

Short story no.199. Hamburg, October 1-3 2063

Today it is the year 2063 and I am watching scenes from my childhood on the Megaron-plasma screen on the Holodeck of the starship I am doing volunteer work on. One should not work at my age, I know, but now your Queer Technologies Centre has officially been closed down by the government, I cannot stop taking care of your precious QTC, and helping your researchers and their students find financial means to continue the research. People say that Queer Research Centres have become tremendously old-fashioned, because everybody is queer nowadays. This was said in 2004 as well, when the first QRC's were founded. I wonder why I myself have never come to this conclusion.

The Megaron-plasma screen was invented in 2047 for therapeutic procedures. Therapists could never resist trying it out on themselves. When a human being is connected to a neuro-transmitter, her/his unconscious thoughts are immediately projected on screen. This refined technology never made it into the next decade due to a lot of discussions on ethics. Maybe I should be happy that people were considering the ethical sides of new technologies. But on the other hand it is exactly this fear being expressed here that keeps society in a heterosexist model. The Megaron-plasma screen is actually comparable to the historical hypnosis-therapy that some Postmodernist Artists used seventy years ago or longer.

I fell in love with you in 2004. It wasn't what I imagined it would be. It was much better. I liked you from the first moment I met you. You laughed at all my jokes. I stopped writing the short stories I used to write. I didn't mind that much. What was the sense of applying desire as a methodology when I was perfectly happy with what I had? I used my professional training as a painter to start up painting classes for amateurs. That was a pretty subversive thing to do at that time.

You went to a conference in the Besnyö district. I am waiting for you to come home. You have been stuck in a dialectical field with your Shimmy Shuttle for a couple of days now. This story is the first I have written for 59 years. But it isn't really a story, is it?

Jeanette Winterson in *The Passion* (1987):

"I say I'm in love with her, what does that mean?

It means I review my future and my past in the light of this feeling. It is as though I wrote in a foreign language that I am suddenly able to read. Wordlessly she explains me to myself; like genius she is ignorant of what she does."

She says she is in love with me, what does that mean?

It means she reviews her future and her past in the light of this feeling. It is as though she wrote in a foreign language that she is suddenly able to read. Wordlessly I explain her to herself; like genius I am ignorant of what I do.

When I met her in 2004, she was a writer. For one reason or the other she stopped writing. She took up her old love — painting — and now she has become well respected within the art world.

The first trip we made together was into space. No, I am not joking. She won a trip on the first privately financed space shuttle in a writing contest. She had entered as an Engineering student called Dick Jameson who wanted to surprise his girlfriend— a nurse he met while he was being treated for a toenail infection.

When Dick turned out to be a lesbian artist of Moroccan origin, the jury of researchers was surprised, but couldn't take the risk of complaining. I love her for her small interventions in reality. After our trip she couldn't stop referring to my Queer Technologies Centre as a starship, though everybody knows it will take another 60 years before humans will be stationed in space.

In 2004 I worked for a pharmaceutical company who offered employees 36 hours of paid volunteer work. I started to organize workshops for scientists and artists to think through queer strategies for challenging the normative work model I had been dealing with ever since I started work. 36 hours a year became 36 hours a week and I needed to give up my job as a junior researcher. Some people found it funny that my former employer encouraged me to challenge him. Personally I don't think it is funny that as soon as one doesn't fit in the normative model, one is doomed to work under precarious circumstances.

She is working very hard for my QTC at the moment trying to find possible financiers to enable my researchers to continue their jobs. I am very impressed by her results so far. I know I should have taken better care of that when our profits were going down a couple of years ago. I must conclude artists have a much better commercial understanding of the world than scientists. I thank her for that.

I had been stuck in a dialectical field with my beloved Shimmy Shuttle for a couple of days. I tried to contact her yesterday, but unfortunately the communication batteries were low to keep the life support system running. I know it is not a big deal, since I am on my way back to Earth already, but sometimes it is important to fulfil the desire to hear her voice, to make her real again. One could also wonder if I should not give up joy riding as a leisure activity at my age.

This text was part of exhibition 'Episode 1, a retrospective of early 21st century art' (a collaboration between Maurice Bogaert and Suzanne van Rossenberg), October 2004, Rotterdam. Copyleft ©2004 Suzanne van Rossenberg