supported desire. It has always reduced it and made it say something else. Among Freud's most ridiculous pages are those on fellatio... Interpretation, regression, forced regression.... Maybe there is an Oedipal homosexuality, a *homosexualité-maman*, guilt, paranoia, anything you like'; but this is challenged, Deleuze declares, by Hocquenghem's notion of the 'specificity and irreducibility of homosexual desire, a flux without and aim or origin, an affair of experimentation, not interpretation'. Homosexuality is lived in the present, it is not a function of the past.<sup>27</sup>

Journiac delights in parodying the dichotomy suggested by Deleuze: the 'Oedipal' prim son versus the wild transvestite, and their idiosyncratic combination in his literal parody of the condition of a *homosexualité-maman*. In *Trap for a transvestite* of June, 1972, he created photograph sequences of the dressings and undressings of a professional transvestite, Gérard Castex, transformed first from a man in fashionable trouser suit to a nude, then into Greta Garbo; a parallel sequence shows the transition to Rita Hayworth; yet instead of an image of the star, Journiac placed a mirror with her name at the end of each of the four sequences. As with his earlier 1969 sculpture called *The Substitute* (mounted life-size photographs of naked bodies with cut-out holes for interchangeable heads) the viewer him- or herself, changing or modifying sex, becomes the *travesti* named Rita - or Greta. Who are we? What is our sexuality? Is the mirror-image a truth, a licence, our 'other half'? The performance was repeated live at the opening.<sup>28</sup>

In November, 1974, the photograph series, '24 hours in the life of an ordinary woman', while extending ideas and procedures in both *Homage to Freud* and *Trap for a transvestite*, conflated Journiac's wildest drag dreams with an apotheosis of the *homosexualité-maman* fantasy. Based on the stereotypes promoted by women's magazines such as *Marie-Claire*, the series also makes a parodic yet devastating contribution to feminist debates in France: women trapped in what Jean-Luc Godard had once called 'the gestapo of structures'.<sup>29</sup> Journiac, in his

mother's guise, was photographed - by a local commercial photographer - going through the rituals of what Henri Lefebvre had glorified in its masculinist form as 'everyday life'. This was the everyday life of a not-too-young, married working woman of the lower middle class:

Series: 'Reality' (photographs by Marcelle Fantel).

Husband wakes up. Housework. Washing, Going out. Arriving at work. Clocking in. Work. Fixing make up 1. Fixing make-up 2. The midday meal. Coffee. Cigarette. Shopping 1. Shopping 2. The purchase [Tampax]. Cooking. Husband arrives. Evening meal 1. Evening meal 2. Washing up. Television. In bed 1. In bed 2. In bed 3 [no action, the husband reads a newspaper in all three photos]. Dream: waiting 1. Dream: waiting 2. Dream: waiting 3, Dream: lover.

Series: 'Phantasms' (photographs by Marie-Armelle Dussour).

In his arms. Maternity. Suckling the Baby. The Bride. The virtuous young Virgin. The Whore. Giving birth. The Widow. The Rape. The Covergirl. The Feminist. Girl taking mass. Carried away [on a motorbike]. The Queen. The Lesbian, Woman in drag as a Man. Woman in white. The Striptease artist.<sup>30</sup>

'... Women have been condemned' Journiac said to *Marie-Claire*, 'to embody desire. Female fashions, make-up, have no other function. A man is proud of two things. His mind and his phallus. So he locks up art in museums and women in perfectly irrational outfits incarnating a stereotypical desire...'<sup>31</sup>

Transcending an initial response of derision, Journiac declared that 'the transvestite is, beyond laughter... in the domain of the sacred.'<sup>32</sup> The sacred history of gender variant priests extends, of course from archaic times to the tradition of the Orphic Christ who fused pagan and Christian in a mystic union, and continues into the modern period with Paul Gauguin's 'berdache' figures in Tahiti, or the avatars and practioners of 'gay spirituality' today.<sup>33</sup> Within the Church itself, the force for change was unstoppable. Despite the unequivocal biblical prohibition of the homosexual act, and the institutionalisation of the cycle of sin, shame, guilt and confession and absolution within Catholicism Church, a fundamental liberalisation had been set in train with Pope Paul VI's Vatican II revisions of 1962-70. An open discussion of the problem of homosexuality within the Church led to the foundation of the Parisian group 'David et Jonathan' in January, 1972, initially hosted by the gay review *Arcadie*. Initiated with a group recital of the Paternoster, it became the model for similar discussion groups in the provinces. Relations with the Vatican were almost non-existent, especially following the unanticipated Papal confirmation of the prohibition of homosexuality, masturbation and premarital sex in

1976, which provoked a wave of protests - even suicides - in France.<sup>34</sup> Just as the Catholic Church had been compelled to engage in debates with Marxism and Existentialism in the 1950s, it was now forced to accept the imperatives of a post-Freudian age.

Yet just as the transvestite is sacred, Journiac argued, the sacred role of the artist is a form of prostitution. The previous year, he had stated in a discussion on 'sociological art': 'We're prostitutes. What's important is that we touch others whoever they are, you find yourself in a position where you don't choose the partner.'<sup>35</sup> The personal biography Journiac provides at the end of the publication, *24 heures dans la vie d'une femme ordinaire*, has a more personal take on 'whoring': genuine photographs of his childhood and adolescence take their place within the contemporary genre of 'fake' biographies promoted by artists such as Christian Boltanski. Journiac's captions become increasingly ironic and judgemental: 'Maternal nestbuilding' [Michel and mother in a nest of twigs]; 'Jean' [the dead brother]; 'Vagabond paternity' [Michel and his father]; 'Advent of the word' [Michel reading]; then 'Whore 1', 'Whore 2' - which show Michel as a young man, dressed normally, not in drag, the repressed other of the 'whore' of the *fantasm* series.

Whoring and loving within or outside the family? This little-known biographical supplement to *24 heures...* was the precursor of *Inceste*, March, 1975, the natural successor to *Homage to Freud*. Journiac, working again with his parents, posed in 'prim son' guise, doubling and tripling himself in a series of eight photographs in which he is always both the lover and the third person, the excluded one. Artist, art-tart, outcast. He is both the presiding genius of these love narratives and the provocative *films-voyeur*, both son and voyeur, whose initial Oedipal trauma is generated, Freud argues, by seeing or overhearing parental coitus.... Eight permutations were offered in a numbered sequence:

1. *Father-as-lover son-boy-lover Son-voyeur*
2. *Father-as-Lover Son-as daughter-as-lover Son-voyeur*  
(Journiac doubles as the sister he never had, who resembles his mother and who embraces his father)
3. *Mother-as-lover Son-boy-lover Son-voyeur*
4. *Mother-as-lover, Son-as daughter-as lover Son-voyeur*
5. *Son-as-father-as-lover Son-as-mother-as lover Son-voyeur*  
(Journiac in his *Homage to Freud* parental disguises, fantasises, through photomontage, the sexual love in which, incestuously, he plays both roles)
6. *Son-as daughter-as-lover Son-boy-lover Son-Voyeur* (Journiac committs incest with the sister he never had)
7. *Son-as-daughter-as-lover Son-as-daughter-as-lover Son as voyeur*  
(Two non-existent daughters [Journiac] have a lesbian affair)

8. *Son-boy-lover Son-boy-lover Son-voyeur* (two brothers embrace; Journiac, a third, looks on jealously).

‘In short, a whole world of ambiguous signs, included divisions, bisexual states. I am the son, and also my mother’s brother and my sister’s husband and my own father’ states the passage on incest in *L’Anti-Oedipe*.<sup>36</sup> But perhaps every Oedipal variation is a travesty? Without the guise of ‘looking-alike’ would we ‘feel-alike’ as Freud says we must? Masquerade and antihierarchical ‘horizontal’ are emphasised in the *Inceste* series. A Deleuzian insistence on the present is guaranteed by the narrative sequential arrangement of the photographs read from left to right, while real ‘presence’ is attested by the ‘veracity’ of the photograph itself. Yet the ‘here and now’ is teased, provocatively by the time-based axes of fantasy and repression: ‘Freud’s uncertainty whether *events* or *fantasies* make up the typical content of the repressed’.<sup>37</sup>

In the April-June 1975 ‘Indecency’ issue of *Artitudes*, Journiac’s poem ‘Preliminary to Incest’ accompanied the startling *Inceste* photographs: *Comment dire l’autre si ce n’est pas par drague ou par mort...?* How should we speak the other, if not by a lover’s encounter (*la drague* = the pick-up) or by death? Here, painful memories conflate the liquid of his dead brother’s lumbar puncture with his own sperm and masturbation ritual, ‘masquerading as victor, masquerading as victim...parents at the cemetery, at the brother’s tomb’<sup>38</sup> For at the origin of Journiac’s trauma, as declared in his poems published as *Le Sang nu* (Naked Blood) in 1968 was the death of Jean, his brother and playmate in 1948 whom we see in the pictorial biography included with *24 heures... drag* series. Is there a clue here to Journiac’s consistent claims to have been born, not in 1935, but in 1943 during the French Occupation?

Legal, medical and educational practices themselves were changing in this climate.<sup>39</sup> With F.H.A.R. now succeeded by the more political Groupe de Libération Homosexuel, De Gaulle had lowered the age of homosexual consent to eighteen in 1974 (it was currently fifteen for women!) and the Société Clinique de Sexologie was founded. In politics, local gay ‘cells’ on the communist model were organised by arrondissements, and in 1978, two ‘homosexual difference’ candidates were fielded in the legislative elections. As a result of this new liberalisation, a gay sex industry flourished with renewed vigour and visibility, extending from magazines in kiosks and gay saunas to the infiltration of several advertising campaigns with the gay message. Homosexual film festivals were held in Paris in April 1977 and January 1978 (the

latter closed by the police with casualties): the Comité d'antirepression homosexuelle was founded in 1979.<sup>40</sup>

In late 1981, the aggression Journiac sublimated in *Hommage to Freud* and his subsequent acts of masquerade appears, shockingly, in 'Murder-space of the body. Family I' a text on the family as 'murderess... an entanglement of bodies from which we cannot escape each other'. No longer love but murder: 'necessary murders, son-brother, father-son, mother-son, father-mother': the love-theme of *L'Inceste*, 1975 turns to a violent hatred.<sup>41</sup>

The masochism of 1970s performance in France - the self-mutilating Gina Pane was a contemporary - has yet to be fully analysed. As a form of personal catharsis it was present in Journiac's first blood-filled paintings, and the 'naked blood' poems which museum director Jean Cassou had likened to 'physiological and moral hell' in 1968.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps the euphoric freedom of polymorphous sexualities first posited by Hocquenghem and Deleuze were not so free. Perhaps the postmodern supposition of 'masquerade theory' in all its post-Deleuzian 'horizontalities': gender as choice, or what Deleuze called in the *Anti-Oedipus* the 'polyvocal real' has little respect for the lived experience of those who designate their own position - within our societies - as 'Other'. In 1954, Jean Genet had insisted - against Sartre's insistence on Genet's 'self-determination' that his own state was 'experienced as a theme of guilt...inversion is lived in a solitary state.... The homosexual rejects woman, who, ironically wreaks her vengeance by reappearing inside him, putting him into a dangerous fix. They call us effeminate. Banished, sequestered, hoaxed, Woman, through our gestures and intonations seeks and finds the day: our body, suddenly riddled, becomes unreal.'<sup>43</sup> As early as July 1972, Guy Hocquenghem described the trap of desire in terms of a similar dialectic: 'We were imprisoned in the game of shame which we transformed into the game of pride. It's never more than gilding the bars of our cage. We are not free homosexuals proud to be gay.'<sup>44</sup>

Journiac's *Excommunication*, a performance held in July, 1978, at the Théâtre Oblique, continued the motif of the third, the Other, who here becomes witness to a heterosexual relationship, parodied as a narrative of the exchange of transitional objects: a cigarette, flowers, rings, photographs. At first Journiac is included in a 'threesome'. While the couple draw red circles on their arms, Journiac brands himself with a red-hot iron. Finally the young couple rub away their circles, burn their flowers, rings and photos and walk off stage. Journiac is left, looking at their portraits, bearing the sole enduring, burning scar of the relationship, alone. Originator of the performance and voyeur, he is excluded. In 1983, Journiac branded himself

with the triangle, pink on his wounded skin, which marked out the homosexual in nazi concentration camps - a highly disturbing action he would repeat in a period of AIDS militancy in 1993.<sup>45</sup>

Finally I shall discuss the *Action of the Excluded Body* which took place at the Centre Georges Pompidou in June, 1983. Here, Journiac 'gives birth' to a baby bloodied with his own blood and buries it, in front of a couple locked in embrace behind the scene; he picks a fight with the young man, and ends up travestyng a *Pietà*, lying in the arms of the naked woman. Again the theme of the third, the inclusions and exclusions of erotic love, the impossible desire to transcend gender in love, and mourning for the dead baby brother are ineffably linked with the postures of Christ.<sup>46</sup> Journiac's performance parodies his own exclusion, from the experience of birth, from his brother's love, from love of a woman, and as a *Pietà* figure, from the love of the Madonna.. Or is there not a critical aporia here, in that the performance itself, the bloodying, the cradling, the striking, the lying with, are the transcendent acts of love? Surely the persistence of desire in the present is the complement to memory, with its games of repression and prohibition, the unforgettable brother, the unending 'work', in the Freudian sense, of dream, of mourning, of 'being with' ones' parents. In his embrace of love and the Christ-like mode within performance, Journiac distinguishes himself from the orthodox Foucauldian or Deluzian subject, and the transvestite who uses drag and the theatre of sadomasochistic practice alone as forms of political and symbolic resistance.<sup>47</sup>

Journiac dedicated his *Ritual of Transmutation*, an action in twelve stages extending from 1993 to 1995, when he already knew he was dying of cancer, 'To Jacques Miège, to my friends, to my lovers'.<sup>48</sup> One could argue that Journiac's last performative act was his death. Journiac had constantly spoken of his desire to preside over death, to take it upon himself, to organise it, to be at the heart of the action.<sup>49</sup> Yet here, too the sacred act of love was paramount, from the moving deathbed photograph, taken by Jean-Luc Moulène on October 16th, 1995, the day after his death to Vincent Labaume's moving funeral elegy on October 20th, 1995 at Notre Dame de la Gare.<sup>50</sup> An artist and AIDS activist to the last, Journiac died, aged 60, not, in fact, of AIDS but prostate cancer, ironically during the Centre Pompidou exhibition, 'fémininmasculin'.<sup>51</sup> In 'fémininmasculin', love, and paradoxically sex itself as an epiphanic and ontological, not genital, phenomenon was the lack. Michel Journiac's art, in contrast, demonstrates the sacredness of sexuality and its links with mourning clothed in travesty and masquerade - invoking, always, the transcendent dimensions of sexual practice.

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## NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*, (1979), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> See Sarah Wilson, 'Monsieur Venus. Michel Journiac and Love', *Manifestations of Venus*, Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott eds., Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 156-172, 218-222, for an extended version of this article.

3. Marcel Paquet, *Michel Journiac, L'Ossuaire de l'Esprit*, Paris, 1977, p. 73.

4. See Roland Barthes: *S/Z*, Paris, Seuil, 1970; *S/Z* translated by Richard Miller, London, Cape, 1975.

5. See Christopher Robinson, *Scandal in the ink. Male and Female Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century French Literature*, London, Cassell, 1995. Genet's play *Les Paravents* (*The Screens*), 1961 (performed 1966) and Guyotat's *Eden, Eden, Eden*, (Editions Gallimard, 1970, Graham Fox trans., London, Creation books, 1995) were both critiques of the Algerian war involving explicit homoeroticism and gay sex (Guyotat's book was banned for eleven years).

6. Cecily Beurdeley, *L'Amour Bleu*, Fribourg, Office du Livre, 1977; English reedition, *L'Amour Bleu*, translated by Michael Taylor, Cologne, Evergreen (Benedikt Taschen Verlag), 1994.

7. Michel Foucault, *La volonté de savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1976; *The History of Sexuality, an Introduction*, London, Allen Lane, 1979, and *Herculine Barbin, dite Alexina B.* Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1978; *Herculine Barbin, Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, introduced by Michel Foucault, translated by Richard Mc Dougall, Brighton, The Harvester Press, 1980.

8. See Michel Foucault, *L'Usage des Plaisirs*, Paris, Gallimard, 1984; *The Uses of Pleasure*, vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, translated by Robert Hurley, Harmondsworth, Viking, 1986, pp. 53, 40, 250.

9. Paquet, op. cit., p. 99.

10. Unpublished letter (typescript), dated 'Damas: mai 1962 / juin 1962' communicated to me by M. Jacques Miège.
11. These paintings, salvaged by Journiac from a destroyed body of work, are illustrated in Paquet, op. cit., pp. 28-9, 32-3, 40-41.
12. 'Parcours - Piège du sang', October, 1968, consisting of *Porte, Portique, Autel I and II, Autel circulaire, Icones petit model, Icônes grand model*.
13. Guy Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, Paris, Éditions Universitaires, 1972; *Homosexual Desire. Guy Hocquenghem*, translated by Daniella Dangoor, preface to the 1978 edition by Jeffrey Weeks, with a new introduction by Michael Moon, Durham, London, Duke University Press, 1993. See also Guy Hocquenghem: *L'Après-mai des faunes. Volutions*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1974.
14. See Guy Hocquenghem, *Race d'Ep! Un siècle d'images de l'homosexualité*, Paris, Editions Libres/ Hallier, 1979, pp.158-160. The macho gay American leather-look is dated to 1976 in Jacques Girard: *Le Mouvement homosexuel en France, 1945-1980*, Paris, Éditions Syros, 1981, p. 115.
15. *Messe pour un corps*, comprising a white altar and five 'portable altars' - hinged sculptures; 1) Buttocks, 2) Sex, 3) Arms, 4) Masturbation, 5) Legs.
16. Transatlantic performance with the critic Pierre Restany, who linked the Galerie Bonino, New York by telephone and telex to Paris; Journiac's *boudin* recipe was promoted for a New York public.
17. 'Adresse à ceux qui se croient "normaux"', 'Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous', *Tout*, 12, 23 April 1971 (review directed by Jean-Paul Sartre), in Guy Hocquenghem, *L'Après-mai des faunes. Volutions*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1974, pp. 143-5. See also Guy Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1972.
18. 'Parodie d'une collection', April, 1971 see Journiac's full list in *Artitudes*, bo 6-8, December 1973-March, 1974, p. 26.
19. *Piège pour un voyeur*, June, 1969, cage of fluorescent tubes, life size photographs of a 1.80 x 1.25, Polaroids as requested, portrait with blood and individual acrylicised clothes. The complexity of Journiac's parodies of Duchamp extending from cheque-signing (after Yves Klein) to electoral posters, parodying De Gaulle's fateful referendum in 1970, acknowledging Duchamp's 'Wanted' poster (after Warhol) etc., go beyond the scope of this paper.
20. See also the archetypal exhibition "*Transformer*" *Aspekte de Travestie*, Lucerne, Kunstmuseum, which included Urs Luthi, Castelli, Juergen Klauke, Werner Alex Meier, Ist, Alex Silber, Luigi Ontani, Marco, Pierre Molinier from France, Andrew Sherwood, Andy Warhol's women (sic), Eno (Brian Eno), Mick Jagger.
21. See the substantial catalogue by Charles Dreyfus, *Happenings & Fluxus*, Paris, Galerie 1900-

2000, 1989 (Journiac is not included).

22. *Artitudes*, 1, October 1971: 'Le corps matériel de l'art'.

23. *Hommage à Freud*, photographs mounted on formica, 75 x 50 cm; edition of 10 for France, 10 for America; issued as poster folded into four and posted, signed 'm. j.' 'photographie: m.'.

24. The currency of the term 'masquerade' over two decades of feminist studies, deriving from Joan Riviere's 'Womanliness as a masquerade' (1929) would have had no contemporary resonances in terms of Journiac's games with 'travestissement'. Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (Paris, 1973), London, Vintage Books, 1994, churlish towards both women and 'Anglo-Saxon research', does not even name Riviere when he introduces the concept in the essay 'From love to the libido', p. 193. For the Anglo-French critical history see my essay 'Feminites-Masquerades', in *Gender Performance in Photography*, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997, pp. 135-155.

25. Marcel Pacquet, *Michel Journiac*, op. cit., p 86 (the Moebius strip metaphor, central to Jean-François Lyotard's contemporary description of a 'libidinal economy' was very prevalent) and Dominique Pilliard: 'Entretien avec Michel Journiac', *Artitudes*, no 8-9, July, 1972, p. 28.

26. See Harold Heyward, Mireille Varigas, *Une antipsychiatrie? La folie en question*, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1971 and Gilberte C. Rapaille, *Laing*, Paris, Editions Universitaires, 1972.

27. Gilles Deleuze, 'Préface' in Hocquenghem, 1974, op. cit., pp. 8-9. For similar statements by Journiac see Julia Hontou, *La photographie dans l'oeuvre de Michel Journiac*, Dossier de D.E.A. Paris-I, Sorbonne, 1988, vol. I, p. 17 and *Le conception de l'art corporel de Michel Journiac*, Mémoire de D.E.A. Paris-I, Sorbonne, 1998, vol. II, pp. 55-7.

28. *Piège pour un travesti*, Galerie Stadler, 20 June- 4 July, 1972. A transvestite performance was given by Gérard Castex or Jean-Pierre Casanova according to two varying accounts.

<sup>29</sup> Jean-Luc Godard, from the publicity for his film *Deux ou Trois choses que je sais d'Elle*, 1967 - Paris, *elle*, epitomised by the female predicament.

30. *24 heures dans la vie d'une femme*, Paris and Zurich, Arthur Hubschmidt éditeur, 1974. Dedicated to Dominique Pilliard.

31. See unpublished interview between *Marie-Claire* and Michel Journiac, in Hontou, *Le conception de l'art corporel...*, op. cit., vol. II, part III.C.1.2., p. 63.

32. 'Entretien avec Michel Journiac', *Artitudes*, 8-9, July, 1972, in François Pluchart: *Art Corporel*, Paris, L'Image 2, 1983, pp. 78-9.

33. See Randolph P. Conner, *Blossom of Love. Reclaiming the Connections between Homoeroticism and the Sacred*, San Francisco, Harper San Francisco, 1993.

34. See Jacques Girard, *Le Mouvement homosexuel France, 1945-1980*, Paris, 1981, pp. 150-155, 'David et Jonathan. Christianisme et homophilie, un menage difficile'; p. 153 details the denunciation of 'grave depravity' by the 'Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith', 1976, and the furore generated by Roger Peyrefitte's revelation of Pope Paul VI's own homosexuality. The 'Centre du Christ Libérateur', 1976, and its research into the pastoral problems of homosexuality sponsored by the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Geneva, is discussed pp. 159-60.

35. Michel Journiac, in 'Dix questions sur l'art corporel et l'art sociologique', *Artitudes International*, no 6-8, December 1973-March 1974, pp. 4-5.

<sup>36</sup> Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe, Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1972, p. 186 (analysing the work on incest by anthropologists Lévi-Strauss and Marcel Griaule).

37. See Frederick Crews, 'The Revenge of the Repressed', a critical discussion of several publications relating incest and 'incest work' to repressed, recovered and false memories, *The New York Review of Books*, November 17th, 1994, p. 54.

38. 'Préalable à l'inceste' from 'L'Acte Indécent de Michel Journiac', *Artitudes*, 21/23, April-June, 1975, p 17 (extract), republished as 'Préalable à...', in Michel Journiac: *Délit du Corps*, Paris, Les Éditions de la Différence, 1978, pp.11-12.

39. For the changing legal situation from Vichy through to the 1970s see Christopher Robinson, *Scandal in the ink*, op. cit., pp. 2-5.

40. Girard, op. cit., pp. 142-145.

41. Michel Journiac, 'Espace-meurtrier du corps: Famille I, novembre, 1981' in *Méfais d'hiver*, Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne, Ministère de la Culture, unpaginated, 1982.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Cassou, preface to Michel Journiac, *Le Sang Nu*, Paris, 1968, dedicated to his brother Jean.

43. Jean Genet, 'Fragments', *Les Temps Modernes*, August, 1954, pp 200, 203.

44. Hocquenghem in *Partisans*, July, 1972, quoted in J. Girard, p. 91. Girard discusses the reversibility of the politics of pride and the politics of shame, underlining the constant condition of otherness, p. 93. His discussion '...Christianisme et homophilie, un ménage difficile' pp 150-5 is particularly relevant as regards Journiac.

45. See *Marking: action of the excluded body*, 1983, and *Action: marking in the present, August 1993*, with texts and illustrations in *Michel Journiac: Rituel de transmutation; du corps souffrant au corps transfigurée*, Ville de Châteauroux, 1994, pp. 24-27.

46. *Action du corps exclu*, performance curated by Blaise Gauthier, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, June 1983.

<sup>47</sup> See Marie-Helene Bourcier's extensively-footnoted article, 'Sade n'etait pas sadomaso, Foucault, si', in *La Revue h*, 4, spring 1997, pp. 18-24, which investigates the late career of Foucault, particularly within the context of American SM practices and their critical reception.

48. 'Rituel de transmutation, du corps souffrant au corps transfiguré' was the title of an action in twelve stages, extending from 1993 to 1995, see *Michel Journiac. Rituel de transmutation...*, op. cit., 1994.

49. See Hontou, 'Le corps: "ouvroir de la mort"', *La conception de l'art corporel de Michel Journiac*, op. cit., vol. I, , pp. 28-30, where she relates Journiac to the context of the death-games of his contemporaries, Ben, Christian Boltanski, Gina Pane and Günther Saree in the 1970s. A discussion of works such as *Inquest for a body*, December 1970, *Contract for a corpse*, 1972, or *Ritual for a dead person*, December 1975, go beyond the scope of this article.

50. Jean-Luc Moulène, *Portrait mortuaire de Michel Journiac*, 16 October, 1995, reproduced in Vincent Labaume: *Le Tombeau de Michel Journiac*, Marseilles, Editions Al Dante, 1998.

<sup>51</sup> See *féminin-masculin, le sexe de l'art*, Editions du Centre Georges Pompidou, 1995.