

# consonni

What if...

An image from fiction can help us to give visible expression or form to a position, an experience of what we feel. For example, what if, in social gender relations, we wouldn't be the woman as defined and presented by education, the media, history and politics? What if we did not define political or historical representations as 'man'? If we choose the female identity as resistance, as a political act, as a creating and creative act, we need to shift among the norms and codes that define us; we have to imagine ourselves as cyborg, vampire or witch, as an 'other woman' in order to be ourselves, to be capable of thinking of ourselves beyond the stereotypes, norms and codes.

[...] Figures from fiction allow us to envision new arrangements, juxtapositions and alliances. They help us to connect worlds virtually, with our imaginations; they invite us to an experiment that begins with "what if...", with a fiction, with prospecting, experimentation. What if we had a capacity for empathy (as Octavia Butler puts it in *Parable of the Sower*, 1994)? What if strangeness did not exist (as Cory Doctorow posits in *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, 2003)? What if the private realm no longer existed? What if we could imagine another equality? [...] Speculation, fiction and science fiction are ways and spaces to grasp a reality constructed from errors, chance occurrences, hybrid encounters and mutations which, at the moment, seem difficult to accept: the transformation of gender, the mutation of work, the shift of boundaries and bodies, the link between our identities and machines.

Extract from the lecture by Laurence Rassel, cyberfeminist and member of the Constant collective, for the Zombie Seminar of "Stay inside. Close windows and doors" in Barakaldo.