



## *Staging Death, Translating Death, Rehearsing Death: A Photographer's Apprenticeship in Dying*

by Daniela Fargione

"We photograph things in order to drive them out of our minds. My stories are a way of shutting my eyes." Franz Kafka

The interconnections between photography and death have been amply analyzed by several theorists. W. Benjamin, R. Barthes, S. Sontag, and J. Berger, just to mention the most eminent contributors to this critical discourse, have all reflected on the social and cultural impact of "photography as thanatography" to use R.H. Stamelman's expression (Stamelman, 1990: 266). But it was Susan Sontag who, in her pivotal essay "Photography" (Sontag 1993), highlighted the violence that is embedded in the very practice of taking pictures and reproduce "reality." Even from a terminological point of view, the metaphors used by both critics and practitioners evoke some sort of aggressiveness: photographers "point," "shoot," "frame," "burn," in short, they encroach a personal space that they freeze in time. Sontag argues that like guns, "cameras are fantasy machines whose use is addictive" (104), but contrary to them they are not lethal, "the camera does not kill, so *it seems to be all a bluff* – like a man's fantasy of having a gun, knife, or tool between his legs [...] To photograph someone is a sublimated murder, just as the camera is the sublimation of a gun" (104, *my italics*).

Also *History of Violence*, Claudio Cravero's last photographic project on which I will focus this essay, "seems to be all a bluff." This is a collection of "portraits" that reproduce apparent dead bodies, mostly attacked in their own domestic spheres. Cravero chooses not to show their faces, thus suggesting that their identities are both irrelevant and negligible to his critical study. In this way, the imbrication of the



narrative within the practice of (non)showing entails a dismantlement of the traditional conventions of the portrait.

In Cravero's shots, neither the perpetrator of death (a mysterious murderer?), nor the weapon used (an omnipresent knife), should be considered as main focal points of the artist's inquiry. As I will show in this paper, the undisputed protagonist of these photographs is the light: as sharp as a blade, it subtly penetrates from a distant elsewhere and rips off a veil of fear, not of death itself, rather of the obnoxious indifference to it, as the result of generalized death imagery saturation. It is my contention that, although we might feel bemused when questioning the authenticity of reproduced death (Cravero's victims are "actors" who *fake* death), the serializing quality of the artist's work should be seen as disciplined probing: by entering the certainty of the fictional, it bespeaks the ambiguity of the real. As a matter of fact, the pervasive theatricality of this narrative raises questions on both the faithfulness of photography translation and the immutability of the *fact* of death. Eventually, the project can be considered as an apprenticeship in dying through translation practice. In fact, similarly to a translator, who moves "freely" from one cultural and linguistic dimension to another, Cravero collects shots that might be seen as the results of specific domesticating translation strategies. The apparent violent death, here, replicates and refracts (à la André Lefevere) previous encounters between the photographer and his model (as argued by Barthes), in this case death itself, hence implying both a history and a futurity of death.

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When in 1955 English anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer published his seminal article "The Pornography of Death," a very controversial debate inflamed many scholars. Gorer's thesis involved Victorian society and its prudery towards sex and sexual behaviour, which had eventually produced pornography as the result of a culture of repression. Gorer argued that in modern Britain death had replaced sex. Mainly a private affair, an unmentionable event, death was the last taboo of contemporary society, "the last pornography of modernity" as Baudrillard would say (Baudrillard 1996), a movie for adults only to be watched secretly and not without embarrassment.

The idea of death as an invisible f/act stemmed from different social, religious and political changes in the Western world. In his essay, Gorer insists on the process of secularization that invested post-Victorian Great Britain; on the progress of preventive medicine with the subsequent decrease of mortality; finally, on the removal of death from the domestic sphere, together with its relocation into institutionalized environments such as hospitals and sanitized medical structures. As a consequence, both grief and mourning started to be considered *ob-scene* in the Shakespearian sense



of the term,<sup>1</sup> finally doomed to be removed from the central stage where the action was being performed. Geoffrey Gorer (and Philippe Ariès after him) eventually called for a readmission of the celebration of death, a practice capable of reconciling death with human dignity. Up to the twentieth century, in fact, the end-of-life experience was accepted as a natural phenomenon. The passage was somehow “tamed,” to use Ariès’s word, by religious and social rituals that helped both the dying and the bereaved, whose beliefs in afterlife and immortality of the soul rendered death an intrinsic element of human life. In contrast, denial and concealment of death constituted the leitmotifs of many scholarly studies during the 1960s and 1970s both in Great Britain and in the United States, and emerged as a response to a general lack of interest towards issues concerning death.

Half a century later, we are still confronting a paradox, since the current aphasia of the mass media towards any *informative* discourse on death seems to be counterbalanced by its only viable alternative: its gaudy spectacularization. Possibly, it was the Vietnam War that ratified this perception. Also described as “the war America watched from their living rooms,” this was an unprecedented case of fully mediated conflict, which also marked the media’s new function, namely “to maintain the illusion of an actuality” (Baudrillard 1987: 38). The Vietnam war offered a graphic representation of death through the media, which provided a sanctuary of viewing, a collective observatory of the unfolding of the deaths of others. On that occasion, against any repudiation of death on the account of its illusionary status, death became real and irreversible.

Since then, images of war and accidents, epidemics, and natural disasters – all witnessed from a distant vantage point, daily poured into domestic environments, and equally served as any other fictionalized product – contributed to celebrate the supremacy of the “three screens” (Cynthia Ozick 2000), i.e. movie, TV, and computer, as authoritative *loci* where to stage death. Besides, Cynthia Ozick claims that the three screens are universal toys of our society, and explains that its infatuation with anything oral and visual as opposed to anything written is mainly a declaration of total subservience to the ephemeral. In this view, the insistence of mass media on the reiteration of images of (violent) death not only enhances a distorted perception of death, but it also assimilates it within a dynamic of image consumerism based on the impermanence of its desired effect, mainly empathy. The more we watch, the more we fail to retain.

The images that onlookers generally remember through the implementation of a pattern of insistence and serialization of their displaying, mostly appeal to people’s mere sentimentalism and are aimed to provoke shocking reactions. In many instances, news are broadcasted in their melodramatic and sensationalistic form, in respect of

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<sup>1</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “obscene” derives from Latin “obscenus,” which had a strong religious sense of “inauspicious, ill-omened, abominable, disgusting, filthy, lewd.” Shakespeare was the first to quote it in 1597, in *Richard II* (IV i 122). (OED 1972: 63).



the famous adage: "if it bleeds, it leads." All over the world, the intense rise of reports on murders, fires, rapes, calamities in newsrooms is clear proof of a morbid curiosity that exists around the *practice* of death, but which necessarily raises ethical and moral issues. The oversimplification of a broadcasted story stems from a policy of maximization of profits, which exploits – among other things – the suffering of the victims' families. However, what seems to be taken as true by most people is often nothing more than the result of manipulation, mostly hinged on a discourse on television and image displaying as *evidence* that stems from a dichotomy of "truth" and "falsehood," something that has become tragically unstable. The "era of simulation" as conceptualized by Jean Baudrillard, evokes a pattern of "commutability of formerly contradictory or dialectically opposed terms" (Baudrillard, 1993: 8), so that "when reality is systematically turned into a spectacle, the spectacle itself becomes reality" (Huyssen 1989: 13).

Yet, if the philosophy behind death image production and commodification may be easily grasped, how can the recent increase of public interest in death be vindicated? Various factors can be listed – from the fear of mass death through the prospect of nuclear warfare or international terrorism to the sacralization of the body in death – but all of these factors seem to point to a general new attitude towards death *and* dying.

The simultaneous status of a double paradigm – concealment on the one side, and obsession with it on the other – increases our bewilderment while attempting to come to terms with its inevitability. Nevertheless, despite the promise of a prolonged life span and the illusion of rejuvenation, new death awareness has finally emerged. What is still lacking, however, is a common strategy or method of coping with death, which needs to be reconsidered within a larger frame. Death, in fact, is not a mere individual concern; rather, it is a feature of a larger social context. Robert Kastenbaum, for instance, places death within a dynamic "death system," that he defines as "the interpersonal, sociocultural, and symbolic network through which an individual's relationship to mortality is mediated by his or her society" (Kastenbaum 2001: 66). In the light of recent terroristic threats and attacks, and the consequential invocation to international solidarity, it seems feasible to assume that a common expected behavior in front of death is recognizable. More so when death is violent. If it is true that each society has its own ethical, cultural, and religious beliefs that change according to time and place, it is also true that there are some norms and values that are shared almost universally. Violent death is seen as a violation of these very common norms and values and, since it locates itself outside the parameters of normative expectation, it is condemned as *deviant*. Within this discourse, Claudio Cravero's *History of Violence* provides an opportunity to ponder on a potential realignment within the ambiguous relationship that exists between photography and death, eventually discarding his audience's expectations.

As already stated, Cravero's work is an unusual collection of portraits. If both in painting and in photography one of the tenets of portraiture is the re/creation of the subject rather than its mere representation, Cravero's shots completely dismantle that



tenet. It has been stated that a photograph offers indisputable proof of an individual's existence. However, it is only up to the photographer to capture the model's essence, the unique distinctive features that differentiate him or her from anybody else, in Hannah Arendt's words the "absolute Self-ness" that radically separates the individual from "all its fellows" (Swift 2009: 46). Yet, in case those very features are either neglected or effaced, the subject turns into a mere "type" and is integrated into a generic human category. Cravero consciously constructs his work as a catalogue of types: a girl raped in her bedroom, two wealthy women murdered in their living room, a musician killed with his instrument, a group of students mass-murdered in a university classroom... The photographer never provides any title for them, but he marks them by a sequence number that respects chronological order. Therefore, inasmuch as *History of Violence* depends upon an archival structure, it exhibits archetypal representations of death and attests to an interest in the straightforward, almost anthropological inquiry that is coherent with the inventorial agenda of his project. Because of the concealment of their faces, his models' subjectivity is completely removed from either recognition or memory through a process of obliteration that contrasts the very function of the portrait. The evocation of Antonin Artaud's concept of the human face foregrounds the consistency of the photographer's work with an underpinning critical discourse on the ambiguities of the photographic representation,

The human face is an empty power, a field of death. [...] In the portraits I have drawn I have above all avoided forgetting the nose the mouth the eyes the ears or the hair, but I've sought to force the face that was talking to me to reveal the *secret of an old human story* [...] (Artaud 1965: 229. My italics)

As argued by Barthes in his *Camera Lucida* (1981), photographers are driven by a willingness to represent life, but eventually they need to surrender to the irony that the photographic image is, instead, *thanatographic*. Contrary to Martin Heidegger, who claimed that the absolute protagonist of death is the individual who cannot be substituted by anybody else (Heidegger 1959), Cravero's work cynically comments on a "greedy reductionist"<sup>2</sup> explanation of the relationship between death and the referent, that is perceived as an assemblage of endless combinatorial possibilities, none of which can properly grapple with the individual's *true story*. As it occurs on television, Cravero's victims of violence could be anybody: identity is a purely anagraphic fact. But the issue at stake here is not simply the reaffirmation of a universal human vulnerability – death, as photography, is democratic – rather a

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<sup>2</sup> "In their eagerness for a bargain, in their zeal to explain too much too fast, scientists and philosophers [...] underestimate the complexities, trying to skip whole layers or levels of theory in their rush to fasten everything securely and neatly to the foundation" (Dennett 1995: 82).



denunciation of the spectator's indifference in front of a crime as the result of image saturation. "Images transfix. Images anesthetize" (Sontag 1993: 108).

Artuad's definition of the human face may be expanded through La Rochefoucauld's maxim, "on neither the sun, nor death, can a man look fixedly," conjured up here as a warning: if you stare at a face, that is a field of death, you may eventually go mad.<sup>3</sup> But if you *do not* look at death, you may forget (or pretend to forget) of your own mortality. In this sense, *History of Violence* implements a subversive strategy of capsizing the function of photography that, while witnessing life, reminds of death. When Cravero strips his victims of their own faces, he also deprives his viewers of a death reminder, a *memento mori*, thus apparently perpetuating an illusionary state of "deathlessness." Everything, however, "seems to be all a bluff." In Cravero's photographs, his dramatic act of imposture is reinforced by the fact that his subjects are not real corpses, but alive "actors," who pretend to be dead. To look at his photographs, then, means to enter the realm of the pure fictional, so that the inherent slippery meaning of these images consecrates Cravero's art to be a medium of betrayal as much as of enlightenment. It is, in short, Baudrillard's "perfect crime" (Baudrillard 1996). But as for Baudrillard, for whom the murder of the real is not equal to the celebration of the illusion but rather to a methodic actualization of everything, to the annihilation of otherness, also here everything is reduced to a universal "transparence."<sup>4</sup>

If Cravero's victims are faceless, their bodies are parcellized. Rarely are they shown in their entirety; at best, the viewer can glimpse portions of them: an arm hanging from a bathtub, a calf standing out against an armchair, a head tilted aside. In this way, the atomization of the body corresponds to the fragmentation of the Self, thus suggesting that even in death the human being is just the result of mere accumulation, mainly of other people's images of him or her. A typical example comes from photograph n. 48.

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<sup>3</sup> [...] our face, that which is our most personal, exists only for others. We do not exist but for others. We-ourselves are definitively hidden from we-ourselves, unidentifiable, not only in the secret of our heart, but in the secret of our face. In return, we know the true face of the other, we possess the secret of the other. The Other is the one whose secret we possess, and who possesses our secret.

To contemplate our face would be madness, since we would no longer have a secret for ourselves, and would therefore be wiped out by transparence (Baudrillard 1993b).

<sup>4</sup> See previous note.



Contrary to many other images of the same series, violence and death seem to have penetrated this domestic space silently and deviously. As usual, this looks like the scene of a “perfect crime,” whose perfection, according to Baudrillard, “lies in the fact that it has always-already been accomplished – *perfectum*” (Baudrillard 1996: 1). No clues are offered to our reconstruction (and understanding) of the crime, except for the omnipresent knife lying on the floor and those two female bodies, which by virtue of their fragmentation respond to an invitation to provide “some truth.” Because, as Barthes explains, “The photograph gives a little truth, on condition that it parcels out the body” (103). By applying Barthes’s theory literally to this photograph, the viewer is soon engaged in a search for truth. The gaze follows a precise itinerary, a circuit that the photographer has probably intuited in advance<sup>5</sup> and traced out on the stage with a spectacular final effect in mind. Following the roundness of the armchair, the onlooker’s eye advances along the curves of a thigh, then of a calf, where the gaze gets to a sudden stop by stumbling first into a red sandal, then along a heel, finally into a blade. The knife – as it always happens in Cravero’s scenes – lies on the floor to evoke a scuffle, possibly a murder of which the two women are the victims. The red of the invisible blood – which is never showed but which can be imagined by association – insists on the shoe, then on the dress of the second woman and, especially, on the backgrounds of the two paintings hanging on the wall. There, the eye gets to a stop. That is the end of the viewer’s gaze’s course that finally crashes against the dead bull on the right and the bullfighter on the left. The mute and anonymous deaths of the two women are thus aligned with the gratuitous and spectacularized death of the animal, all of them caused by a blade. The photographer, it seems, is playing with the many paradoxes of death, reality, and the ritualization of death.

As in a *corrida de toros*, in fact, the two women seem to be part of a highly ritualized practice. However, whilst the two paintings reproduce the intensely

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<sup>5</sup> Cravero generally inspects his models’ houses some days before the shooting.



emotional atmosphere of the arena, the two female models that stage death evoke the world of the theatre. In both cases, death is fictionalized and represented *in absentia*, while being inscribed within a spacially arranged sequence. As viewers, we are allowed to the last narrative phase only, but our roles may be compared to those of a participatory audience at a bullfighting or at a theatrical performance, since either our scorn or our consensus are elicited through an implicit request of the photographer, who invites us to mentally visualize all the previous steps of a *precise* succession. And precision, in contrast with the epistemological ambiguity of the scene, is an important technical feature of Cravero's photographs. His exclusive use of a terse, natural light, whose amount and slanting filtration are accurately monitored, contribute to both fix the neat awareness of the *fact* of death and at the same time to guide our gazes towards a distant and invisible elsewhere, a deferred focal point from where the light comes.

Another important dilemma that Cravero confronts in his work is the immanence of history, which dictates many of his aesthetic and conceptual choices. His photographs, it has been said, are recognizable only by a sequence number, which gives the work a serializing imprint and an archival style. However, they are included in a collection that is called *History of Violence*<sup>6</sup>, so that the title emphasizes the investigative quality of his discourse. Barthes explains that by inserting the past within the present, photography duplicates a previous encounter between the photographer and his model – in this case death itself – finally offering him an occasion to rehearse his own final moment. Through the technique of repetition, Cravero *refracts* images of death and transforms *History of Violence* into a translation practice for his viewers as well as for himself, where the process finally reveals to be his personal apprenticeship in dying.

In "The Metonymics of Translating Marginalized Texts," translation theorist Maria Tymoczko claims, "It is a curious fact of contemporary literary studies that very different branches of literary theory converged on the same insight: every telling is a retelling. [...] Every creation is a re-creation." And since "writers do not simply create original texts," also translation, which is a literary work, "depends on previous texts [...]. Every writing is a rewriting (Tymoczko 1995: 11). Therefore, to continue with this logic and assuming that photography may be compared to literature in its capability to re/produce texts, we can conclude that Cravero's versions of previous images of death are "a form of writing that is a rewriting" (12). This concept is very well expressed by Polysystem theorists, notably by André Lefevere, who has stressed that "a writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through 'misunderstandings and misconceptions'", or, to use a more neutral term, "refractions," which he defines as "the

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<sup>6</sup> In a personal interview (July 2, 2010), Cravero informs me that the title has been chosen as a homage to his cinematographic passion, since *A History of Violence* is the title of a well-known movie by David Cronenberg (2005). Similarly, another work recently exhibited at Perpignan (*Mise en Cène* by Roger Castang) bears the title "La grande bouffe," evoking Marco Ferreri's film (1973).





adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work" (Venuti 2002, 240-1). Moreover, the translator, as Tymoczko reminds us, "is in the paradoxical position of 'telling a new story' to the receptive audience, even as the translator refracts and rewrites a source text, [...] the more remote the source culture and literature, the more radically new the story will be for the receiving audience" (13). The photographer, then, plays the role of the translator and re-tells the long-standing story of violent death reinventing it at each shot, as the next two images attest.

These are the very first photographs of the collection. Although Cravero states that the idea of *History of Violence* had been "hanging in my mind for quite some time,"<sup>7</sup> it was in the year 2007, on the occasion of an exhibition of his photographs in the south of France,<sup>8</sup> that he started to actively work on this project. Photograph n. 29



recalls a whole production of Flemish painting – from Anton van Dyck to Rembrandt, from Rubens to Jan Vermeer – which strongly advocated a new perception of daily life reproduction. Many of their paintings, for example, meticulously mirrored scenes and objects of daily usage, which acquired a new artistic value and dignity. Cravero's photograph thus concentrates on the two main features of Flemish art of the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth centuries: the portrait and the domestic space, but instead of conveying a feeling of warmth and social activity, he violates this intimate place by making it subject to the attacks of violence. The artist activates a dichotomic paradigm of inside (the home) and outside (the violent world), which also comments

<sup>7</sup> Personal interview (July 2, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> "Les Passions Traversées." D. De Lisi, C. Cravero, S. Reichenbach. Maison des Arts, Bages, 2007.



on the interlacings between the personal story of the individual and the wider dimension of History. The result is the restatement of the idea of violence as deviance through an act of transgression: the viewer's expectations, in fact, are completely baffled by the photographer's luring domesticating strategy. Again, the final effect is cunningly achieved through a wise dosage of a natural light that, after filtering from the outside, smites cups, pots, and dishes (common emblems of a domestic life), together with the woman's white robe, that thus becomes a shroud, her own burial garment.

With literary texts, translators find themselves in the position of needing to settle on one of the two translation methods: they can either supply the receptive readership with a new and foreign discourse, often resisting the dominant poetics of the target country, or they can adapt their source texts to the receiving cultural universe, providing a translation aimed at meeting the expectations of the target audience. The process of domestication within the act of translation consists in making familiar something that is alien, while favoring an illusory gap filling of the two worlds in comparison. This approach consolidates implemented conservative tendencies within the target literary system and, oftentimes, it reflects an ideology of assimilation. Transparency and fluency in translation are a sort of reassurance that the receptive readers require in order to feel "at home" within the familiar context offered by the target language. This strategy of domestication is applied in photograph n. 2, Cravero's version of Jacques-Louis David's *Marat*.



Contrary to the previous example, which calls for a whole tradition of paintings, this photograph is the reproduction of one single picture, and it is possibly the most pugnacious to illustrate Cravero's philosophy. Central to the photographer's quest is what Baudrillard terms "hyper-reality" (Baudrillard 1970, 1988), a theoretical state in which subject and object, true and false, real and fake dissolve as a consequence of an



uncontrolled proliferation of communications. Mass media, TV in particular, produce a simulation of the real that is even more credible than reality itself, thus eroding any distinction between the material world and the mediated image of it. This conscious denial of the concept of authenticity and originality renders photography the ideal ambit where to invent a perfect, self-identical world. The replication of Marat's painting both translates and theatrically stages death, eventually forcing the onlookers to confront the mortal limit. Of their personal lives, of course, but also of the meaning of both death and history.

This is especially true in photograph n. 72. Here Cravero moves to the level of mass killing and provocatively engages with a reflection on the savagery of massacres and on the atrocities of their media coverages, which become even more abrasive when children are involved. The reference here could be to any of the numerous mass murders that have taken place in American schools in these last ten years. The killings at Columbine High School, CO, in 1999 is perhaps the most notorious case, but in my interview with the photographer the massacre at Beslan School N. 1 was mentioned quite frequently.



Schools are undoubtedly perfect terrorist targets, and when in September 2004 a group of pro-Chechen armed rebels took 1200 children and adults hostage in North Ossetia, the world stopped in abhorrence. Russian security forces stormed the building after three days of negotiations, which were followed by a series of explosions and gun battles that left more than 350 people killed and 700 injured. In our conversation, Cravero expresses all his criticism and contempt not only towards the shouted images of violent death that were spectacularized in those days, but especially towards the silence that still lingers around the unspoken truths of that episode. As of today, many aspects of that massacre still remain riddled with different questions (such as military responsibilities, censorship and disinformation, the government's role in negotiations, and undisclosed political and economic games of the other super-powers involved), which have found no satisfactory answers. Cravero suggests again that photography



has become an instrument of moral soothing, and history an assortment of pure anecdotes.

One last aspect of *History of Violence* deserves proper attention: the highly dramatic charge of its representations. Barthes symbolically cites theatre to elucidate the ways in which photography creates a condition of illusion, "Photography is a kind of primitive theatre, a kind of *Tableau Vivant*" (Barthes 1981: 32). As we have seen, Cravero's shots are strongly marked by a performative quality, which invites to ponder on the very concept of "performance." Drawing on anthropologist Victor Turner's theories, we may want to consider it as a body practice used for a critical redefinition of the real. Turner, in fact, gives special attention to the theatre on the basis of its proximity to life, and argues that it is "the form best fitted to comment or 'meta-comment' on conflict [...]" (Turner 1982: 105). This thesis needs to be evaluated in relation to what he calls "social drama," which is initiated "when the peaceful tenor of regular, norm-governed social life is interrupted by the *breach* of a rule controlling one of its salient relationships" (92). The consequential state of *crisis* requires a "redressive" act, which usually involves a ritualized action, a sort of "reconciliation" (92). Drama, then, may be conceived as one performative area for both social meta-comment and reconciliation.

Because of his militancy in theatre,<sup>9</sup> Cravero seems to be well aware of the potential value of theatre for his personal reconciliation with violent death. Photograph n. 20, though, complicates things.



In this shot an "actor" on a stage pretends to be a dead actor on a stage, so that a series of refractions invests the viewer in a process of endless image multiplication. The myth of photographic truth is called into question again, as the morbid game of simulation is here blatantly staged to denounce the unstableness of the indexical

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<sup>9</sup> Claudio Cravero was one of the founders of Fan Teatro, Torino, and actor between 1982 and 1993.



nature of photography. Differently from other shots of the same series, however, this photograph seems to be a more solipsistic entertainment with death, since it also allows the photographer to re-visualize previous encounters with it within a space that Turner would define "liminal." Conceived as a "temporary state," a "betwixt and between" (232), this is an experiential "realm of pure possibility, whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise" (Turner 1967: 97). In this perspective, not only is a performance capable to merely represent the transformations of its socio-cultural context, but it also has the power to *effect* those very changes through a performative process that can either bolster or resist dominant and familiar structures.

The similarities with the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization that have been discussed earlier in this paper are quite evident. It seems to me that the staged apparent deaths displayed in *History of Violence* eventually serve as a strategy to both make death more familiar and to come to terms with the very idea of dying. Cravero finally finds in his art a kind of translated theatre for the oscillating tension between the fear and the taming of violent death.

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