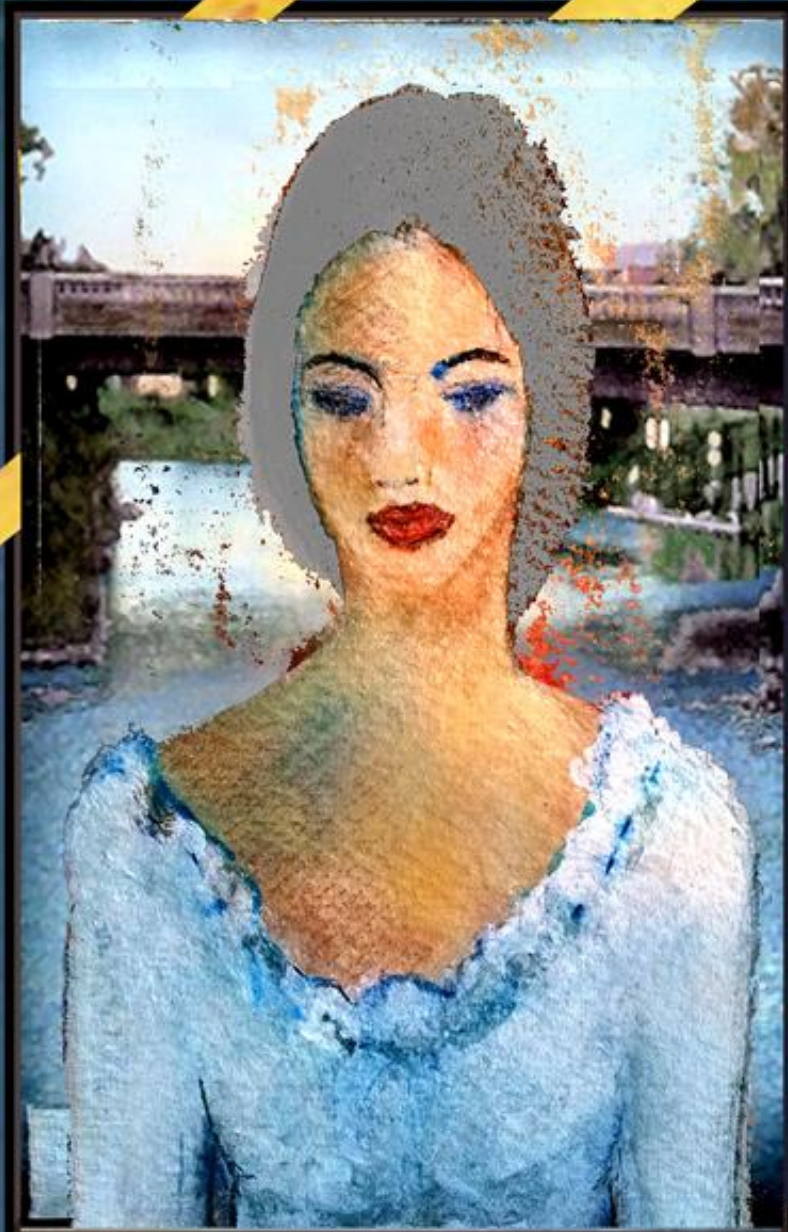


Old Mother Hershman's Rigby's Homunculus

Old Mother Rigby's Homunculus



— and the five skandas —

Preface

Many different artists, writers, scientists, and philosophers have pursued an interest in the human sense of self.

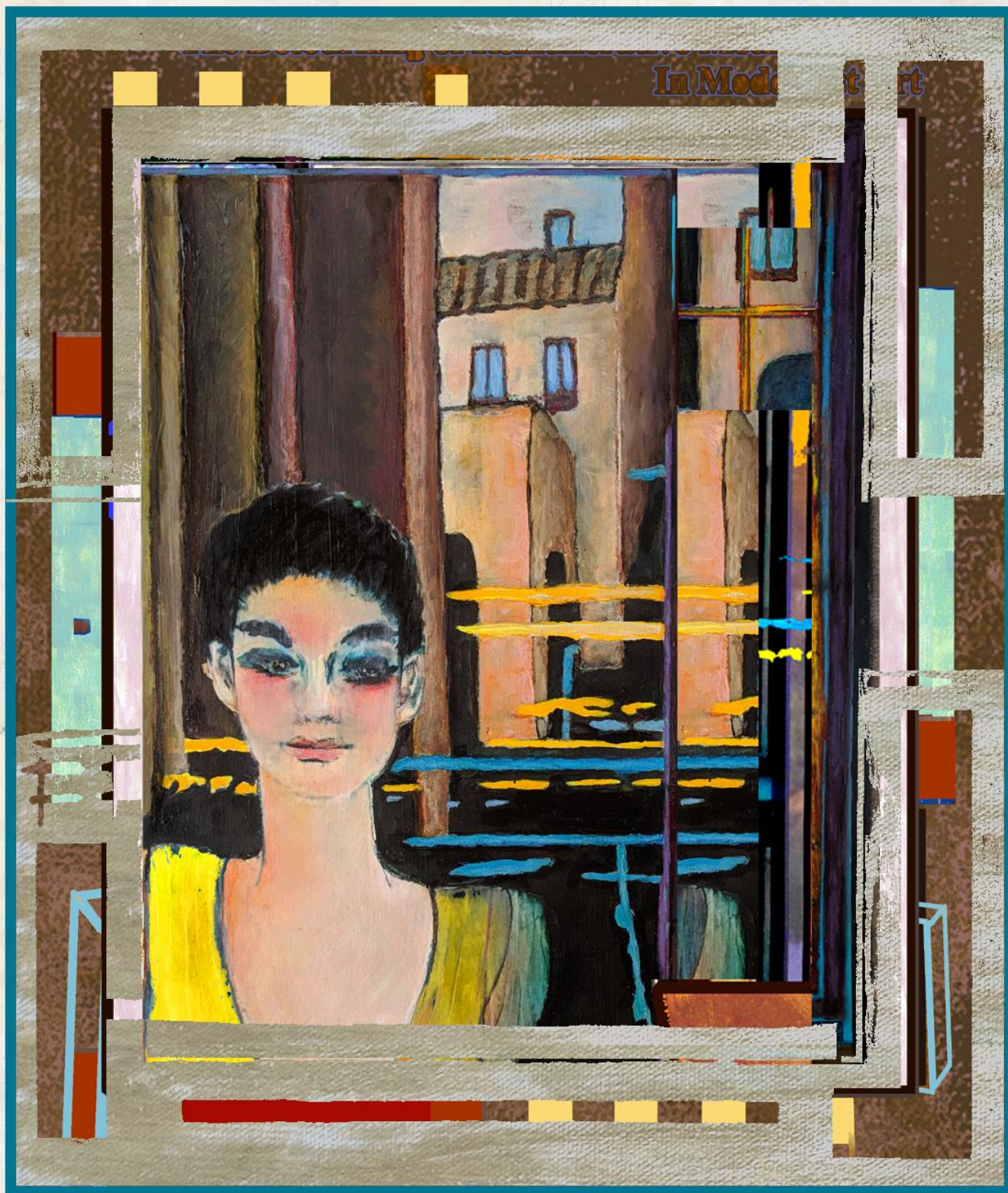
Nathaniel Hawthorne, Julian Jaynes, Jean Baudrillard and others have famously speculated and theorized about the conceptualization, construction and composition of the human self or personal identity – and the possibilities that self-identity might emerge naturally from certain organized material.

Even among the other notable feminist identity works of the 1970s, *Roberta Breitmore* is uniquely explicit and focused on exactly that.

In her complicated 1973 landmark performance piece, *I Am Not Roberta Breitmore*, Hershman Leeson teases her viewers by claiming that she is actually not the person or identity which emerges from the agglomerated experiences of her performance piece (living a completely false, but tenable life as the fictitious personage Roberta Breitmore.) Hershman presented her newly-constructed, historically-buoyant personality to the world as San Francisco resident, job seeker, grocery shopper, and art-piece; she shopped for apartments, acquired credit cards, chose roommates, dated and brushed her teeth as Roberta Breitmore. Isomorphically counterfeit shades of Feathertop.

The specifically-renounced conclusion of Hershman Leeson's empirical piece is that indeed we are all Roberta Breitmore. It's an interesting proposition, and her evidence is prima facie, even if rather self-referential, no pun intended.

Interest in all this has lately increased exponentially, as we are now remuneratively asking ourselves: could it be that the next generation of Artificial Intelligence might actually be Roberta Breitmore too?



210816 Oil on Board 20 x 16

or as well as the isomorphic relationship and mirrored reflections between the basic structures of pataphysics and quantum physics; so it's easy to imagine an outline of coherence between these two very different enterprises. We can at least call that an interesting haptic synchronicity, or perhaps it's the zeitgeist, or better yet: a covalent topological expression of the tenor of our times; i.e. simply the outcome of both Alfred Jarry and Einstein breathing the same new rarefied non-Euclidian Twentieth Century airs;



but now that A.I. machines are able to converse with the public, write college term papers, and paint like Vermeer, we're forced to address the *Puzzle of Anatman*, per the ancient Hindu Vedas: whether or not a personal identity can naturally emerge from a physical body's five collections or "Agglomerations" (Sk. *skandas*) of memorized experience. These five memory-agglomerations are of "Form or Physical Body" (Sk. *rupa*), "Sensations", "Conceptualizations", "Feelings", and "Noticings of Duality". According to the Anatman doctrine, a self-identity can naturally emerge from such agglomerations,



210816 Oil on Canvas 32 x 28

so Johnson is suggesting we give a self-moving body to an advanced A.I. - hands and feet, vision, hearing, etc. Let it explore the town for a month, and then go into its memory banks and, from its agglomerated memories, construct a personal identity as isomorphic as possible to what it can learn about human personal identity from the Vedas and from the internet. Could a silicon simulacrum like that, or a silicon homunculus, experience something isomorphic to human identity? We might assume it would demaculate



alone although, in his masterpiece *Feathertop*, Hawthorne discusses the simulacrum as a homunculus, a counterfeit witchcraft of a man; verily a stuffed scarecrow which old Mother Rigby's spell endowed with breath, fancy clothes, and enough accoutrements of a human self to deceive the majority of townfolk into accepting and entertaining it as a live human.

In his influential *Origin of Consciousness*,¹ professor Julian Jaynes explains how our current version of self slowly developed from the internalization of an arguably schizophrenic simulacrum, which is typified by how the bicameral structure of our mind, in Iliadic times, would often conjure up imperative hallucinations of informative humanoid deities.

Baudrillard, of course, elucidated the simulacrum with his subtle sociological metaphors of deconstructionist cultural phenomena. But Hershman Leeson's *Breitmore*,² though a Twentieth Century empirical work, goes straight at what Sanskrit calls the *skandas*: the external agglomeration of tokens, signs, and signal experiences by which we create the simulacrum, or an awareness of the thing we call self. The arbitrary existentialist monad of

¹ Jaynes, Julian, (1976) *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Houghton Mifflin.

² Hershman Leeson, Lynn, (1973-1978) *I am not Roberta Breitmore*. Long-Term Documented Performance

I'm
It's like [insert simile here]

~~Rigby's~~
**Old Mother Hershman's
Homunculus**



**Investments in the Personal Isomorphism
and the reclamation of solipsism as a strategy**

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**Incomplete Pataphysic Sorties
In Lorem Ipsum Veritas**