

Open enclosures: a woodchopping performance
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My neighbour drives by and he says, oh wow, you are *really* doing the work. When you're done here, he says, you can come over to my garden and go on, because that's something that neighbours in Germany enjoy saying. We look at each other and we say ha-ha-ha to each other, we're in a conversational pattern that precedes us and I'm letting the *real* of *really*-doing-the-work stick, letting the qualities of the work extend to my body as realism, as body, not as costume, woodchopping is serious business.

My neighbour walks by with her dog and she says, oh wow, you are *really* doing the work, so nice, and we look at each other and we exchange polite smiles with each other, as in aren't we both *really* doing the work constantly? Then we let it pass and mind our own business, because I'm precisely NOT interested in saying, oh, look what this body can do, too. And then I think about how Halberstam talks about Babe from 95 movie *Babe* and think of the little pig who wants to be a sheepdog partly because pigs get eaten on the farm and dogs don't, and partly because all his primary connections and identifications are with dogs, and think how Babe proves to be a better sheepdog than a sheepdog.

Chain mail or simply mail is a type of armour and it consists of small metal rings that are linked together, here following the simple and common pattern of the European 4-in-1 to form a mesh. In its circular structure, each ring is closed to define, in opposition to itself, an outside and an inside. Each ring is closed to contain on the inside four other rings that bridge to that shut-out outside, each containing on the inside four rings that bridge to that shut-out outside.

No link is solid.

No ring is riveted closed, thus made solid.

All rings remain open.

All links are bent closed.

So technically and with full force, this mail might not be as cut-resistant as it could be if properly closed, but in theory wouldn't you agree that like the garden, or any garden, or gender, we speak of an enclosure that carries in itself some sense of openness, too, and that to remain open does protect and that enclosure is an illusion and thus not real anyways? And when, practically, the garden belongs to some real estate and has a pool in it, like there is no outside to gender, like we peek through holes in the fence as one small part of this constellation, and the neighbour invites you to the garden but only to point to the not-enough or the too-much, I don't think we would talk like that outside of hierarchy.

In addition, I'm thinking that to carry this weight is also to remain mobile, or malleable, as you like. And with that said I have to make (un)clear that when I say mail, some say that I refer to a spot or opacity, as in the Latin macula, becoming mail, of the retina. And others say that in French to mail is to hammer is to work on something that is malleable and on something that will not be fixed.

And as mail takes a lot of work to make, as mail takes a very long time to make, it gives a very long time to think about the lineage of this work and to think, who did *really* do this work back in the days. And that because it is weaving and because it is metal work which are both very gendered

practices, I'm wondering at my need to create an imagined history in which the phantom maker is I, or who I want, and the wearer does not matter because his life will be saved anyways.

Coming back to Babe, Babe plays and mimics the role of "dog", but seriously, and appropriates dogness, performs dog functions, and says, well, I don't care to the sheepdog's superiority over sheep and to master sheepdog's natural hierarchies, but "instead, he proves his willingness and ability to herd and shows proper respect for the sheep and above all takes pleasure in his dogness."

Today, mail is worn by woodworkers, for example, as they work with sharp

machinery, or by competitive woodchoppers as shoes around their feet when they do the discipline called standing block, chopping down in between their thighs, their feet, so it's not only applied to protect against some outside force as in against the ground you stand on and that's all around, but also against yourself, your own hits and I think about the brute force and how easy it would be to sever limbs or crush... – I shudder.

My friend said do you think it's a good idea to give woodchopping workshops to people? Yes, but what if one participant seriously injures themselves, like hitting their leg or chopping off a finger, and maybe check if you need insurance. Oh yeah right, maybe, after all, I did not think

about the cutting-up of my body or all bodies outside of its abstraction and abstraction is useful because otherwise it would really be quite gory, and it might lose its validity as political demand.

When we chop wood, when we break things apart like muscle – not bones! – or wood or representational conventions, when it's a big gesture and a no-nonsense kind of performance at the same time, we won't say what Foucault calls 'no to power' but maybe we say, well, I don't care, or ha-ha-ha, and maybe we cut a tie, and make mail, and the phantom maker material and I'll wear the shoes to guard the feeling of your presence,

and Babe walks into the garden that
was guarded by a sheepdog before.

A passer-by that passes and not
becomes,
a nomenclature that will not be read,
a reading that costumes,
a costume that's *real*.