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In lizard years I was 52

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Wearing, Writing, Becoming-Other

This exegesis is about dressing in a sequinned jumpsuit and re-naming myself a lizard, and then what followed.

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Introduction

For three months between the Thursday that was the 29th of May and the 1st of September 2014, I went about my usual activities dressed as a lizard. I did not have a lizard's tail or claws, only scales. I wore a jumpsuit I had sewn all over in sequins, transforming my surface. Sometimes my appearance was likened to a fish, or mermaid. The creature appeared indeterminate, but a fantasy of being lizard occupied my thoughts. As lizard I worked my part-time job at a café. Went to classes at university. Walked around the city. Every day for three months it was my dress, both costume, and uniform. It was washed once a week and repaired as required. It was not used to sleep in, but was worn everywhere else. At night it hung on two coat-hooks on the back of my bedroom door. The wearing of it cast coloured reflections over my everyday routine. Inhabiting an idea of a creature very different from human serves as a catalyst for becoming-other, a process that entails a deterritorialisation of the self, which is the undoing of both subjectivity and signification. The desire to become-other engages Derrida's (2006) claim that 'the human is the animal at unease with itself.'

Dress is a speaking surface. This research investigates dress as an articulation of identity, and how this can be used to critique representations of subjectivity when at variance to norms. Studying dress as a visible condition of subjectivity reveals something about the effects of dress on both psychological and embodied experience. I argue that through the use of unconventional dress I can shift out of my default mode of subjective being and use this to consider ways to perform becoming-other. In this exegesis I offer an analysis of how wearing affects experiences, documented through a written record undertaken daily throughout the three months as a sequined lizard-creature. I also situate

coming out of that period and of a return to my previous set of clothes, though my relationship to what could be considered everyday clothing had altered.

Nonhuman animals are sometimes thought to exist in surface only, that is, lacking the interiority of humans. Ron Broglio (2011) subverts the negative association of this claim, proposing surface as a productive site of interaction. This provokes consideration of what humans might gain from considering relationships to surfaces. Dressed as the idea of an animal, notions of surface slowly infiltrated my thoughts and habitual behaviour. Considering this, I explore existing ideas about subjectivity and hybridisation, to stretch my notion of self in a way that does not necessitate the exclusion or opposition of otherness. The concept of otherness describes an oppositional relationship to what is different from the self, or recognised subject. To become-other conceives of perspectives and possibilities that are unfamiliar and produces new alliances. This also enables an understanding of how my own subjectivity is constructed and how this effects cohabitation with others. To embody dress and perform as irrational spectacle interrogates rational humanism. Privileging rationality produces oppositional difference, a distinction that inhibits becoming-other and connectivity. Irrationality performed destabilises the status of rational human subject.

Understanding the ways that surfaces communicate reveals innate ways that dress can perform. In costume I performed as a lizard every day and directly experienced a shift. In this guise I was understood by my surfaces and become a spectacle under an interrogative gaze. This interaction of being read by others reveals how societal context regulates perceptions of appearance. While this investigation is focused on a few months of my own experience, it has wider implications for posthuman considerations of

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wearing. The wearing of ideas and writing them down are intertwined in this exploration. Separate each can directly communicate, but together they form a concept of becoming that finds potential in the gaps exposed where familiar systems of representation are inadequate. Stepping out of my performance in sequins was not the end of the research but a means to examine the agency of the costume on its own, to assess how it performs to others as a vacant garment, and to reflect on the difference between lizard costume and more conventional dress.

The section immediately following this introduction, 'Unfolding,' addresses methodology, by explaining my approach and my aims in exploring becoming-other through experiencing dress as costume. 'The Creature Wore Clothing' is a review of literature that examines and provides interpretation of select theoretical perspectives in relation to my research. Additionally, it summarises examples of performative modes that I identify as pertinent to my own hybrid practice. From this point the exegesis follows a chronology. 'Lizard-Writing' offers my take on documentation of performance, writing undertaken while dressed as a lizard that becomes its own transformation. Upon returning to my former manner of dressing, 'Withdrawal/Renewal' feels the difference experienced between lizard and human clothing. 'Surface Displayed' turns to the needs and approach to re-displaying the worn garment inside a room I have altered as a means to activate the way the costume performs. 'Emerging/ Disappearing' brings together the findings of the research, and what conse-quences can be drawn for thinking about dress. 'End(less)' echoes the undoing of singular identities, proposing fictive possibilities of costume.

Unfolding

The experience of dress is transformational. By arguing that dress is performed, I consider the layered and mutable ideas that surround the way that dress is both experienced and understood, on or off human bodies. Elizabeth Wilson notes that the ever-changing aesthetics of fashion masks the changes of the subject and body, that it 'glazes the shifty identity, freezing it into the certainty of image' (Wilson, E, 1985, p. 60). By wearing lizard costume daily, my 'self' inside the garments no longer appears to provide the constant, and I experience different facets of my 'self.' Eventually I also come to realise that the garments are changing as well, I find things that were assumed to be static and certain are revealed to be less secure. Becoming-other interrogates fixity as it requires a shift out of representation, though this is complex and can be understood in various ways. The way I use the term is particular to my own experiences, but does refer to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts. As a subset of becoming-other, I examine becoming-animal, which is not described as a literal transformation; becoming-animal is described as becoming neither human nor animal, but is an undoing of both categories. A deterritorialisation is here understood as a transformation in perspective where definitive representation is unfastened. Becoming-other deterritorialises social codes and results in alliance with something previously considered 'other.'

Through performing and writing as a sequined lizard, I deconstruct rationality through exposing the irrational, this creates an understanding that evades representation, but requires renewal to prevent it from reasserting itself. In the process both rationality and the irrational come unfixed, to reveal that these seemingly opposing notions are unable to be reconciled. To be outside of representation is to become precarious, I take up this position and propose

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it be applied to the practice of dress, a precarious dress that always holds transformative potential.

I was always set to weave myself into a fictive creature. In costume I became a spectacle, visible 'other' for three months. I then moved back into more conventional dress, to better understand my relationship to clothing, and conceive of what sort of creature to become next. Withdrawing from lizard costume allowed reflection upon the creature I had become and the way the costume performs as a vacant garment. Costume as a medium presents an opportunity to experience otherness, as it can mediate a shift outside of a familiar sense of self, in order to take a different perspective. I take becoming-other to be a process of unfixing the way I understand my own subjectivity. Butler (1993) calls the production of humanness and otherness a 'differential operation' each is defined by the opposing relationship. Deleuze and Guattari identify that becoming deterritorialises fixity, so becoming-other is a means of undoing the opposition of subject and other. I mediate a shift out of self by leading with unusual dress and my ingrained mindset is slowly swayed. The way that dress performs identity instigated my interest in the ways that self-consciousness can constrain ways of being a human subject. The effect dress has in the reflection between self and other has become central to understanding the potential of dress to create difference. Beyond my local interaction and personal experience, this research poses consequences for making and wearing clothing. The position taken is removed from typical fashion concerns of commodifying desirable identities. The focus here is on the lived experience of dress, performing through costume and writing in embodied response. Dress and language that perform becoming nonhuman unsettle systems that disregard otherness. Both wearing and words are able to diverge from

established norms and disrupt limitations of representation, as shown by other artists, designers, and writers mentioned herein.

Fiction, theory and performance all express differently, and together give a sense of irreducible and diverse becomings. Images are deliberately not used to represent myself in costume, to avoid such fixed or certain impressions. Alongside live encounters with costume, I used writing as documentation for its ability to perform mutable shifts in perception. During my wearing-performance I wrote my impressions as they unfolded, as my mode and ways of perceiving oscillated from self-conscious, introspective human and sensory lizard. When writing as a lizard I mirrored the behaviour of recurrent processes of becoming, acknowledging discrepancies, wavering between irrational – an attempt to be 'other' – and possibility: tracing the rare moments of tangible alteration of being. In writing of becoming it is impossible to be sure what the reality is in the first place and the words inevitably take on their own transformation. Despite the impossibility of conveying the experience of performing in language accurately as I or any other felt it, in the spaces where the words begin to show their (in)capacity, I hope to make an example.

The Creature in Clothing

I began with the idea of 'animal' and with clothing. The rest followed. Animal is referenced in quotation marks here to qualify the way the term is often used to oppose what is considered 'human,' this instance of language denies the relationship that exists between humans and other creatures. The Western ideology that separates the 'human' from the 'animal' refuses mutual vulnerability, preferring rational thought to embodied existence. A view that privileges those characteristics that are thought to belong exclusively to humans, gives less attention to what we hold in common. Thinking through ideas of animality provides a lens by which to consider being human, a perspective that heeds Derrida's musings in *The Animal Therefore That I Am* (2006) and Ron Broglio's *Surface Encounters* (2011), which provide insight into what humanity might learn from considering the non-human. Taking the idea of the human as 'rational animal' and the paradox this proposes I performed irrationality by dressing in a sequinned jumpsuit and re-naming myself a lizard. This deconstructs representations of both lizard and myself, and in becoming a hybrid I explore otherness. Irrational and animal are separate formations, but both contradict the surety of the rational subject as definitive. This offers alternative possibilities for thinking outside the centrality of the human subject, as advocated by a posthuman philosophy.

Posthumanism counters a philosophical stance that relies on the exceptional significance of autonomous subjects and, as consequence, privileges the human as the beholder of rational thought over other creatures. This humanist[1] subject is defined through 'differential operation,' that positions an essential self in opposition to what is 'other' (Butler, 1990). The idea of a creature very different from human helps me to shift my relationship to

my surroundings. I mean to destabilise any belief of having an singular identity by imagining unusual perspectives. I exhibit this idea through my own dress and by costume displayed afterwards, attempting to provoke a similar experience with others. While performing in costume I feel myself change, but appearing in costume also affects those who saw me. Their comments filter back to me, and others have made their own narratives around the outfit that are all different to mine.

Dress and its role in the 'surface politics of the body' (Butler) make clothing an especially productive site for communicating for and about the body due to its very closeness to the skin, and as dress customarily functions as an indicator of identity. This can be manipulated in such a way that subverts the production of identity norms through the same performative repetition that creates them, as Judith Butler explains in her theory on cross-dressing that will be returned to later. My lizard costume demonstrates the multitude of possible alternative forms of dress that could be used to interrogate the pretence of fixed identity in a given context. In a wider sense this explores the ways in which fiction and the imaginary produce some aspects of subjectivity but also communal realities. My particular interest is in how fictitious ideas about self can colour experiences in certain ways. To explore this I have performed and experienced becoming-other mediated by writing, and costume, by utilising clothings ability to transform the wearer and the perspectives of others, and translating this experience into written form.

The following turns to a closer explanation of key perspectives pertinent to my research and practice. All encompass ideas of becoming-other, deterritorialisation and irrationality, and the potential these concepts offer my performance in lizard costume and its subsequent display. I examine feminist

perspectives on Posthuman theory, which by decentring the human subject creates new theories of subjectivity that are open to alliance with otherness. Deleuzian-Guattarian becoming describes ways to mediate shifts in perception and for this is linked to posthuman subjectivity. I find fictions that explore themes of hybridity or transformation between human and other species to be an appropriate point of reference for how the ideas imbued in clothing can shift subjectivity. My own use of words to demonstrate becoming has similarities in the way that it performs hybridity and spaces in-between representations. Alongside this, examples of performance artists dealing with animality serve to position my own hybrid practice that draws upon anti-fashion, performance and writing. As my work operates between disciplines, the surrounding field is somewhat disparate, finding connection in ideas from various areas, and occupying speculative terrain.

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In relation to the 'posthuman condition,' clothing provides an interesting medium. Responding to the suggestion of a subjectivity not defined by rational and fixed values, I propose this be performed through dress, which generates openness to the possibility of becoming different. This would affect not only wearing, but also how clothing is viewed and understood in modes of display. In subverting and experimenting with the conventions of dress, alternative prospects are revealed, for understanding the psychological and visceral experience of interacting with clothing. In thinking of views that pursue rather than shy away from difference, what role does dress, as both marker of identity for self and interface with others, have in beginning to think outside of the preconceptions of being human? Stephen D. Seely proposes using 'fashion to decenter the human' (Seely, 2013, p. 247) and outlines this potential of affective Avant Garde designs to generate a becoming nonhuman

and undermine established logics of identification. The text features works of Alexander McQueen, Hussein Chalayan, Gareth Pugh and Comme Des Garçons that advance what innovative forms of clothing are possible. On display, these shift understanding of the relationship between wearer and garment, calling into question the subjective status of the wearer beneath the clothing. By distorting and extending the shape and surface of the outer body's form, garments effectively destabilise familiar understandings of the body and subject (Seely, 2013). The designs Seely references are specifically purposed for show, most are not intended for everyday wear. Visually, these pieces speak through a proposed relationship to the skin. By looking at clothing, the viewer imagines and desires to experience the promised becoming. Visual experiences of clothing directed by the fashion industry perform very differently – often as phantasmic spectacle – to how we understand clothing worn by people we know, or strangers in the street. Despite its sensory qualities, clothing performs most often through appearance.

Each of the designers mentioned above critiques the system and ideals of mainstream fashion in their work. This is one form of antifashion, though this must still be understood as operating within the discourse of fashion as a whole. Where fashion exists, most forms of dress are understood in relation to fashion, even when contradictory of what is currently fashionable, or in defiance of the capitalist fashion system. Despite intent to protest, antifashion is often assimilated into what is fashionable, its aims subverted. Fashion takes from antifashion to fuel its system of selling desirable identities, recasting it as novelty. Understood in terms removed from consumerism, antifashion aims to shift conceptions of dress to outside of established identity tropes. As Seely identifies, this is when dress can be understood and valued for its potential to affect becomings. Fashion appeals to me as an expressive cultural

form and a medium for ideas. However, my own use of clothing is concerned with anti-fashion as my project is questioning the normative standards by which appearance is enacted, and in the same way is vulnerable to recapture by the systems it hopes to evade. Understood in Wilson's terms as 'oppositional dress,' costume might be considered a form of antifashion, though the degree of spectacle this creates is contingent on the situation in which it is worn. I have explored these ideas while dressed as a lizard. These experiences informed the display of the vacant costume in the way I arranged the surrounding space, considering how to activate the inanimate costume and let it perform to others.

A lizard outfit evokes costume, even when worn as everyday dress. Costume implies an embodiment of something 'other' to everyday dress, and here there is a correlation between the function of costume and Avant Garde clothing. In these instances dress serves as a productive fiction that mutates conceptions of identity. This holds similarities with Seely's examples, though instead of attending to the design of the garment, the emphasis is on the wearing phase, arguably the performative context that can have the most realistic effect on subjectivity. The act of dressing as a lizard becomes irrational through the perceived inappropriateness for the context in which it is worn. This communicates to others and also creates an embodied experience that has consequences for the relationship of dress to subjectivity. It became apparent as I wore it, and then watched it hanging on its own, that the costume is an agent that can shift subjectivity independent of my being inside of it. Displayed on its own the garment exhibits this potential. Clothing that is understood for what it is able to affect rather than its ability to sell itself is demonstrated by some forms of antifashion. Considering antifashion as a constituent of fashion discloses potential to revise the dominant aims of the

fashion system, as antifashion that is thoroughly anti-commodity has potential to change understanding of relationships with clothing.

The construction of self-image contains a psychological and social dimension that influences the affective qualities of wearing clothing and how this can be manipulated. Costume is often understood as a fictive mode of dress, inhabiting a character that is not your 'self.' Costume is entered into like a story, one that surrounds your body. The layers to this experience are not easily understood through a purely visual encounter with clothing. Lizard-writing interacts with and discloses depth to surface performance. Lizards may not speak with words but they also do not wear clothing. These paradoxes stay on the surface, revealing absurdity in the systems of representation that find lizard-writing and lizard-clothing to be irrational. To interrogate humanness through codes that are particular to being human, dress must relinquish rational aims, and so must writing, to speak as creature.

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To mediate becoming, the words and the garments must transform, away from how their more familiar use is understood. In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1897), French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari use fictive examples of becoming mediated through writing. Fictions provide an alternative view to more analytical theories, because they are less attached to reality, the authors are freer to transgress. Creative fictions strive to imagine perspectives different to the familiar and rational human and make a fitting medium to instigate becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari propose becoming first through literature and the voice. As part of their discussion on becoming-animal, the writers extend an invitation.

> Either stop writing, or write like a rat… If the writer is a sorcerer, it is because writing is a becoming, writing is traversed by strange becomings that are not becomings-writer, but becomings-rat, becomings-insect, becomings-wolf, etc.
>
> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 240)

I adopted this suggestion while writing in lizard dress, and it seems to have been taken exactly by Andrzej Zaniewski, with his novel *Rat*. Zaniewski has written from the imagined perspective of a rat after careful research and observation of the species, and his book draws comparison between the lives of rats and humans. The Author's note gives the warning, that 'a rat has created this novel, but you will find yourself in it' (Zaniewski, 1993). The story certainly does not adhere to human codes of propriety, so any affinity between reader and rat would require the abandonment of human standards, a genuine attempt to meet the animal on its own terms. Reading and writing as nonhuman relocates the way words can be understood, as vessels of signification for something other than logical and concrete understanding. In this novel, writing is used as the mediator for becoming-animal.

In Deleuze and Guattari's own explanation, becoming-animal requires a mediator, an encounter with something in order to effect a becoming. As becoming-animal is not a literal transformation into a different species it is becoming something that is neither human nor animal in the representative sense. Becoming requires a deterritorialisation of whatever constructs impose fixity upon being. An authentic becoming is not representational, nor can it be truthfully represented, what is produced by becoming is deterritorialisation and alliance with otherness. To become through writing or with clothing can appear to be representational, as these forms rely on systems of signification.

However it is not dressing in clothing or the act of writing or reading that make the perceptual or embodied shift, rather it is the deterritorialisation of the codes by which we are familiar with words and dress. It is this that produces a new alliance with something other and a move beyond representation. Becoming-other also demands a release of subjectivity, although this seems to be a problem with the representations bound up in the humanist subject, a revised, non singular posthuman subject encountered later in this literature review is a becoming-subject, formed suitably for 'a world of things fundamentally in motion' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Clothing is a cultural form specific to humans, so from a view of human/animal separation, the animal in clothing is an irrational proposition. It interests me when clothing emulates furred, feathered or scaled beings. This represents an idea of 'animal,' but could be seen to signify an envy of surfaces that belong to other creatures, a longing to be different from the human subject that is constructed in opposition to animality. As Judith Butler notes in *Bodies That Matter*,

> It is not enough to claim that human subjects are constructed, for the construction of the human is a differential operation that produces the more end the less 'human,' the inhuman and the humanly unthinkable. These excluded come to bound the 'human' as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and articulation.
> (Butler, 1993, p. 8)

This 'differential operation' produces hybrids that evade categorisation and disrupt a stable view of subjectivity. Butler proposes precariousness in place

of fixity. In *Precarious life*, Butler reveals the way that 'vulnerability to others… without ceasing to be human' (Butler, 2004, p. xiv) traverses boundaries of selfhood through the experience of embodiment. As with becoming-other, precariousness effects deterritorialisations and produces an alliance with otherness by exposing vulnerability to the unfamiliar.

The New Zealand based artist Catherine Bagnall, dresses up in the 'wilderness' to experience immanence and embodiment. She wears clothes that enhance sensory connections with her surroundings, through both the material qualities of the clothing and sentimental or imaginative relationships with garments. For Bagnall these qualities are able to facilitate an expansion of being that is the feeling of becoming-animal. She describes this as 'sensations of fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being a body with limbs that have extension in space' (Bagnall, 2013, p. 355). She also locates potential for clothing to heighten this experience, finding that 'wearing a dress with more than two sleeves gives me the sense of having more than two arms and in a dress with a tail I have a tail' (Bagnall, 2013, p. 355). If Bagnall's works offer a genuine becoming it is through a transportation from ordinary to a vivid and immanent state of being, and because she writes accounts of how clothing transforms her experience, offering insight into a personal experience of becoming through dress. She often performs alone, though sometimes Bagnall dresses groups and leads them on walks. Having participated in one of these group performances, I took part in becoming a pack of creatures, amid people of all ages wearing tails and pointy ears while tramping in Tongariro National Park. Reflecting on this experience after my recent performance as clothed-spectacle, I remember when other trampers who were not part of the performance confronted our pack. Dressed as a creature under an interrogative gaze, a reflective moment passed, I experienced

being 'other' as they saw me and felt the imposition social constructs that regulate identity. Though inhibited by being watched by seemingly sensible humans at the time, I remembered how the interaction created a shift in perception for both parties, and this became of interest to me. The private pleasure that clothing can provide is somewhat separate from the way dress performs in public. In public situations, dress becomes an interface that projects an impression of identity for the consumption and understanding of other people, as well as giving security to a personal sense of self. It is this comprehension of becoming-other that this research focuses upon, to investigate how transformative dress is affected by surrounding views and the way this might be used to undo opposing perceptions of subjectivity and otherness.

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Posthuman theorists including Harraway, Braidotti and Butler, make use of the various forms of becoming as an active way to destabilise representations of being human as static. Though some feminist theorists find fault with Deleuze and Guattari's theory,[2] these writers find becoming useful to envisage feminist posthumanism as is advocates embodiment of otherness. As the human subject is not held as the dominant concern in posthuman theory, the issue of subjectivity is sometimes neglected. However, anti-humanist and feminist writer Rosi Braidotti stresses the importance of re-visioning the subject within posthuman thought, as one that is 'materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded' (Braidotti, 2013, p. 51). Braidotti's revised subject extends the basis within posthuman theory that asserts that many of the decisive constructs that have heretofore determined what it means to be human are coming undone. This proposes openness, for imaginings, and is an opportunity for subversion and strange hybrids and for experimental being and becoming. A posthuman subject that is embodied and manifold,

no longer opposes the conditions of becoming, it is itself a condition of posthuman subjectivity.

Steppenwolf, the novel by Herman Hesse, contains just such a multifaceted subject. Harry Haller believes himself to be half man, half wolf. His notion is not of being literally half wolf but a way to understand the feeling of having two opposing natures switching between different selves. The Steppenwolf is conflicted between the comfort of bourgeois living of his upbringing and intellectual pursuits and a wild, sensory and independent spirit. I relate to this tendency to categorise sensations and behaviours as 'animal' or 'human,' to separate and impose a veneer of systematic understanding. In the novel it is put forward that this notion of a dual nature is a simplification of what is really a possession of a multitude of personalities that fluctuate in a repetitive process of becoming-other and the Steppenwolf's discomfort with what he considers 'normal' human life is really an inability to reconcile himself to the Western emphasis on a singular and unified sense of self. This corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari's specifications for becoming-animal,

> It is at this point that the human being encounters the animal. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. A fascination for the outside? Or is the multiplicity that fascinates us already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us?
> (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 240)

To temporarily become a sequinned lizard was an opportunity to experience a dormant facet of myself, to unfix notions of a definitive personality and find potential to become. Donna Harraway addresses the expansion of human subjectivity in her *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985). Cultural technologies, including

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many forms of clothing and dress are sometimes thought to distance humanity from a more 'natural' state of being. Harraway contradicts this simplified position, unfolding the cyborg from a feminist perspective; she finds not only a symbolic blend of organism and technology but also 'a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction' (Harraway, 1985, p. 291). She asserts that in the world we have made, all humans are cyborgs, and our lived experiences are hybridised, part subjective and part collective. On social reality Harraway argues

> This experience is a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind. Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginitive apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility.
> (Harraway, 1985, p. 291)

This reveals how the ability to continually transform through dress might be productive in ways yet unconsidered. If dress can affect consciousness there is potential for it to be liberating in this way.

Harraway has also written a *Companion Species Manifesto* (2003), where she considers nonhuman animals and the way they are 'teaching us to pay attention to significant otherness as something other than a reflection of one's intentions' (Harraway, 2003, p. 28). Harraway considers that both cyborgs and nonhuman species can help redefine the human in relation to what has previously been considered 'other.' Instead of oppositional categories she identifies a relational mixture of things cohabiting in the process of being. In this view the intentionality of humans is just one form of agency, which is no more critical than instinctual and innate agencies that have effect regardless of human measures.

Preconceptions and definite intentions must be abandoned when inquiring into otherness, as an all-pervasive knowledge is not possible, and misconception unavoidable. This is the stance taken by Ron Broglio in *Surface Encounters: Thinking With Animals and Art* (2011). Broglio links surface to the tendency of Western thought to depict animal being as lacking the interiority of humans, and although this is not a view he shares, he finds productive ways of interacting through surfaces. I find this understanding of surface to be useful for thinking with dress. As Western philosophy still carries an instated mind/body divide, Broglio suggests that in privileging interiority, we dismiss a surface based perspective that could be a way of being more embedded and embodied. Broglio discusses how we might consider the nonhuman without the intent of gaining concrete knowledge; instead he proposes becoming-animal and interacting through surfaces. Between worlds of perception, becoming-animal creates shifts into entirely new modes of seeing/experiencing. This diverges from self and representation, to a multi-dimensional view that moves outside of Western traditions of thought. This shift into possibility is unable to be represented, although mediation might be offered to others in the expression of hybrid forms. By inhabiting the idea of lizard I learn to sporadically lose my sense of self to the extent that I unfix my understanding of subjective reality and experience otherness. I apply what I found in this experience to my writing and displayed costume, to investigate whether it is possible to mediate an encounter with otherness through viewing costume and reading an account of its ability to alter subjectivity.

I perform wearing and words as irrational, but in the process both rationality and irrationality are rendered absurd. In philosophy the absurd describes the futility contained in the manner humans pursue individual meaning in their existence, as opposed to simply being. Returning to Derrida's analysis of the

humanist subject as 'rational animal' is it possible that the posthuman subject might be irrational, or other-than-rational? The concept of rationality relies on a system of fixed meaning. Correspondingly, irrationality consists of all other possibilities, and becoming-other defies rational intention towards fixity and concrete knowledge. Derrida uses Lewis Carrol's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) in his discussion of the relationship between human and animal to describe the unknowable otherworldliness of nonhuman species. In the iconic story, rational values are subverted and sensibility replaced with absurdity, indicating that exclusively human values, such as rationality, should be discarded when considering animal perspectives. As Derrida demonstrates in the unanswerable flow of his inquiry, while it is unjust that nonhuman animals should be assessed by anthropocentric standards, it is impossible to deny a human perspective. Instead he proposes rethinking a stance that preferences singularity and conviction. Works of imagination, whether literary or visual, are released from adherence to rationality, which allows them to create unusual perspectives that expand capacities to conceive the 'other' in multiple ways. When these alternative modes of communication intersect with the habitual behaviour of daily life, consciousness can become altered. While walking around as a lizard, I found that I wanted to walk on the grass whenever possible. My legs were green. I touched the fences and plants that I passed by. I stopped to look at textures. Other people watched me in my spangly costume and were jolted by my difference. I was different in costume in the way that I understood and interacted with my surroundings. Additionally, my costumed presence also disrupted the everyday experience of others. In their routine, encountering someone in unusual dress altered their understanding of familiar surroundings.

My research utilises both costume and writing to shift representation, both forms rely on systems of symbolic meaning, but these can be manipulated to subversive ends. The conditions of a hybrid practice indicate that slippage between representations need not be undesirable, finding those spaces in-between as places for productive imaginings. The live presence of performance makes it less determined, able to shift. The way I perform is particular, as to perform in surfaces I let my dress lead, and nothing about my behaviour is intentionally altered. I use performance to inquire into the ways that dress performs within itself. This means concentrating on the agency imparted by clothing, how this affects my subjectivity, and the experience of others that encounter me in costume. The issues with re-presenting performance are equivalent to those that make an embodied becoming so difficult to communicate, as any image or phrase begins immediately to impose a particular view. An image imposes fixity that I attempt to evade, though it is difficult to retain openness of encounter in any method of representation. In place of image I wrote daily, to show the way that the immediate experience of being in costume was changeable. This writing forms the section 'Lizard-Writing' and is not only a representation of my embodied performance, but signals a shift away and allows the reader access into the potential of otherness. Aside from a live experience of wearing, I have an interest in the way clothing performs in the imagination, which allows multiple perspectives to coexist freely. Displayed off a body, clothing retains all its markers without the condition of a particular occupant. As a display, the encounter with an empty costume, and with lizard-writing, has an affect that is not unlike how I was seen in costume by strangers in the street. In this others were struck by a creature less human in appearance and shifted out of familiarity. Inquiring into the work of other performers aids understanding of how possibility can be maintained through various mediums, and what may stray, or be transformed in translation.

The following studies survey how performance of a representation ruptures the surface of understanding, causing consideration of other perspectives.

The Swedish artist Ann-Sofi Sidén has performed as a creature that she titled 'Queen of Mud' (QM) in a number of performance works between 1989 and 1997. QM is visually distinguishable from the usual appearance of the artist by a lack of human clothing. Instead of garments, QM is caked in a layer of sludge so that the skin of the artist is completely concealed, as a result becoming a creature that is neither naked nor dressed. Without clothing the body is less restrained, as it is no longer civilised by human garments. To be in the live presence of QM would be a visceral experience, as without clothing and with every inch of skin covered in mud the artist becomes completely 'other'. In the various works in which she appears, QM is seen as an alien being, distinct from the human subjects around her. I am most interested in the earliest works that feature QM, when the creature appears in public spaces and interacts with people. However, in the film *QM, I Think I Call Her QM* (1997), QM is held captive by a scientist who seeks to gain information concerning what kind of creature she is by subjecting her to tests. By representing QM as a specimen the otherness of the alien being is adhered to in a way that arguably loses some of the discomfort produced when reflecting back on the rational human subject.

Marcus Coates is a shaman who wears Adidas tracksuits and taxidermied animals strapped to his head. Costume used in this way counteracts the way conventional dress enforces aspirations to rationality. In one video work entitled *Finfolk* (2003) he emerges from underwater in imitation of a selkie. In *Dawn Chorus* (2007) he teaches bird calls to people and in many of his performances he speaks to animal spirits as a shaman. In some of his video

works, Coates uses materials to alter his physical capabilities and through this can empathise with specific species, walking on stilts in *Stoat* (1999), or strapped high in a tree imagining being a *Goshawk* (1999). What can be taken from all of Coates's performances is how they engage with animal being to contradict the sureness of rationality. He performs what Broglio calls 'knowing idiocy' presenting otherness as a way of reconceiving the familiar and, as shaman, he uses this to consolidate communities. The sincerity that vies with the irrational humour in these works disturbs any complacency about the relationship between humans and other creatures (Broglio, 2011). To experience someone engage in irrational behaviour, while still appearing human and relatable, produces an unsettling upheaval of rational values.

A cardboard snail enacts its reproduction. The snail is the actress and film-maker Isabella Rossellini. With another completely cardboard snail, she acts the strangeness of other creatures' sex lives. With her *Green Porno* (2008-2009) series of short films, Rossellini would have people consider the lives of the nonhuman creatures they cohabitate with as mysterious but also lively and significant. The films are captivating, as the tension between a human perspective that views the sexual habits of animals as bizarre and undignified is met with defiant indifference, by the celebratory aesthetic of the bright cut-out cardboard sets and costumes employed. Rossellini crosses gender as well as species when she performs and as such her work offers critique on strict understandings of gender dynamics.

In the work of both Coates and Rossellini costume is used to destabilise the rational human as the fundamental subject. In these works the costume is tied to the stage of the performance, whereas I determine to extend the notion of costume and its association with fantasy and the surreal to become indivisible

from other forms of dress. Costume here signifies a shift outside of the singular self. I argue that in any dress, however conventional, the wearer assumes the associations constructed by themselves and others. There is always a putting on of ideas that perform a shift, the difference is in degrees of subtlety. By performing in costume offstage, I refuse to adhere to an appropriate context. This is to consider how unusual forms of dress worn in everyday situations can serve to illuminate the ways in which dress is at work in the construction of selves and others.

◆

Judith Butler (1990) gives cross-dressing as an example of a performative repetition that 'shakes the ground' of gender identity. Here the performance of dress is not necessarily for show but has real impact as it operates in the arena of everyday dress. Butler explains that gender norms are produced by reiterated performative acts, and as such are vulnerable to rupture and trans-formation by the same means. Considering dress as one of these performative elements, that affects various identity constructs, not only gender, it becomes apparent how most forms of dress function as costume to some extent. As dress is performative the wearer takes on what it represents, not only in how dress performs to others, but these ideas are also incorporated into a sense of self. As a consequence, there is potential for dress to reinforce or destabilise the fixity of identity constructs. Explicit use of costume exaggerates the notions of original or natural identities. Butler identifies drag as an example of a practise of dress that 'subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space' (Bulter 1990, p. 417). This is to say that the overt gesture of drag reveals how performativity is enacted on the surface of the body, and these 'surface politics' create inner conceptions of identity. Perhaps what I do is a form of cross-dressing, crossing species rather than gender. Isabella Rossellini does

this to denaturalise representations of animals, I hope to denaturalise a cohesive definition of what is human. Dressed as a copy of a lizard, I am able to unfix my prior identity. I have changed only my surface, but this affects my ideas of self, and of humanness. By embodying the idea of a lizard I became a different creature, with different ways of understanding.

A concept of fixed subjectivity is destabilised when dress is used incorrectly from a rational perspective. Though not specifically concerned with dress Mady Schutzman performs similarly to Butler's explication of how dressing in drag functions, by embodying a representative construction of gender to the extreme that it is rendered absurd. Schutzman uses the image of the circus performer as a visual trope that exists outside of norms, as well as the potential for heightened experience that the context of the circus provides. In performing as a clown, she critiques the spectacle of hysteria and frivolity that is ascribed to femininity. Schutzman identifies how advertising casts women as hysterical, in the irrationality of the desires they are depicted as holding, the advertisement designing the disease while simultaneously proposing the commodity as cure (Schutzman, 1999). The advertisements she uses both objectify women and render them absurd through exaggeration of feminine stereotypes. Dressed as a clown, Schutzman performs the hysteric to provoke a spectacle of irrationality, embodying a representation of the hysteric to deconstruct its significance and revel in absurdity. Schutzman's intent to embody the spectacle of femininity in its seeming absurdity points to Butler's assertion that 'gender norms are [finally] phantasmic, impossible to embody' (Butler, 1990, p. 421). This use of spectacle is one I have applied specifically to dress, becoming a spectacle every day.

I have also encountered Schutzman's performances through her writing. In doing so, I find reading can be an invitation into the sensation of becoming that both counters and extends what can be read into her images. In my own work I move entirely away from fixed images, instead using writing as a mode of re-representing performance, so the reader's own imaginings can occupy a becoming mediated through language. This is less prescribed than what images tend to convey, as they are fixed and still, and becoming is always shifting.

In becoming a spectacle I escape the bounds of self, masking my identity within a glittering costume, becoming no longer accountable to usual standards, both sense and nonsense. Placing myself outside of societal constructs releases the need to uphold a former subjective status. This extends to how I understand otherness, finding connection outside of familiar systems of representation. The humour in the spectacle of irrationality vies with the discomfort of revealing systems of being as constructed and fallible. As Butler writes,

> The loss of the sense of 'the normal,' however, can be its own occasion for laughter, especially when 'the normal,' 'the original' is revealed to be a copy, and an inevitably failed one, an ideal that no one can embody, in this sense, laughter emerges in the realization that all along the original was derived. (Butler, 1990, p. 419)

Nonsense refuses to be understood logically and will not fit comfortably into established systems of representation. As such, it can be used to illustrate that which declines to be fully understood, what is unknown and 'other.' Language that performs as less-human or nonhuman defies logic, and

challenges the security of established systems of representation.

Used in this way, irrationality becomes an instrument to prevent representation from reasserting itself. There is always the threat that through repetition, the irrational seems to become concrete and understood, falling back into familiar systems. To remain open to possibility requires experimental being, a view to precariousness and a becoming-subject/self. Like the repetitive process of enforcing normative standards, precariousness requires renewal, though not repetition of the constant and familiar, but a recurring passage aimed at variance. One way to do this is through a use of dress that is manifold, surreal and absurd. Moreover, as exemplified by the works of fiction cited earlier, language derived from sensate being also conveys movement, away from a singular human perspective to something wholly other where words can become precarious. The lizard-writing that follows detaches in style from this text, as a means to speak as something other than rational human.

Notes

1. The definition of Humanism is difficult to qualify as the ways it can be understood are embedded in different contexts. Here it is used to describe a human-centric position that privileges rational thought and logic over other ways of understanding.

2. Feminist theorist Elizabeth Grosz (1994) assesses the relationship feminism has to becoming in Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism. She notes that the way the body is understood in Deleuze and Guattari in terms of what it can do, and that this is useful to feminism as it defies polarising binary logics. She states that some feminists are critical of the lack of specificity that is proposed by a complete undoing of representation in favour of fluctuating assemblages, and how this is sometimes seen to undermine the struggles of feminist politics towards equality.

3. In 2004 as part of Sidén's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm, a collection of evidence concerning QM was presented as an archive titled Queen of Mud Museum (Liljefors, 2010).

4. This phrase is borrowed from Marina Warner, from her book Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds (2002). In this she describes 'double(s)' as the potential other selves that threaten the concept of a singular identity, and at the same time offer a 'becoming different' (Warner, 2002, p. 165).

Lizard-Writing

Over the next six sections writing performs and words become-other. These sections follow a chronology, from sewing on sequins to when I was preparing to vacate the costume. The writing here is taken from notes written daily over three months in lizard dress. They carry both the way I felt and changed over that time as well as how others apprehended my actions how their responses affected my thinking. This writing unfolds my own experiences, but stands in for myriad possible becomings through dress, with its ability to shift the subjective into new configurations. To say that dress affects subjectivity is no unusual claim. In subtle and familiar ways, dress is always shifting perceptions of the wearer. This investigation asks what else is possible when dress is used not to reinforce comfortable identities but to become strange. I use spectacle and the non-human to become, though there are many ways the transformative abilities of dress might be augmented.

Dressed as a lizard, taking notes was writing as irrational posthuman. As such, the pace and voice of the writing alters to convey a series of deterritorialisations. Words have a way of conveying tangibility, when they are really elusive. In response, this writing is configured to try and indicate something in between what the words represent, as some sensations are unable to be reproduced in writing. Words here express their hybrid natures, describing as embodied lizard, and introspective human, by using language to transform.

As representation and fiction the writing and the wearing-performance function both separately and alongside each other. The writing can be inhabited like clothing and by reading can reveal and include others, bridging the gap between spectator and spectacle. As seen with examples cited earlier in my

literature review, becoming-other requires language that speaks as nonhuman, through words that are faceted and necessarily fictitious. When Zaniewski writes as a rat, this tests the ability of words to become precarious, revealing the absurd by writing the unknowable. Through an animal lens, writing performs in the imagination, as counterpoint to visual spectacle. Together these begin ways to encounter the expanded subjectivity proposed by Braidotti. To describe a posthuman subject begs multiple forms that demonstrate differences in perspective. As representation this writing slides away from conventional classification and performs as its own becoming.

Considering my pores,
pale and mottled skin
an idea refuses to be deterred,
that I have been plucked.

Stirring Stillness

On Somes Island they can be heard,
scampering through the undergrowth
quick and camouflaged.
Some stay so still, they hardly look alive.
To be outnumbered by lizards
makes me exultant.
They know things they won't tell me,
even while lizard-still.

To be as evasive would please me.
To experience time at different speeds.

An idea of cold blood, no eyelids
moves outside of my familiar.
My heartbeat is running too quick.
Counting (and the internet tells me)
my racing count is so close to the heart rate of a lizard.
It seems it should be slower.

My skin is blank
and susceptible
unlike these shiny, pebbled beings.
Envy of strange creatures causes us to adorn our subtle skins.

To be lizard is finding pleasure
In lying down as flat as possible.

Sensing
becoming-animal is most often thought to dwell
within movement, active embodiment.
Stillness offers a divergence
–to escape ingrained ways of introspective being-
that take over when movement is mechanical.
Stillness is about persuading my thoughts to quiet
so it is possible to move/feel without their imposition.

Pressing into mossy concrete.

Lizard-ness is a pause
unnoticed things come into focus,
that otherwise seem unworthy of attention,
close up views of the ground
its texture.
Temperature of it and the smell.
Not to actively inquire but just be alongside.
In this mode -being called stillness
nothing is really still at all,
only changing in ways
difficult to see.

This needs a kind of clothing that invites these pauses.
Rational dress inhibits my ability to do nothing,
lying down as flat as possible might crease my shirt.
Dressing as a lizard allows me
to escape imposed standards.

Upon getting up,
the hexagonal edges of my scales have pressed deep into my skin
and all my surfaces have turned reptilian.

Talking to surfaces

Obsessing over patterns
and trying to fix them
gives an illusion of safety
but what about non-patterns
they have all the potential.

To obsess over non-patterns.

There is a bird outside my window,
drinking the drips of rain from the underside
of the electrical cable running up to the roof.
This is the first time this cable is noticed
This bird would look like a drawing if it would stay still.
White dots on black and its wing feathers are all outlined in gold.

The bird looks like a Starling.
Without names, discomfort might perpetuate, but so might wonder.

Where there can be no explanation
the gaps in-between edges of knowledge,
and the gaps in-between different perceptions.
Existing in between the edges of fixed meaning,
thinking about words.

Stitching a skin

My frustrations are vented on my skin
concentrating on flaws and multiplying them
picking at it and making little scars
so easily
trying to scratch it off
covering up until it disappears.

Dress directs
informs the body
in the way that it can move and be understood.

To mask or expose.

Sewing to stretch an idea of self,
tied to the way human bodies are comprehended.
Clothing that defies convention and affords a new sense of being.
Erasing any notion of a fixed self,
through making and wearing,
reinventing and multiplying.
It is inquisitive
locating those inscribed patterns of thought and behaviour
interrogating their function.

The process of making already engages with time, identity politics and my
body.

Sequins are stuck in place,
to check the pattern, stitch them down.
Five months of sitting on the floor sticking, sitting in bed stitching.
There is no picture of design or animal.
It grows slowly and looks different every moment until finished.
It changes quicker, impossible to match.
We live on different timelines.
Lizard-like it eludes my wish to keep it pristine.

While making,
an imagined moment
a seamless symbiosis of vision, body and garment,
but there is always some aspect that wants fixing.
Before it is finished it is already being worn
loose sequins slip away.

Bright sequins stick to my feet and filter through the house.
In the months of wearing it sequins are spread everywhere.

A plastic lizard skin.
Plastic sequins have a low status in terms of rationality.

A breakdown of representation performed through dress.
To slip between systems of signification, already a sieve,
though the surface has a way of appearing concrete.
Though not to offend the lizards
presuming clothing could turn me into a faithful imitation.

My hair is the wrong colour so must be covered up.
Growing into sequins and stillness.

There is time to be spent learning how to wear it.

Upon arrival my surface has changed colour completely.

Other species are indifferent as they are perfect.
This is the motive for making clothes to feel strange.

Concealed in Spectacle

Walking across the streets as a lizard, the road workers all look.
Often one will comment, or ask a question.
They had bright outfits on too, orange, with reflective strips.

Sparkling makes me both elated and nervous.
Going outside provokes desire to cover up,
anywhere open where sequins can be seen from afar.
Still clinging to my (more) sensible image, feeling foolish.
The sequins provide a little armour, but not much.

Walking past whispers.

In the supermarket strangers with expressions incredulous are watching me
picking up all the vegetables of colours that match my scales,
pretending not to notice the stares
In the fluorescent lights,
A broccoli looks exactly the same green as the sequins on my ankles.

At the open-air markets, though it rains, sequins make people smile.

Seen and misunderstood.
Concealed and exposed at once
catching the eyes of a watcher, who quickly looks away.

The gaze of children never makes me feel tense or uncertain.
They say everything they think out loud.
Tiny babies follow my movements with their adult-sized eyes.

Never have the sparkles caught the eye of a nonhuman creature.

When it goes unacknowledged, discomfort is palpable.
Silent conjectures stick in the atmosphere.
When they do speak, it is only to ask why.
It must be advertising something.

They aren't sure which of us is the hoax.

A look of cold indifference does not invite comment.
They comment anyway.
Someone took my picture and later it was on the Internet.

These moments reduce me to a visual representation.
Maybe this is similar to the way that we look at nonhuman creatures?

Standing on my own in the sunlight coming through the window and watching
the coloured confetti of reflections on the opposite wall.
Standing as still as possible the lights dance to my pulse.

Undone

In the still moment outside
awareness of being watched will not disappear, but
not thinking forward, just here in the cold grass,
more than is achieved most of the time.

Watching myself on the screen, my gaze fixates on the face.
The shape of those eyebrows refer to an image that is not mine.
It is not as strange a creature as was desired.
A decision, to bleach my eyebrows so they blend into my skin.

My hair turns grey to match my outfit that is turning from green to silver.

The person in the reflection no longer aligns with thoughts of myself.
Instead there is something else.

Last night a man came across me
looking like a creature on the way to outer space.

Considering the textures encountered while walking
made up of grass and concrete
turning grey gives me an affinity with concrete
because of the speckles.
Some concrete has glittery moments
rough wool is similar to pavement.

Concrete is all made up of sand and stones
imagine it crumbling and all the buildings are made of driftwood.

Though my looks are different now
strange
because of the way people look at spangles
gender is always coming to get me
cutting off my escape.

But when the sequins are off
being drab deflates me
not a spectacle
but anchorless
not anything.

All the invisible ruptures
like teeth-marks.
All over the abstract thing that is called my personality.

My surface is changing me.

It is collapsing already,
many of the sequins are losing their colour
and it has begun to stretch out.

There is space between my skin and the lizards
that was not there before.
Patches are starting to rub bare.
They can be repaired, but all the scales are too heavy.

Threads tear holes in machine knit
fabric unloops
mechanical moth-bites.
A soft touch
does nothing to stay wearing-out.

Watching the material surface degrade.
Wondering about my own skin.

Becoming worn

Change is happening quickly now,
faster than fits into my sense of self,
faster than is comfortable.

All my ideas about myself up until now have accumulated
but they are not unshakable.
It could probably reverse
this makes me unsure if any of my attributes are truly innate.
What is real or imaginary is confused
sometimes there is really no difference.

A long red hair was tangled in the sequins this morning.
It seemed like something that belonged to a long time ago.

Without haircuts, how would change be detectable?

An old friend barely recognises me.
The back of my head has aged
Try to be like the iguana, nonchalant.

After watching the iguana at the zoo tasting the air
testing this out has occupied me.
It is possible to taste a difference
between indoor and outdoor atmospheres,
but not to taste the presence of other beings.
Air tasting is a whole new way of knowing.

After about a month my sequin shelter acquired an old t-shirt smell,
a worn a million times smell that won't wash out.
It is washed in the shower with me.
The water turns grey.

It is not safe to brush past furniture.
It might scrape off my ageing scales.

They are all made differently
some have a layer that peels
some curl after washing
brittle or bendy
some lose their iridescence sporadically
rubbing off like powder
insect wings.
When it is gone
they are completely clear.
Even the heat-set creases in the uniform shape
start to come away.

The sequins have gotten all brittle
like teeth that have been brushed too often.
Hot water wears them out.
Maybe it wears me too.
The fabric has gotten very thin just as the weather has gotten much colder.
The cold gets to me often, but it is nothing unusual.
The strangest flaws are the places where the sequin has disappeared
and the stitch is left behind unbroken.
It took me a long time to realise how they escaped.

The blackened sequins at my wrists are being replaced.
My mind becomes attached to the previous worn state.
The new ones are too gaudy. The colours are so peculiar.
Sinking in
certain things are beginning to feel important without any rationale.
An affinity with grey and green textures like grass and concrete
light on or off my surface
how closely an area is populated,
alternately in modes of display,
introverted pensiveness and that of an embodied creature.

To see myself in the mirror
as a stranger.

A full moon makes me feel as if maybe this is actually a dream.
It is strange enough to be one.
This may produce more memories. Things are vivid.

Looking back this will make a good story.
Something to tell strangers at parties.

Today the iguana is further away.
It does not move for a long time and wont catch my eye.
Its head looked like it had turned a bit blue.
Because the iguana is still
instead the tiny monkeys entertain me
one has a little one
attached to its side like a strange garment.
The lizard lifts its head
looking regal,
and mildly disdainful of the ridiculous monkeys.
That cannot seem to be still for even a second.

Does a lizard have a gender? Does a lizard have an agenda?
These are things for re-thinking.

The thought of what it will be like to wear trousers again disturbs me.

On the first of September, sequins are to be replaced by my regular wardrobe.

Now my lizard suit is full of little holes.

Initially I had no intention of when I might stop wearing my costume, or what would come next. To vacate the costume and return to my previous manner of dressing was a means to better understand how I was different as lizard, and was necessary to complete the research. I had to feel again the difference in modes of dress and consider the costume, and my time in it, in response to the investigation that I had set up.

Removing the lizard costume from myself made it possible to assess the agency that it possesses, and to construct an encounter that reveals this to others. Alone the garment conveys its own experience of being worn daily for three months, as I reflect and prepare to become anew. It was only by wearing it that I become embodied in other ways and was able to unfix my ideas of selfhood. The wearing also shifted experiences of those who observed me, as a spectacle and figure of otherness. The vacant costume addresses others more directly as it is without a subject and has potential to be worn. In re-displaying the surface spectacle and lizard-writing I hope to make visible how the costume creates a fiction and how ideas of humanness and self are communicated through use of clothing. The following sections reflect on the transformation of the garment and how my time in costume affected my relationship to clothing.

Withdrawal / Renewal

The night before I have decided to part with my sequin covering I experience some panic. I was to become different again. For the first time in three months it was necessary to decide which clothes to dress in. In preparation I lay out my wardrobe onto my bed. As they had been shut away, my relationship to these familiar clothes had altered. It was a struggle to understand the meaning of the shapes. Black jackets and trousers seemed perversely stern and androgynous. Even by looking at them I could sense the fit would be odd when I put them on. Constricting.

Even so, by the second day of wearing my regular clothes it was already perceptible that my walk was becoming different. In returning to them I recognised how my everyday clothes are also performative.

This entire investigation addresses the transformative potential of clothing to move outside of identity tropes, following one example of costume and the shifts it can mediate. The referents that have been applied here stand in for countless possible others. For Schutzman it is the model of a clown, Coates a postmodern shaman. Rosselini is a worm and next a praying mantis, then a whale. All of these performances employ absurd figures to oppose a rational human subject.

Wearing costume offstage allowed me to learn more about how dress can affect my daily existence. By removing the costume I let it perform directly to others and reflect on its own transformation. Worn by a particular subject the visible impression is of clothing and body fused, visually the two forms

are combined. The way I am understood in costume shifts and distorts in the eyes of others and as a spectacle I visibly distance myself in the attempt to be incomprehensible. Being misunderstood can be liberating, but my irrationally costumed presence also attracts an interrogative gaze. To be in-between those positions is precarious. The freedom comes from comprehending myself differently, as through the reflection provided by an alternative surface and classification I destabilise my concept of self. Conversely, my distinctive appearance ascribes a designated category, which is assigned to my personality by others. The outfit outwardly defines me as much as it interrogates rational understanding, returning to Butler's terms this calls into question 'the distinction between inner and outer psychic space' (Butler, 1990, p. 417). I became accustomed to lizard costume over many weeks because of wearing the same clothes, when the strangeness was exhausted I settled into the lizard character, feeling both complacent and restless. This reminded me that becoming requires a reoccurring process of deterritorialisation and I needed to renew. It is not the putting on of unusual costume that instigates becoming, but the associations embedded in clothing and the capacity to subvert the familiar, that can mediate a shift in understanding. As Elizabeth Grosz states of becoming-other, 'It is not something that can be put on or taken off like a cloak or activity' (Grosz, 1994, p. 174). Nevertheless, becoming is always reversible, and the change in perception unable to be fixed (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This means that though clothing of a hybrid appearance can imply becoming through a kind of representation, the actual becoming cannot be fully represented.

The sensory qualities of the garment affected my experience of wearing it, the sound it made when I walked, the feel of the fabric, and the smell. I used the real and imagined qualities of the costume to become embodied. It is this

aspect that only I could feel. That has translated and mutated into writing that is encountered adjacent but allied to the displayed garment. The outward performance, of appearing as spectacle of irrationality, continues in the garment that hangs. Removing the physical subject from the garment allows it to be seen entirely for what it signifies as an object. Uninhabited clothing manifests as a guise that asks to be taken up.

Neither the writing nor the display recreates the experience or appearance of wearing. Images of myself that were taken by others during that time fail to express the elusive changes of perception that occurred, in the live performance I was recognisable to people who saw me repeatedly, but I changed my appearance gradually and was never quite predictable. To transfer from my own observations to designing an experience for others, written account and physical presence of costume hold more imaginative potential. Both forms are documentation of the wearing-performance but convey their own deterritorialisations, each referring to their specific constituents. These become in distinctive ways that surpass explicatory representation, as each begins by interpreting wearing-performance, but transforms in the translation. The decision to exclude images of myself leaves the costume displayed and the written record unidentified, to convey as 'other'. The associations embodied by clothing perform on or off a body, as fashion communicates and is understood through image more than any other way. The ability of clothing to mediate embodied becoming is possible through wearing, though a visual encounter is enough to affect a shift in perception.

At work yesterday they found a sequin in the gutter outside the café.

Surface Displayed

I might have gone too far, become a costumed thing and can no longer find any of myself left in it.

Since removing myself from my lizard costume I have watched it hanging on the back of my bedroom door for weeks. It has grown accustomed there, but its place on the door implies movement, the swing of a door seems to suggest travel, of interchange and another becoming. There is a shift in comprehension of a costume as a garment on display, to be encountered *after* it has been worn. A previously worn garment is usually understood in terms of absence, the missing body giving an impression of loss and haunting (Wilson, 1985). Though the costume has been worn it does not seem empty, if it is haunted, it is by its potential to be embodied. The garment itself can continue to perform, in doing so it displays the agency of costume, and by extension all clothing. This recognition occurred through watching the inanimate costume upon my bedroom door, after the experience of wearing it. Once removed I found a new vantage point to view the garment, as it still harbours some spectral sense of myself, existing in performative representations and fancies of escape. The door emphasises these as a trope for an entry into *somewhere else*. There, the garment hangs in-between familiarity and otherness.

For the garment to be able to perform its potential when displayed inside of a conventional room, the existing surfaces of that interior needed to be altered. The surfaces must speak to each other to activate what is contained by the costume, so as to become precarious and irrational. The alteration of the interior assists in heightening visitors' awareness of being taken elsewhere. Peach painted walls and the carpet of fake grass accentuate the strange other-

worldliness that is implicit in the costume. The plastic grass touches feet, a sensate feeling akin to plastic scales. In the room, a doubling of plastic absurdity that activates the irrationality stitched into the garment. The hybrid mix of furnishings in the room transfers to become a distinctly unfamiliar experience. The room and all the elements within have transformed into a spectacle, one that has been informed by consequences of posthumanism and its non-rational potential. The surfaces have become, in order to perform an idea of posthuman interior. Taken and displayed, my bedroom door and the costume itself are both deterritorialised, as they have been removed from their prior functions. The displaced door is out of its frame, suspended in-between expected place and purpose and the garment is presented otherwise to when it was only ever seen as my dress. This attempts to reiterate the ways that dress and surface can mediate becoming-other, in a distinctly different way to wearing and performing in costume.

For the period that I wore the costume my appearance to others was always a surface performance. Outwardly, visual spectacle concealed my experience of actually becoming embodied, mediated by imagining a strange creature unlike my familiar self. If the appearance of this becoming was representational, the performance of transgressive dress also ruptures representation; by the way experiences of others can be relatively understood.

To do this dress must be seen to be affective. By comparing costume to my everyday clothing I consider how most forms of clothing perform as markers of identity through their visual surfaces. This corresponds with earlier examples of Avant Garde affective antifashion understood through image only, by exhibiting surfaces that can destabilise ingrained beliefs concerning human

bodies (Seely, 2013). Garments that perform and produce strange, irrational hybrids cause the concept of a rational human subject to come undone. I produce this in a sequin lizard-skin, in combination with written experiences that voice the less human and the nonhuman. Sometimes this meant writing nonsense in order to shift out of conventional use of language. These lizard-writings are presented alongside the garment, and transform the comprehension of empty clothing when read, by stating that it is a thing that has lived and affected others already.

The performance of familiar objects re-presented as irrational suggests new representational strategies. This is to suspend the costume between my own fantasies of what it represents and what it discloses when removed from myself, when presented as less immediately identifiable. The sequins that pattern a lizard skin, or scales, blur the notion of human with something 'other' and this contests the relationship between human identities and the clothing that classifies them. The interpretations others make of the display will be through their own experiences, of creatures and clothing. The book of lizard-writing sits as an offering of my experience of becoming-other in the costume, adding to clues in the room that combine to make classification difficult. For this to take hold, I have constructed a display that facilitates abandonment of preconceptions and definite intention. The book of lizard-writing offers something of my own experience of becoming-other in the costume, and adds to the combination of elements in the room that together work to evade categorisation. In this context the writing substantiates my claim that an encounter with the otherness of clothing identifies that 'fashion is always surreal' (Schutzman, 1999, p. 188). The reader is held in-between the hanging costume and the creature writing, both invite a mediation of becoming-other. This encounter remains open for the difference of multiple imaginings, as the

words and costume evade categorisation as less-human hybrids themselves. The inanimate costume is activated by the elusory performance of words that imagine a posthuman subject-creature, in a non-rational interior space.

The vacant garment also holds the potential to be worn and to transform those who visit. An invitation, to enter into ideas put forward by the costume, the garment is an agent that shifts subjectivity through its suggestive surface. Taken off, clothing performs independent of individuals, and it becomes apparent how this must affect subjective experience. A surface displayed is an opportunity for reimagining self, via the appearance of a creature of vaguely human shape. The previous wearer has gone. The worn surface intensifies the sense of the costume's agency and the signs of wear allow the surface to speak of having been. The transformative potential is now experienced through intimate encounter of viewing costume, displayed as having residues of past experience in a small room where surfaces perform and converse, holding its visitors in-between.

Emerging/Disappearing

In mind, I follow my dress that performs first.

Whether intentionally costume or otherwise, my outfit implies certain characteristics and I assume this, it is written on my body. By changing my dress every day, this difference was only scarcely understood. Through a sustained relationship with one overtly expressive outfit, the way I performed and was understood through my dress became gradually more evident. I suggest that dress always has an effect on subjectivity, to a greater or lesser degree, and in this way all clothing might be understood as costume. Understanding dress otherwise to the objectives of a consumerist fashion industry has consequences for thinking about the role of dress. This provokes consideration of the ways that we perform in surfaces to each other and how surfaces perform back to us. 'Oppositional dress' questions what potential exists in this interaction, and how surface becomings are able to affect connections with the unfamiliar.

Returning to the potential of a posthuman and becoming subject as multifaceted, it seems that to dress such a subject would require a mode of being precarious and experimental with clothing. Butler's concept of precariousness is similar to becoming in that representation must be unfixed for precariousness to be realised. Butler describes how this works using the example of a human face, she writes that 'to respond to the face, to understand its meaning, means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself.' (Butler, 2004, p. 134) To realise meaning in a range of faces it is first necessary to unfix representations that insist on relative singularity of what a face is or looks like. Butler states that to be affected by

a face is to understand a failure of representation. As an extension of Butler's meaning, we might consider that 'face' is also used describe a surface. Perhaps dress, as a speaking surface, can also be a face that awakens precariousness in instances where it transcends representation. The way that dress affects subjectivity is partly contained in the way that it can set the situation for how human façades are understood. Using clothing to become creaturely may be one way to mediate an understanding that there are faces, of sorts, existing in the less and the non-human, which reveals that human surfaces are anything but fixed and representable.

I have written that I performed irrationality, as that was how it appeared to a rational perspective. However, if rationality is a system of representation then to become precarious is to move outside of rational signification, an undoing of rationality and the irrational, as both become absurd. In beginning to invent a posthuman subjectivity that is diverse and irreducible, I consider that it might be possible to begin by following dress, to affect shifts in understanding through surfaces that are non-rational. This suggests an attitude to dress that is aware of the way it has a close relationship to costume, and utilises this potential to evade capture, by representations that attempt to make one singular.

Just when others get comfortable, when I do myself, a transformation. I resist being understood. Even by myself.

I can only stretch as far as I can imagine. It is not far enough.

End(less)

Sewing to stretch a self.

A continuous shuttle between making and wearing, becoming and being.
My new creature is not sequinned, but tasselled and fringed.
It has antlers made from twigs and tiny birds nest in hair.

A forest outfit, the sort of rich brown that glows, attracts insects.

Something to swim in, something that moves.

An underwater creature, clouded like coral.
A folded exterior with bright streaks half hidden in the folds.

A black creature for hiding in trees at night-time.
Dressed like sky and stars and in amongst them.

Over summer I should turn green at the edges.

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