

*A PAF DAILY - THURSDAY MAY 8th 2013*



# PARASITIC MANAGEMENT AND THE SICK STUDENT BODY - The Marxist of Granby

University For Strategic Optimism goes down on higher education without mercy under at from NL. Follow their goddamn blog, and do it now.

That Higher Education is under attack by a neoliberal regime that seeks to rationalize everything under the sun in accordance with the logic of the market, is abundantly clear – hell, even the sedimentary crud under couch cushions in the SU will have its turn. The extensive and intensive fracking of our lives by a corrosive capitalism that has continual expansion as a structural necessity can leave no stone intact. It must be broken down then reconstituted to allow the frictionless extraction of profit. Anything superfluous, like, say, a philosophy department, unless it can be marshaled as market differentiation, is burnt off in the process. Scorched earth is the standard policy of those whose tactics are calculated by cost/benefit analysis. If the riots taught us anything, it is that fighting fire with fire remains a viable option.

The vanguard of this attack was and remains the infestation of the university by a parasite that goes by the name of Senior Management. The parasite gives nothing to the host. It eats, digests, counts, divides, surveys, quantifies, reports; then shits out spreadsheets, Research Excellence Frameworks, Student Experience Surveys, marketing and mission statements. Everything must be broken into atomistic form so that management might function with free hands, always with an eye to the market. The Mothership, in return, shuttles policy through parliament to accelerate the process. Unlike most parasites, whose numbers dwindle as their colony reaches a critical size and they begin to choke to death on their own shit, Senior Management's effluent is neatly piped throughout the university. What is choked is the possibility of thinking, thought, learning and research.

The only thing everyone must learn is how to thrive off the fetid new food source, or, face expulsion into the job market. And so, bit by bit, we learn to live in the muck. Our own thinking and learning becomes to resemble a tick boxed multi-choiced questionnaire, or the chronologised credentials of a C.V. Arse-to-mouth.

Take a recent example. The Tory government ran on an election pledge to reduce immigration figures to the tens of thousands, pandering to austerity exacerbated racists. Gleefully slurping this up the UKBA, invigorated with extra powers, began to make coming to the UK to study an even more tortuous and absurd process than it had already been made under New Labour. It was stipulated that teaching staff must act as border agents by forwarding attendance registers to the UKBA (presumably so tardy students could be murdered by G4S security on a deportation flight.) Finally, the new technology of discipline was used, in the style of a public execution, to revoke London Metropolitan University's ability to grant visas to its international students. Thousands of international students were forced into a choice between finding a new university to study at or to leave the country. London Met, who has more students of colour than the elite Russel Group combined, and a higher proportion of students from working class backgrounds than any other university, was faced with a £20 million loss from its already completely fucked finances. Management at universities around the country were quick to deploy the most repugnant and intrusive methods of surveiling international students they could think of in a ham-fisted attempt to placate the fear that had splattered all

over their Armani briefs. Swipe-cards for lectures, calendar searches of international staff, regular herding and passport presentation, unenrollment for misdemeanors, etc, etc. The list goes on.

The UKBA was forced to climb down from this position slightly once it saw what its maniacal underlings in the university had done, and released a statement asserting that: 'universities do not need separate, tougher attendance systems for international students, and that they do not necessarily need to consider introducing physical checks such as fingerprinting.' And so the new measures of surveillance were expanded to include all students and border surveillance began to double as market research. Also disciplined by the experience of the London Met students and a £30000 debt looming over their heads, students everywhere began to demand that their paperwork was in order and their attendance correctly registered. Their degree needed to make them shine on the supermarket shelf (which they will in all likelihood end up stacking) of the job market, not leave them tainted by the shame of a dysfunctional warren of misguided working class aspiration. And so the final suture is completed: self/surveillance, consumer/entrepreneur, student/labour. Arse-to-mouth-arse-to-mouth-arse-to-mouth. Marx's famous claim that a school is formally no different to a sausage factory holds true. Now the same can also be said of content. The insides of a sausage or a university are both well described by the phrase: 'it's all lips and assholes, mate.'

The management parasite likes smooth functioning. An unobstructed flow through its pipes. The student body must reject this flow and wrack this smooth functioning with violent convulsions. Vomiting must be induced if we are to rid ourselves of this rabid infestation and refuse to pass on it its rancid excretions to the next in line. The issue is constitutional in a dual sense, the first sickly the second sickening. The student body is sickly and poorly prepared for the collective response that the current conjuncture necessitates. We need to pull together and build collective power. Differently put, learning to learn collectively to learn to learn to be collective. Secondly, the constitutional foundation of the university places sovereignty in the hands of a neoliberal managerial executive, itself gurgling fluid from a legislature that sprays stools at the demand of a ruling elite. From high above, and behind some hallowed and medieval cloud, that decrepit old bitch Elizabeth straddles all, perched on an imaginary covering a void, sucking up energy from those below and raining down piss from her puss riddled cunt.

Bleugh. Yes, we need to vomit. Management must be regurgitated onto the pavement outside the front gates of the university (hopefully we can tear down those gates, physical and social, once management has slithered far enough back to its stink tanks, boards of infestors, and Home Offices). But we may not want to run the university ourselves. We must be vigilant to the threat of turning into that which we are fighting against. Once voided from our stomachs – always a site of revolutionary power – we need to think and talk about how we want the university to be. Let's be honest, it wasn't great before: sexism, racism and classism has never ceased to be structural. That conversation, however, is premature and convulsive purging necessarily prior. It is not possible to hold that conversation in our universities as they are presently. But we will need to talk about constitution. We need new configurations of knowledge transmission and a new covenant of learning. We need to ask the question of organizational sustenance, so that we can no longer be made subject to the dictates of the digestive tracts of a bourgeois elite. After all, there are far more wholesome ways of being collective than a human centipede.

March 2013, from: <http://universityforstrategicoptimism.wordpress.com>

# CINÉMA À TERMINAL 2F METAL MACHINE MUSIC

Editor Marcus Doverud

Lou Reed's new set, a two-record electronic composition, is an act of provocation, a jab of contempt, but the timing is all wrong. In its droning, shapeless indifference, Metal Machine Music is hopelessly old-fashioned. After a decade of aesthetic outrages, four sides of what sounds like the tubular groaning of a galactic refrigerator just aren't going to inflame the bourgeoisie (whoever they are) or repel his fans (since they'll just shrug and wait for the next collection). Lou Reed is disdainfully unveiling the black hole in his personal universe, but the question is, who's supposed to flinch?

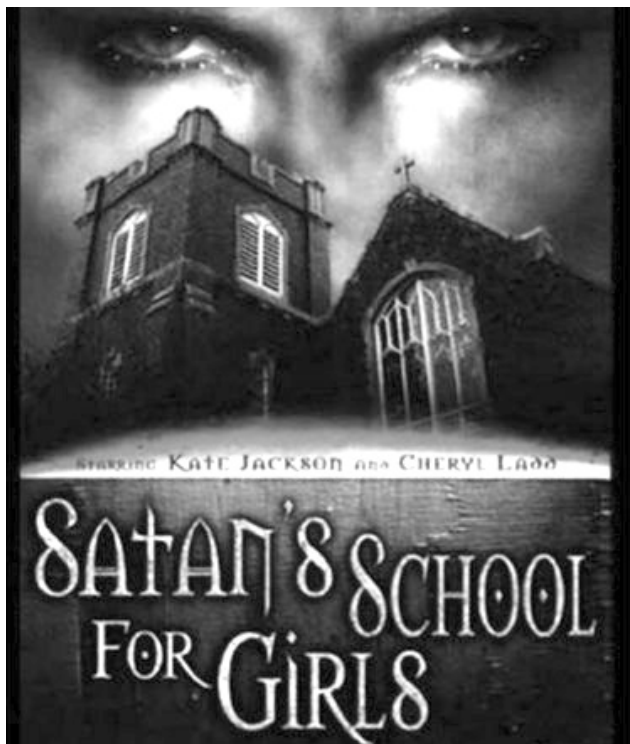
The critics. In a recent interview, Reed's metabolism was in its usual inert state until the subject of critics came up, at which point he became agitated, lashing out at several. Reed probably conceived M/M/M knowing that only critics would pay serious attention to the damn thing. In the liner notes he admits that he hasn't listened to it all the way through, and in the interview the claim that he made for M/M/M was that playing it "would clear the room."

Well, I have. Played it, that is. Once. Which is one of the better feats of endurance in my life, equal to reading *The Painted Bird*, sitting through *Savage Messiah* and spending a night in a bus terminal in Hagerstown, Maryland. Yet, when my turntable mercifully silenced Lou Reed's cosmic scrapings, I felt no anger, no indignation, not even a sense of time wasted, just mild regret. Avant-garde artists (Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Andy Warhol) have been experimenting with ennui as a concept for so long that it's no longer daring to tax the audience's patience by being deliberately, intensely boring. By now, one knows how to respond to such distended buzzing: One simply tunes out and tunes back in when the action picks up. Reed himself understands this: "I'm like everybody else, I watch things on TV," he sings on "Satellite of Love."

If this album is Reed's Self Portrait, then we may have to tolerate a lot of stroboscopic sludge before he gets back on the tracks. What's most distressing is the possibility that Metal Machine Music isn't so much a knife slash at his detractors as perhaps a blade turned inward. At its very worst this album suggests masochism. He may be, to shift weaponry images, moving to the center of fire so that we critics-as-assassins can make a clean kill. Fine, Lou, go ahead. Just stand there. Don't move, But damned if I'll squeeze the trigger.

James Walcott

First published in Rolling Stone, 14 August 1975



Editorial, Stefano Harney

# IN REVOLUTIONARY BECOMING



New information has come to light, man. You don't have to be tired to be exhausted. The Dude knew that. Or maybe it might be better to say you don't have to pass through tiredness to be exhausted. But that's not right either. In the presence of the exhausted, of Smokey the Conscientious Objector, we can no longer perceive tiredness. This aggression will not stand, man. That rug really held the room together. These exhausted words, spoken where other words have deserted, objected, dropped out, these words spill out through what Beckett called a dehiscence. The Vietnam War, or the American War as it is called in Vietnam, made the invaders tired, strategically and logistically. They grew tired of their own power with every drunken punch, every smart bomb, every ceremony on the lawn, every speech at the wedding. And so there breaks from within this tiredness an oozing, pungent, florid dehiscence. And the exhausted step forth: fuck it, let's go bowling.

They are the exhausted precisely because they are not plagued by tiredness, not burdened by its efforts. Having exhausted all possibility. Deleuze said only the exhausted person is sufficiently scrupulous. Like Jesus and Liam, shining their balls. Deleuze goes on. He cannot go on. But he goes on to say the exhausted replace plans with tables and programs that are devoid of any meaning. Walter doesn't roll on Shabbat. But Walter's not even Jewish as the Dude says. His league schedule has no meaning. But the combination is everything, and every combination must be exhausted. And anyway it's a detective noir. The Dude will accidentally combine every set of possibilities and misrecognitions. The girl kidnapped herself. Surely you've considered that, says the Dude finally, exhausted. No, Dude, we had never consider that, says Brad for Mr. Lebowski. They are just tired. But the Dude is exhausted. The Dude has formed what Deleuze called an exhaustive series of things in his life. There is no combination of America that he has not tried. This is why the cowboy is no stranger to him, why he is received with absolute calm. He likes his style. Not just every combination of a tired America, but he has listened to the flow of voices drying up in America. I wouldn't hold out much hope for the tape deck, or the Credence, say the cops of his stolen car. Voices drying even then in hoarse-throated song, long dried up and blowing over the words of Bush 1, overheard on the grocery store's television, Bush's words, breaking through the Dude in a dehiscence. This aggression will not stand, man. Deleuze watches Beckett's work dry up, and his words blow hissing into space, into image.

Deleuze's third way to exhaustion: extenuating the potentialities of space. Those lanes and bowlers in the opening scene. The naked woman on Jackie Treehorn's trampoline.

The Dude flying through space and dancing up the stairs. Stoned space. Drugs spill out of America's tiredness, out of its evil, tired wounds. Like the booze in a Sam Spade novel, the racialised sexual desire in Chester Himes or John Fante's LA autobiographical fiction, the stoned scenes spill out, ooze hot and dazed onto the screen. Deleuze says: space appear as a motor ritornello - postures, positions, gaits - to the one who travels through it. The Dude traveling in space propelled by a bowling ball through the legs of the dancers in their positions. But not just the Dude here, but Donnie, watching Jesus posture in what Deleuze calls the any-space-whatever of the bowling alley. Stoned space is always any-space-whatever. The dehiscence of drugged exhaustion where no space can reach its potential to host the possible. It's not possible that Donnie dies in this space. His ashes do not cooperate in fixing the Pacific for a realisation of his death. Covered in ashes: fuck it, Dude, let's go bowling.

But first, one more. And this one a repetition with a difference. Exhaustion exhausts the possible by dissipating the the power of the image, says Deleuze. These are all Mr. Lebowski's children, says Brad. So, he's pretty cool racially, says the Dude, seeing a sponsored sports team in the picture. No not his actual children, Brad responds nervously. And yet they are. They are bastards of a tired viciousness, of the war at home, where the first enemy of the state is its people as Chomsky said. But not quite, these enemies of the state are not even its chosen people, but they burst out of the wound, out of the infected womb, the Bastards of the Party. No possibilities, so many tears, a dehiscence of tears, a tear of tears in the flesh, ripped by the rabid dogs of COINTELPRO, the tired betrayals and tired agents of the FBI, the end of American that cannot come soon enough. You can't look to the Dude here, or his friends, exhausted as they are.

The visual image is carried along by the music, the sonorous image that rushes toward its own abolition, writes Deleuze. Both of them rush toward the end, all possibility exhausted, he concludes. Who can watch a Tupac video, a Biggie video without being exhausted, without already being exhausted of all possibility, the music carrying you toward abolition, an abolition before birth, exhausted before you are born. In the end exhaustion is abolition, not just of the tired violence of America and its willing coalitions, but the abolition of exclusions, goals, substitutions and disjunctions by which the possible is realized. Abolition of the possible, and the Eagles, all that's left is to abide. This is what it means to live exhausted, beyond the reach of tiredness, in revolutionary becoming.

# BORROWED MATERIALS - MINOR POLITICS EMERGING AUTONOMY

By Valeria Graziano

One is seen to be almost wilfully naive about the real possibilities of politics in the contemporary socius "which, notwithstanding the re-emergence of 'anti-capitalist' themes, is certainly not configuring itself at the cusp of an alternative social experiment to capital. It is thus worth considering what politically propulsive affective condition one might discern in the midst of impossibility.

The 'militant', however, is an odd choice of agent. The history of the model of the militant in the 'little diaries', as Kafka might call them, of the communist movement has been one of considerable critique. From feminist, counter-cultural, left communist, Situationist perspectives, the militant has been challenged as an ascetic model of political practice that forms through a fetishized mode of commitment to 'action'.

Rather than accelerate political change, militant forms tend to end up producing specialized roles, hostility to others, fear of models and struggles outside their own variety of political truth, anxiety about being worthy of the cause, and exhaustion

Minor politics arises not from an emerging autonomy, but from cramped and complex relations that offer no easy or inevitable way out, and are packed full of disagreements, tensions, and impossibilities. I have argued that this condition induces modes of political and cultural invention. What I have not considered explicitly is the strange humour and joy that it induces. Deleuze's sense of the peculiar affective condition of this engagement emerges in his discussion of Kafka and Foucault.

The Divine Comedy of punishment means we can retain the basic right to collapse in fits of laughter in the face of a dazzling array of perverse inventions, cynical discourses and meticulous horrors. A whole chain of phenomena, from anti-masturbation machines for children to the mechanics of prison for adults, sets off an unexpected laughter which shame, suffering or death cannot silence . . . Vall's has already contrasted the revolutionaries' unique sense of gaiety in horror with the horrible gaiety of the torturer. Provided the hatred is strong enough something can be salvaged, a great joy which is not the ambivalent joy of hatred, but the joy of wanting to destroy whatever mutilates life. (Deleuze 1988: 23)

In contrast to Hardt and Negri's location of joy in the midst of productive autonomy and Jameson's diagnosis of the disempowering effects of theorists of the cramping force of social relations, Deleuze, then, sees a certain joy and humour arising from an engagement with, and a critique of cramped space. Deleuze and Guattari even go so far as to suggest that this joy in the midst of cramped space is inseparable from politics:

Kafka's gaiety, or the gaiety of what he wrote, is no less important than its political reality and its political scope . . . We don't see any other criteria for genius than the following: the politics that runs through it and the joy that it communicates.



TOTAL

# THE STUDENT'S HANDJOB: DRUGS

Check it out drugs are the new cool shit again but today they come in new forms. Find out about the different options for a contemporary drug addiction. Our present predicament offers a bunch of peculiar highs. From now on it's all up to you and your revolutionary subject. Bring it on, capitalism.

**Liberal Democracy:** Pushed by extremely well funded gangs and cartels, this one is a properly nasty little fucker, responsible for a great deal of violence internationally and within nations. Causes the delusion of something known as 'individual freedom', and also the belief that voting every few years for one of two groupings of the same bunch of rich kids, distinguished only by arbitrary colours, amounts to taking part in politics.

**High** – Causes feelings of immense superiority over other people, and is marked by a rabid hypocrisy, or flickering schizophrenia, between the ideals it espouses and their complete negation in actual behaviour. If institutional racism and sexism, schizophrenia, and psychotic episodes of imperialism are your sort of buzz, then this one is for you.

**Communism:** Extremely hard to get a hold of these days. May in fact be the stuff of urban legend. Fake syntheses proliferate – look for people selling newspapers – but generally fall short of expectations, causing only paranoia and authoritarian impulses.

**High** – Allegedly brings about the removal of exploitation, the loss of alienation, and feelings of community and communion with others. I have only experienced tip-of-the-tongue tastes of it in the flashes of fleeting moments of collective action, to date. Suggests deep sustenance and the liberation of human potential.

**Anarchism:** Much talk of this in recent times. Has been used to refer to any number of substances and things of little substance. For some people it apparently causes the irrational fear of people in black (not to be confused with the fear of black people: see Liberal Democracy, above) unravelling the social fabric. In others it brings about the determined belief that The State is inherently bad, and extremely bad for the health (of society).

**High** – A sugary rush of political agency. Yet to be seen if that high can be sustained. If you're at a demo, cover your face and follow the red and black flag for a smashing night/day on the town. If not, probably best to try and score it off someone who doesn't look like the MTV version of an anarchist. Harder to recognise, but worth the effort for a better buzz.

**Capitalism:** Like a big fat bag of crack, free of charge when you're young, bored and impressionable. It's legal too, despite causing more damage than everything else combined, so no need to worry about the cops: they're hooked on the glass cock too. The sickly sweet siren call of this one doesn't so much make you smash against the rocks, but makes you pimp-out and prostitute yourself so you can buy more rocks of it. Job in a call centre, anyone? Unless you're born into money, in which case you get to fuck the life out of everyone else. Wouldn't want to be you when they decide they've had enough, though.

**High** – A shallow, yet impossible to satiate desire for more and more shit at the cost of everything else. A bit like Prozac, it covers over a complex and undulating unhappiness with a shallow, artificial evenness. A kind of hypnosis that disguises the crushing boredom of the continual repetition of the same with flashing, candy coloured lights and auto-tuned emotions.

**Utopianism:** This one is designed to blow the backdoor, front door, hell, even the walls, off your imagination. Bang one under your tongue, free your mind and head off out to lunch. Food will taste better, sex will be more pleasurable,

and the sea will taste of lemonade. You might appear to others as if you're a few sandwiches short of a picnic, though. Imagining better worlds can be a powerful pastime. Just remember that imagining something doesn't mean it exists. Use your excursions into the beautiful unknown to criticise the miserable state of the world as it is, now. We all know what happens to people who try to hide away in Neverland with a chimp for a best friend: nothing very fucking good.

**High** – 'There will be 37 million poets the equal of Walt Whitman, 37 million musicians the equal of Nina Simone, and 37 million mathematicians the equal of Albert Einstein. Sex will be terrific, especially for transgendered people, with all tastes catered for. Food will be three times more delicate, delicious and plentiful than now. Cheese will flow in the rivers and we will...' Easy mate! You just stood in a massive runny dogshit and I'm worried you're going to check if it tastes like chocolate.

**Socialism:** An entry level treatment for most is this one. In many cases it is a gateway substance to more exploratory ideals. Others can have a bad trip and never come back to this kind of medication. It has proved a keeper though – campuses across the island are flooded with the sweet smell of this toxin. Be warned: they'll try to get you on this young and will react if you fancy another tipple. Once you find your supplier you'll easily find them again, or more likely they'll find you. Variants of the same strand are everywhere but regulars usually maintain a cult like devotion to one. You can spot an addict by their dissident superiority complex and endless begging for money.

**High** – Here is a classic case where you can never quite match the first buzz. Feelings of euphoria and arrival to some higher plain may be replaced by anxiety and nausea after sustained use. Users feel a tendency to sit in meetings and discuss what's going on outside, but fear looking out of the window. Can also induce authoritarian feelings of one-ness. Many spend their high trying to get everyone else hooked. Side effects also include a desire to write endless dribble in papers and an aggressive, nostalgic but irrelevant interest in history.

**Situationism:** Probably doesn't exist nowadays, if it ever did at all. The stuff of rumour and marketing, a brand name frequently applied to multiple sub-standard knock-offs, mostly placebos. Drug of choice for arty and media types, its effects are fleeting and rarely match the hype. Nevertheless it remains the stuff of legends, is frequently highly addictive, especially amongst the young, and is freely available over the internet. A bit like plant food really. Be warned though, prolonged users are likely to lose their inhibitions, possibly their self-respect, and will find it difficult to be taken seriously.

**High** - Often results in the unpleasant development of egotistical tendencies and attention seeking behaviour. Produces intense emotions ranging from euphoria to disorientation and confusion. Frequent users have been reportedly found aimlessly wandering the streets for days, even months on end. Causes alterations in spatial perception, breathlessness of prose and linguistic deformations.







# SPONTANEOUS ENCOUNTERS OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC KIND

Dance and performance scholar Helen Simard takes a closer look at the notion of choreography as expanded practice, a term that recently has gained leverage in the world of dance but however Simard is intrigued she has her doubts.



I met Mårten Spångberg at a workshop he gave in Montreal in the winter of 2013... His theory of 'Choreography as Expanded Practice' was the theme being discussed in this workshop, and was of great interest to me. You see, I had been invited to present a paper at the Congress on Research in Dance's 2013 special topics conference in Los Angeles. The conference, which was entitled *Tactical Bodies: The Choreography of Non-Dancing Subjects*, was to be a platform of discussion surrounding the notion of using choreography as an analytic lens to examine anything other than dance. The paper I had proposed, *Dance There Be Rock* (Simard, 2013), was a choreographic re-framing and analysis of the 'rockumentary' *AC/DC: Let There Be Rock* (Dionysius and Mistler, 1980) in which I was arguing for "a closer examination of (the film's) choreographic composition, and of the poetic value of the functional but stylized movements created during this musical performance" (Simard, 2013, p. 5).

Now, I had already decided to use Janet Adshead's frame of dance and choreographic analysis (1988) for the exercise, but I was struggling to find a theoretical grounding that would allow me to back up my proposition that this film documenting a live rock concert could indeed be understood and evaluated as a choreographic work. You see, while I have been a professional dancer, choreographer, and performer in Montreal, Quebec for more than a decade, I am still a fledgling writer and dance academic who likes to situate her arguments in a strategically selected body of existing theories and literature... My borderline Type A academic self has found that this approach makes it more likely that other dance academics will take my (at times outlandish) statements seriously. So while I personally felt that *AC/DC's* clear use of spacing, major/minor roles, and distinctive movement vocabularies (who doesn't love Angus Young's duckwalk?) justified my desire to interpret their performance as a choreographic work of art, I knew that I had to find someone more respectable than myself in the dance world whose theories I could use to back up my

claim.

As such, Spångberg's argument for the practical and conceptual separation between choreography and dance (Spangberg, 2011) seemed the perfect theory with which to frame my position. I grasped onto his argument that choreography was:

... a field of specific capacities disconnected from dance or dance-like expressions and can/should instead be understood as a set of generic tools or operations that can be applied, both in respect of production and analysis, to more or less any spacio-temporal capacity. (Spangberg, 2011, p. 58)

By accepting that any object or experience—including a performance by a hard rock band from Australia—could be viewed and read as a choreographic work of art, I had found the conceptual puzzle piece I needed to complete my choreographic analysis of *AC/DC: Let There Be Rock*. Quite pleased with myself, I emailed my paper to Spångberg, who graciously responded and offered a few comments on my work. And then he surprised me with the following email a few days ago:

I was thinking I'm doing a little stupid silly fun news paper here in PAF... farout yes but I'm doing this daily news paper for the session. Only five days but great fun. Now, wouldn't you find it very fun to write something... on dance choreography and *AC/DC*... or about anything else that comes to mind. Get going, I loved the last one so don't you dare. (Spångberg, email communication with the author, May 2013)

Delighted, I responded that, yes, I would love to contribute an article for the newspaper, but could I have a bit more information concerning things such as how long it should be, and if there was any sort of theme I should be working with? Spångberg's response was prompt but not particularly enlightening: "You can write whatever you like - long

short - often - weird - sexy - narrative - humanities - it's all fab..." (Spångberg, email communication with the author, May 2013).

Now, my borderline Type A, fledgling dance academic writer self was thrown into a whirl of high stress floor pacing, finger tapping, and deadline induced panic attacks by such vague instructions. "You can write whatever you like"... what on earth did that mean? Should I do something similar to the last paper, since he had obviously liked that well enough? Yes, I could write more on rock'n'roll aesthetics, and how they have infiltrated contemporary dance in recent times... Or perhaps I should try to seem horribly brilliant by writing something totally new and original in just a few days? Honestly, could I even write something remotely interesting in just a few days??

But wait Helen.

Stop.

You've been given permission to write whatever you want, and here you are trying to write a totally boring academic paper that no one will fucking care about.

Stop Helen. Stop.

If your boring old borderline Type A academic self can't figure out what to do with Spångberg's directives, can you stop for a minute and remember that you are first and foremost a dancer and choreographer, and perhaps find a more interesting and creative way to interpret the exercise by re-framing this article as a choreographic work of art?

Stop. Refocus. Reframe.

What if you try to see yourself not as a writer here, but as a dancer who has been put on the spot and asked to improvise by a choreographer who doesn't quite know what he was









# PERFORMATIVITY

By Mårten Spångberg



Listen up, I say this only once. Performativity is not a good thing! Mediocre art will not get anything better because of some added performativity. Your work is genuinely second rate artistic rubbish with or without performativity. Pas de tout, it's garbage what you do and only curators worth contempt and despise will pick up your filth.

What about this, nowadays curators don't have meetings anymore, sure studio visits and all kind of chit chat but they have something new, they gather up, in order to prepare the upcoming exhibition or whatever it is, in a workshop. Isn't it laughable, I start giggling just thinking about thinking about it, wow. First time in years curators are funny. "Yep, you know we'll have a workshop." What the fuck's that supposed to mean, is workshop their contribution to creativity, just a new name for brainstorming [which obviously is approximately as uncool as Myspace or Perez Hilton], ahaaa is it an adjustment toward contemporary knowledge production, Oh My God. Perhaps it is, a kind curatorial research [a very healthy addition to artistic ditto. Holy Juzuz]. Or, eheee, I think I understand... workshop is the curatorial turn toward, the P word, performativity. Nowadays curating is not a matter of goods [objects], service [relational aesthetics] or experience economy [socially engaged art], no no no it all comes down to performativity, and it's very good. No, it's not. What exactly is good with performativity. This is a disaster.

In fact to consider performativity as some kind of quality or condition of a work of art, is like dissing a piece of music for not having and for not being sonic. But Christ, we have all agreed on 4.33. Anybody, including a bowling-hall, that addresses performativity as some thing, as a quality or a condition is a person that must think that Marcel Duchamp is a DIY shop owned by the same big business that runs Duene Reade. Everything in the world, even really small things, middle sized dogs, chairs, factories and jealousy, are affected, charged, motored etc. through some or other performativity.

For some thing to be able to participate in the world, in reality, in anything at all it must exist within a relation with some capacity of performativity. Or, stuff that doesn't have or is not in relation with some form of performativity you know just puff is evacuated from reality. It doesn't exist. Performativity implies an object's [however unstable, whatever like a memory or a little bit of smoke], subject's [even just a kid, or a guy from Florence] or a movement's [a dance movement as much as a political movements] establishment of relations with reality, with say the symbolic order. Performativity in other words signifies the capacity of naming or being named.

Look at this, the moment when you add performative to your art practice what you do is to justify it. No, you are not bringing it out of anything, a performance is still a goddamn object, your horrid fuckin' dress code parade with queer bling elements is still an object, after all you got paid for it, after all you brought along some idiot to document the act, event or whatever you call it in a crispy nice way

with a camera that makes click sounds. Your socially engaged practice is still an object, it was after all part of and in the catalogue of the biennale this that or so and so. It is not more or less an object than a painting, installation, piece of music, a text or whatever, it is just differently an object. No, what that added title – performativity – really does is to justify your schtuff as perfectly inscribed, formatted, housetrained, well-meaning, politically and socially healthy exactly because you state or emphasize it's ability to established relations or already be inscribed in nets of relationality. Performative art is an art – however it is messy, trashy, sticky, body fluids, dressed down and make up – that has given up all aspirations, any cut-throat attitudes, and is instead endlessly complacent with our current economical, social etc. models of governance. It even licks its ass and with pleasure, performativity has become the lapdog of neoliberalism, the equivalent to the cat caressed by Don Corleone in the introduction of "The Godfather", it's just that this movie isn't even half good. Think Marlon Brando exchanged for Jim Carrey, like that half good.

What is rather at stake right now and in the future, "against" performativity, is to invent methods, tactics, models, auto-terrorisms, heresies that cancels out, exorcise, dismiss, deconstruct, fuck up and, yes, completely goddamn annihilates some things performativity, like all the way. That, exactly disengage itself from relations whatsoever. And this is ha-ha-hard work, seriously h-h-h-hard, because indeed evy-thing, even stuff from Japan, has or is inscribed in nets of performative capacitation. Performativity is inherent in whatever it is we have around us, even memories, faith, the smell of sex, lipstick and the weather forecast. What we need to do, is to get out a motherfuckin axe and cut those relations. It is at this moment, when art frees itself from performativity [however just for an instant and yes it is also potential vis-à-vis performance, dance and music, even – although it feels disgusting to have to admit it – yes, even to live art and performance collectives active in Berlin [nah, maybe not them] that something else, something radically different can kick in, and this radically different is obviously not sympathetic, but seriously violent. It is not furry and chill, it is directly hostile, a goddamn warmachine [Jaja Jaja, obviously warmachine understood as seriously D/G retro, what did you think?].

Okidok, where are we? Even though performativity takes off with "How To Do Things With Words" (a series of lectures delivered 1955, published 1962) and touches down ten years of so later with Derrida, it is only with Butler that shit hits the fan and performativity gains celebrity factor. If we degrade ourselves for a moment to psychoanalytic lingua [spit on Woody Allen] we could consider that Austin's and Derrida's texts function as a symptoms of a truth to come, as kinds of dark precursors of a future that has now gone super-size-me. Is it a coincidence that Austin's book is published the same year as Judson Church brings dance out of the closet... Is it chance that Derrida delivered his lecture "Signature, Event, Context" in August 1971, the

very same months that Nixon abolishes the gold standard and makes the world floating... What those guys did was unknowingly to predict a neoliberalism based on performativity. Since Butler made us aware off our coreless subjects and iteration, performativity has transformed from being something marginal to be the centerfold of our economical and social reality. Performativity is that stuff that our society is made of.

I've said it before, and it's elementary, the world we live in today – even and especially if we live in remote parts far far away from economical and power hubs – is in its entirety performative. A quick sketch would tell us something like this, over the last fifty years the world has experienced a four fold transformation, okay hold on, from: industrial production, distribution and circulation of goods, localness and a society that acknowledges history (and with that asymmetries of knowledge), to a reality organized around: immaterial production, performance (include in this knowledge, experience and subjectivity production slash economies), globality (and I don't just mean around the world, but all the way internet porn, World Of Warcraft, financialization, Richard Branson, FB and derivatives) and acknowledges only the contemporary, i.e. a ubiquitous simultaneity where every moment is every moment and all the time. In that world, ladies and gentlemen, the whole she-fuckin'-bang has turned performative – todo, tous, rubbet. So like how damn subversive is your performativity now, what is it productive of now, baby? Essactly, it's totally over, you just became more of the same. And if you think stating the performative nature of the subject, the body or anything else, it's all too late, because you know what, business already did that for us, and we just need to get the picture that corporate interest lick its lips the more curious forms of performativity we invent, it loves to incorporate it in next years collection. Phab.

Check it out, what about – performative architecture, like fuckin help me! What's that supposed to mean, buildings that looks like sheds, inflatable tents that can be offered as temporary shelter after natural disasters, why not a t-shirt with the Mies van der Rohe pavilion printed on the chest [less if more...], or why not just a t-shirt, it is after all a kind of building, construction and formation of space. Hello, all goddamn architecture is performative, it does something whereas it want to or not, and a lot. Same thing with performative art. Paintings, the moment the museum opens and before too, performs for us, it shows itself to tourists dressed in Bermuda shorts, to art students, to couples that makes out – those poor painting perform for us. Close the museum now, give the painting vacation. We have to, I mean h a v e to acknowledge that performativ is not when something becomes socially measurable, when and artistic practice, work or whatever becomes inscribed in some form of efficiency or contributes with something, especially, something unexpected. Unexpectedness has seriously little to do with performative of not. What in the first place is unexpectedness, it's exactly already in the imaginary, unexpected is not enough. It's just unexpected, but still within that which can be expected. Unexpected is still possible, what we are looking for – and only an art that annihilates it's performative capacitation can close up to this scission – what we are looking for, is an art that is not possible, but instead enters the domain of potentiality, a domain that we can't even imagine imagining. Only an art that renounces it's performativity, only an art that rejects any form of relation can circumvent efficiency, policy, strategy, meaning production, prescription, markets, and become the carrier of spiritual truth [which obviously is not spiritualist or something to do with yoga].

By the way, an art, today, that is implemented in a context as an example, must necessarily be abandoned. Art is about creating the real as the real not propose alternatives, respond to asymmetries, be critical, smart or glamorous.

In the mean time however, artist and their work is responsible to consider not whether or not it is performative, but how, in respect of what circumstances, vis-à-vis what politics, ethics etc. it's performativity is operating. But even so, stop performativity hysteria now, cancel all art that includes participation, abolish all socially engaged practices, stop any art that is efficient, productive, that build bridges, that pities human beings, that is in any respect exited about ecology, and make an art that is totally and utterly useless, that is, and shuns for just a moment any kind of performativity, and because it does, by necessity will force the viewer, spectator, implicated, reader or listener – not into some tacky partage du sensible – but into a problem, a serious problem – namely to invent, and by necessity, entirely new kinds of performativity, modes that might just change the world itself and entirely.





## OUT OF CONTEXT #2

Day by day and night by night, the longer I stay the more I carefully look into things. "Out of the four areas of Saint-Erme-Outre-Ramecourt, only "Saint-Erme Gare" is lit up all night long." By Aline and Rico



To start from the beginning, let's explain that at first - when the town was created - "Saint-Erme Gare" did not exist. The three areas - formerly three independent villages - came together as one single town in 1194. "Saint-Erme Gare" only came to exist when the railway was brought to the area, and with it came new companies and residents. People then started to refer to the northern part of Saint-Erme as "Saint-Erme Ville" - with the Town Hall and the local merchants - to distinguish it from the southern part (the station).

It is important to be aware of the constitution of the village to understand its functioning.

At night, the light condition differs in the four areas. All across the three villages, the lampposts are switched on at dusk and switched off at 10:30 PM. Yet, out of the four areas, only "Saint-Erme Gare" is lit up all night long. How come is there such a differentiation between Saint-Erme Gare and the other areas of the town? Has it always been this way?

Perhaps, since there is a greater concentration of commercial activities in Saint Erme Gare than in the other three areas, we can assume that this light condition is responding to a more substantial care for security in the nighttime.

In doubts, I discussed the situation with various local residents... The conversations revealed that a couple of years ago, the lampposts of the entire village would switch off at 10:30 PM. It is only recently that the situation has changed.

At night, the fact that the light is on after 10:30 pm isolates Saint-Erme Gare from the rest of the town. The light condition changes the local context of this particular area but through a ripple effect it could have consequences on the rest of the town as well. Did we observe change in the behaviours of the local community after 10:30 pm? Did it modify the existing activities or generate new types of activities (new businesses, new entertainment)?

Right now, at night, this crossroad acts as a signifier/marker of the town, for the drivers crossing to reach a further

destination. Instead could it become a node - a meeting point or a destination in itself? Since I come from the city I cannot help but wonder if this area - due to its location and light condition - could attract developers of nightlife entertainments (i.e bars, discotheques, restaurants..)

Yet, considering the local population of Saint-Erme-Outre-Ramecourt: is there a potential for a nightlife area to develop and if so, who would be the target group of those entertainments?

The local population is mainly composed of families, retired couples and individuals. There are very few young professionals. However, we can consider that by including the youngsters from the neighbouring towns and villages, a relative amount of people could have an interest in having night entertainments in this particular spot (rather than travelling 20 km to Laon for instance). There is a great potential for such a new development to occur because of: the close proximity of this area to the highway to and from Reims and Laon; the existing commercial area with its restaurants and cafes, the remote distance of most of the residential areas, the station, the local cab company and the light condition obviously - signifier of this area. All of these parameters brought together create a very attractive spot for this type of activity.

On the other hand, if this were to take place and a new entertainments would come into Saint-Erme-Outre-Ramecourt, what would it mean for the local residents?

Is this desirable for them? Would they still feel at home and/or out of place?

All these questionings come out of one single observation: the change in light. One small change could trigger a ripple effect of actions which might not have been foreseen when this condition was changed. All the other parameters were pre-existing to the change, even though one could not articulate them yet. The new condition activates the connection of those parameters and reveals new potentials out of the existing context.



## HORS CONTEXTE #1

... il semble que je puisse apprécier davantage les endroits où je suis, les gens que je rencontre, les choses que je fais.

By Aline and Rico

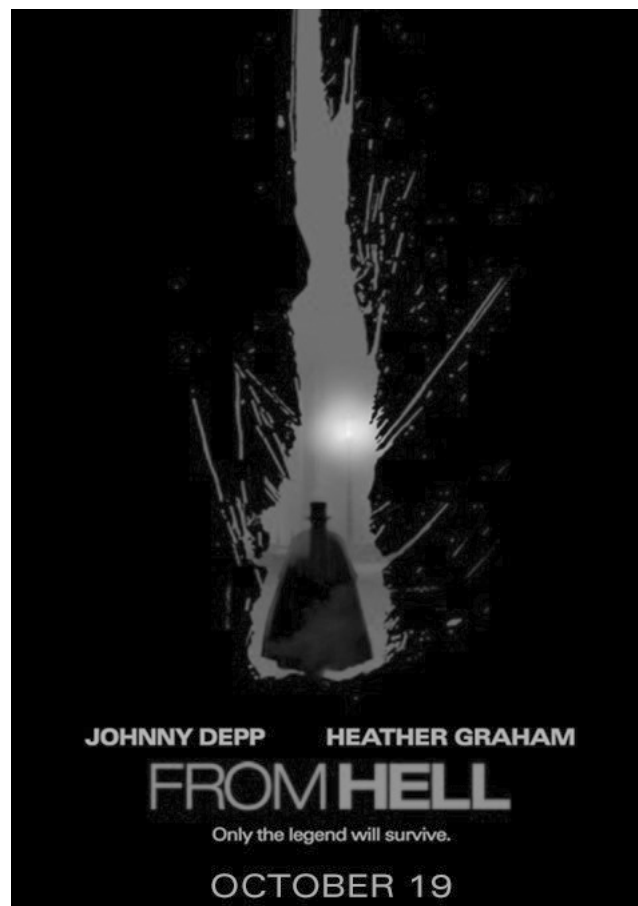
Il y a un certain nombre de choses qui m'ont surpris quand je suis arrivé ici.

La nuit, dans la rue principale, à une certaine heure, la lumière n'est plus. Tout à coup, les lampadaires s'éteignent. Chaque soir, au même moment, toute l'année. Au début, quand vous sortez, vos yeux ne peuvent y voir clair. Cela vous donne une perception différente des environs. Vous connaissez ces lieux, mais vous voyez les choses d'une façon comme jamais auparavant.

La rue devient un décor. Votre imagination et les images que vous percevez créent une nouvelle lecture de l'endroit. Il n'y a rien de plus commun que l'obscurité. À la maison ou au théâtre, nous y sommes habitués. Mais combien de fois avez-vous eu la chance de voir une rue complètement sombre animée seulement par la lumière scintillante des téléviseurs. J'en suis venu à apprécier cela probablement parce que j'ai été privé de cette opportunité jusqu'à présent.

J'ai remarqué cela depuis que j'ai emménagé ici, à Saint-Erme-Outre-Ramecourt. Je vis dans une zone que la communauté locale, appelle «Saint-Erme Ville» - c'est la partie Nord du village, qui abrite la Mairie (Town Hall). Près de la gare, avec son tabac, sa pharmacie, son restaurant, sa bibliothèque, son kebab, son supermarché, sa station essence, son salon de coiffure, sa boulangerie et ses quincailleries, il y a la partie Sud appelée «Saint-Erme Gare». Entre les deux, on traverse le quartier calme de Ramecourt. Enfin, à distance et peut-être insoupçonné, on découvre Outre - détaché de la rue principale - le quartier est détaché du va et vient de la communauté locale. (Sur ces quatre zones, seule «Saint-Erme Gare» reste éclairée toute la nuit).

Quand je raconte que je suis venu vivre ici par choix, les gens me demandent souvent pourquoi? Pourquoi, comme si on avait besoin de justifier un tel choix. Plusieurs circonstances m'ont conduites à cet endroit en particulier, mais la raison pour laquelle je suis ici, c'est principalement parce que rien d'autre ne m'attendait nulle part ailleurs. Pour moi, cela signifiait que je pourrais rechercher et explorer sans avoir à questionner le but de ma présence ici. Hors contexte, il semble que je puisse apprécier davantage les endroits où je suis, les gens que je rencontre, les choses que je fais. Ici, je suis en même temps confiné dans ma maison et exposé à une pluralité d'expériences. Tout à la fois, je me sens déraciné et chez moi.





**FAT**