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EDITORIAL

The Approximate Man

Each time I try to write about the body
I end up writing about language.

JUDITH BUTLER

You're difficult and easy; cheerful and serious:
I can't live with you nor without you.

MARCIAL

we have displaced notions and confused their vestiges with names
blind are the words that after birth know only how to rediscover
their place

TRISTAN TZARA

I am you when I am I.

PAUL CELAN

Like everything that can throw forms of human life into a state of turmoil or danger, questions of sexuality and gender intrigue and concern me. I don't think that people's aggressions and phobias have diminished today; they have merely changed their appearance, to occupy unsuspected positions of authority. Humanity obviously moves forward; however at the same time a herd of diehards can hesitate or decide to turn back. I can't accept the conservatives' concept of "life", "human", and the "universal". I also can't kowtow to their vision of "normality". In fact, there is a moral compulsion above and beyond all the religious and political pamphlets and declarations – that is embedded in the clefts of certain subversive practices.

When my existence is impinged, curtailed or subverted, when I am reprimanded or my liberty to be who I am is denied, I can only insist on being who I am, drawing attention to what one is not supposed to do or say. I merely ask that you stop and consider Spinoza's *Ethics*: where he says that to exist is to exist *in the act*. And that desire ends up being the effort that each person makes *to preserve* the self.

There are things about my self, that even if I wanted to, I couldn't change. This makes me the same as everybody else. As Marguerite Yourcenar's Alexis says: an instinct is still not a temptation; it only makes it possible. I prefer to look temptation face on. And temptation for me is always a face. That talks. Looks. Inhales. Moves. Attacks. Laughs. Licks. Seeks attention. Becomes angry. It is a total mystery. Yet a mystery that can be probed. I think that in this we are all fundamentally the same, if we have the right to make our own decisions. Inevitably, I will always move between what was given to me at birth – my body's traits – and whatever I fancy doing with this body when another body attracts me - the only moment a certain transformation is possible. As such, I can't talk for those who are constant in their predetermined desire for one specific sex. I know that this can be manifested proudly, fatally, obsessively, indifferently or even aggressively. Yet I have never felt so fixed, tied, inflexible or preordained. For me there is no clause that orders or disorders affection. I don't represent anyone other than myself. I can only state the obvious, there is no difference in how we feel pain, when we lose it, when ecstasy overcomes us, a person attracts us, or when an action – not yet experienced – makes us lose our footing. By *lose our footing* I mean to lose touch with reality, when the act of *touching* becomes the *act* par excellence. No doubt this is the root of the curious or difficult mix of vulnerability and exultation that I feel when I can't resist falling in love

The approximate man that I am – taking nothing as a closed book, as preconceived –always interested in the novelties and blows that humanity deals, with the ever-present question of what it means to be alive, also knows that he cannot concede the exclusivity of heterosexuality to heterosexuals, of homosexuality to homosexuals, of bisexuality to bisexuals. I am always living in expectation – even of what I think I already know. And it's always a match of power – with all the power of the game.

Arnau Pons