

Marcus Steinweg

Gramsci Theater

The *Gramsci Theater* is a commissioned work for Thomas Hirschhorn's *Gramsci Monument* (The Bronx, NYC 2013). It attends to Antonio Gramsci by paying no attention to him. Gramsci is the excuse. It was important to me not to place him center stage as a solitary figure and so I decided to include a second focal point, to make an ellipse. This other focal point is Heiner Müller. The ellipse marks the tension and conflict between two focal points, which mutually threaten and define one another. Rivalry cannot be avoided. It testifies to closeness and otherness. They were joined by other figures: Alexander Kluge, Theodor W. Adorno, Bertolt Brecht, Gilles Deleuze, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Luc Nancy, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Marguerite Duras, Alain Badiou, and two additional characters: the First Marxist and the Second Marxist. Sometimes I included original quotations by the protagonists in the text. Other times I have them say things they didn't say and never would have. There are 'materials' inserted between the scenes. These materials are short texts, copies of which one or several actors hand out to the public between the scenes. Their function is to establish fitful contact between actors and audience. The texts are meant to produce unrest. They can be read during the performance or at home. They create an asynchronicity at the time of the performance and continue the performance—at least optionally—at a later time. I wrote *Gramsci Theater* in just under 4 weeks. When Thomas asked me if I wanted to write it I instantly agreed. The idea of doing something I don't know how to do appealed to me.

Marcus Steinweg, Berlin, 30 March 2013.

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Characters:

Anyone
Antonio Gramsci
Heiner Müller
Alexander Kluge
Theodor W. Adorno
Bertolt Brecht
Gilles Deleuze
Marguerite Duras
Friedrich Nietzsche
Jean-Luc Nancy
Martin Heidegger
Jacques Derrida
Alain Badiou
First Marxist
Second Marxist

REFLEXION: THEATER

ANYONE OR SEVERAL (facing the audience)

1. The theater I have in mind is a theater of discontinuity, a play that doesn't work, that disturbs and interrupts itself.
2. A theater of the present, that is broken by the present.
3. In this theater one voice disturbs another by not following the second voice's thread of thought.
4. It is a theater of interrupting interruptions, operating in the midst of an incommensurable world.
5. One voice interrupts another, to be in turn interrupted by it.
6. This is about a swarm of voices that tend to talk rather than communicate.
7. It is not as if there were nothing to say. On the contrary. There is too much to say. There is a surfeit of ideas!
8. What's missing are the brackets that could hold them together. There is no principle of organization.
9. The chaos of too much meaning and language opens avenues to another meaning and another language.
10. The space of this other meaning and this other language is the proscenium stage of a subject open to its inconsistency.

SCENE 1: FINANCIAL METAPHYSICS

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "PRISON.")

Enter: Gramsci, Müller, Nietzsche, Derrida, Deleuze, Duras, Hegel.

GRAMSCI
Do you have a theory?
A theory of reality?
A theory of the future?
A political theory?

MÜLLER
I don't need a theory.
I live in practice.
In the here and now.
I have my life.

GRAMSCI
But the economy...

MÜLLER
Money is running riot, that interests me.
The insanity of the economy.

GRAMSCI
Money running riot.

MÜLLER
The Hegelians on Wall Street.
The economy running riot.
The poetry of capital.

GRAMSCI
The deregulated market.

MÜLLER
The excesses of reason.

GRAMSCI
Speculation.

MÜLLER
The Hegelianization of the economy.

GRAMSCI
The metaphysics of money.

MÜLLER
Financial metaphysics.

GRAMSCI
Creatio ex nihilo.

MÜLLER
Value created out of nothing.

GRAMSCI
Money is religious.
The economy is religion.
Religion never anything but economy.

SECOND MARXIST

Individualism Is Religion.
You should be you yourself.
Which self are you talking about?
There is no such thing as the self.
That is a construct.
Shitty self.
Shitty construct.
Shitty economy.

MÜLLER

The economy is the religion of the state.
Every idiot knows that.
It replaced politics long ago.

GRAMSCI

Politics and metaphysics.

MÜLLER

Both.

NIETZSCHE

I'm dreaming of a new politics and metaphysics.
I'm dreaming of a new infinity.
I'm dreaming of an enlightenment that will generate a new economy.
A different economy.
A different thought.
A different world.

GRAMSCI

There's no such thing as a different world.
There's only this one.

MÜLLER

There is a mistaken understanding of enlightenment.
Which is related to defusing the subject and its reality.
You see only what you want to see.
Moralism absorbs the truth.

GRAMSCI

An economy that leaves home in order to come home.
– That is the old economy.

MÜLLER

An economy robbed of its hyperbolism.
A reasonable economy.
An economy without chrematistics.
An economy without excess.

DERRIDA

Coming home to yourself is a metaphysical phantasm par excellence.
There is no home.
The specters moved in long ago.
When you come home to yourself, you meet a stranger.
It is a madness that watches over logos.

GRAMSCI

Reason controls only instincts to which it gives free rein.

DELEUZE

An economy of immanence.

A politics of immanence.
A metaphysics of immanence.

DURAS

Thought that remains centered by leaving its center.
That only remains centered because it leaves its center.

HEGEL

I've been talking about that for 200 years!

"REFRAIN" SPOKEN BY SEVERAL OR ALL OF THE ACTORS

God survived on the capital markets.
God is not dead.

MATERIAL 1: REALITY

As a codified setting of consistency, reality is super determined and super complex. Within this sphere of this super determination and super complexity, the subject moves along constituted structures that orient thought and action. Even so there is, at times, a critical loss of orientation. There the subject experiences the inconsistency of the contingent fabric of consistency that is its reality. Existence and contingency are linked in the subject's experience of reality: what exists is not compelled to exist the way it exists.

SCENE 2: THE POETRY OF CAPITAL

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "**PRISON LIBRARY.**")

Enter: Müller, Badiou, Gramsci, Brecht, Second Marxist, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Foucault, Duras, First Marxist, Derrida, Hegel, Nancy

MÜLLER:

Corpses are always colorful when you leave them for a while.
Corpses take on all kinds of colors.
God has taken on the color of money.

BADIOU

You're not a philosopher.

MÜLLER

I don't want to be one.

GRAMSCI

Why don't you set any banks on fire?

BRECHT

Setting banks on fire is for dilettantes.
Professionals found a bank.

GRAMSCI

Have you got a concept?

MÜLLER

I don't need a concept.

BADIOU

Have you got an idea?

MÜLLER

Language transcends every idea.

HEGEL

Language is the body of thought.
Language is the cloak of the idea.

BADIOU

You have to live with an idea.
The subject is distinguished from the animal by having ideas.
An idea, a truth, a mission.

HEGEL

Specify your passion.
What do you live for?
What do you die for?

MÜLLER

Deregulated thinking versus deregulated markets.
There you have my idea.

GRAMSCI

Thought against the market.

MÜLLER

Thought against a market that doesn't think.

BRECHT

The market doesn't think.

GRAMSCI

Not to think belongs to the poetry of capital.

SECOND MARXIST

The idiots on Wall Street are poets who don't think?

EVERYONE ELSE (in unison):

Yes.

HEIDEGGER

What's the fucking problem?

MÜLLER

Man is the problem.
Man keeps having to be redefined.
"Man"—a fucking problem.

GRAMSCI

No one needs the new man.
We have to learn to cope with the old one.
It's about living one's own being, about being the master of one's self!
About setting oneself off against others.
Risking autonomy and breaking out of chaos.
It's about being an element of order.
But one's own order, one's own discipline of commitment to an ideal.

BADIOU (hysterical)

We need ideas, we need ideas...

GRAMSCI

We must create sober, patient people, who do not despair in the face of atrocity and do not enthuse about every stupidity.

MÜLLER

The solution is neither despair nor stupidity.

NIETZSCHE

Man is the animal not properly adapted to his environment.

MÜLLER

Nothing can be preserved without killing it.

FOUCAULT

An animal is someone who needs no money.

GRAMSCI

The animal disappears in capital.

FOUCAULT

Man disappears.

DURAS

It is not man who disappears but the animal!

NIETZSCHE

The real man ranks higher than the ideal man.

MÜLLER

The humane man doesn't exist.

The humane man is an illusion.

DURAS

The sky is empty.

I'm frightened.

MÜLLER

Fear is the prerequisite of life.

You cannot live without fear.

DURAS

We don't know where we're going.

MÜLLER

You don't know where you're going in empty space.

You don't know how to move or which direction makes sense.

DURAS

The earth strays lonely in the planetary system.

The earth is a stray star.

Man strays around on it.

FIRST MARXIST

So where to begin?

DERRIDA

There is no beginning.

Get that out of your head.

BADIOU

Not even an end is certain.

The only certainty is infinity.

DERRIDA

Infinite finiteness.

DURAS

We will never reach the goal.
Neither beginning nor end is absolute.

HEGEL

The question of the beginning is the fundamental question of philosophy.
The mind loses its way.
Its way is a byway.

MÜLLER

You always have to begin somewhere, arbitrarily.

GRAMSCI

Man knows neither beginning nor end.

DURAS

Man is a labyrinthine existence.

NANCY

Sense is the problem.

BADIOU

For me it is truth.

MÜLLER

Imagination is more important than truth.
Reality comes from the imagination.

NANCY

Truth is just another name for the absence of sense.

MATERIAL 2: TRUTH

Truth to which no given criterion correlates can only be lawless truth, which is not based on knowledge and therefore remains unjustified, much like the truth of love or passion. Some passions derive their viability from being unfounded. Not because they are arbitrary but because they intervene in reality with such impact that they force it to redefine. Philosophy relates art to the opening of evidences that obscure the established model of reality in order to re-illuminate it.

SCENE 3: SPECTERS

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**GYM.**”)

Enter: Müller, Derrida, Nietzsche, Foucault, Heidegger, Deleuze, Gramsci

MÜLLER

My theory is an economy of the dead.
The dead are in the majority.
The dead are not dead.

DERRIDA

We live with specters.

NIETZSCHE

The fact that God is dead doesn't mean that he doesn't exist.

FOUCAULT

God is dead means that a man once died.

MÜLLER

Man is an abyss.

HEIDEGGER (quoting Hölderlin)
That is, mortals almost/Reach into the abyss.

MÜLLER
Man stands on the verge.

NIETZSCHE
Who wipes off the blood?

FOUCAULT
Specters have no blood.

NIETZSCHE
God is dead means:
He looks different now.

DELEUZE
In costume?

HEIDEGGER
God is money.

NIETZSCHE
Money is a God who doesn't need any money.

MÜLLER
God is money, money shits.
God shits like mad.

GRAMSCI
Money destroys itself.

MÜLLER
That's what it's for!

GRAMSCI
To generate something new.

MÜLLER
To simulate the future.

NIETZSCHE
To create specters.

GRAMSCI
Money is inventive.

DELEUZE
Money is shitty creative!

NIETZSCHE
Creativity used to be God's privilege.

MÜLLER
Then art's.

GRAMSCI
Now the economy's.

MATERIAL 3: THE DEATH OF GOD

The death of God undermines the idea of an absolute programmer. There there is no one who *knows*. No one has a plan, that is, everyone has nothing but an individual plan, and doubts about its consistency. The subject without God is not its own proprietor. It constitutes itself as an inventor in the unintelligible terrain that is its life. One can speak of a subject when the willingness appears to substitute auto-invention for the esotericism of self-search, in other words, when the subject has enough courage to address itself as something other than an object.

SCENE 4: DEATH

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**IN THE FUTURE.**”)

Enter: Duras, Gramsci, Müller, Lacan, Brecht

DURAS

Let us look at atrocity, at death.

GRAMSCI

No one wants to die as a consumer.

Money opposes death.

So money devours death by producing the dead.

MÜLLER

Humankind simply can't cope with its shit!

LACAN

Like I said!

Shit is what differentiates man from animals!

BRECHT

Money shits money.

Money shits on death.

GRAMSCI

Capitalism as a cesspool.

BRECHT

Capitalism that shits the dead.

Capitalism is a shit house.

GRAMSCI

But a house.

DURAS

At least a house.

GRAMSCI

A prison is a house, too.

A mortuary.

BRECHT

You should know.

MATERIAL 4: VIRTUAL ECONOMY

The virtualization and fictionalization of the economy, the termination in 1973 of the Bretton Woods Agreements which led to the uncoupling of the world of finance from a system of fixed exchange rates and the gold standard, its openness toward aneconomic factors and self-unbounding toward inconsistency, toward a “regime of free-floating signifiers with no anchor or measure, unsecured by a transcendental signified,” which takes place in the “transition from commodity money to credit money, from backed to unbacked currency systems” (Joseph Vogl), corresponds to the philosophical self-

uncoupling of reason from any *fundamentum inconcussum*, as described by the transition from the principle-based ontotheological metaphysics of ultimate grounds to the postmodern affirmation of the absence of a guaranteeing or stabilizing principle.

SCENE 5: THE DESERT GROWS

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**IN THE PRESENT.**”)

Enter: Gramsci, Duras, Kluge, Nietzsche

GRAMSCI

God is narcissistic.

God is the void.

God is money that circles around itself.

Egocentric money.

DURAS

Money needs man as little as God does.

GRAMSCI

There is no beyond of narcissism.

KLUGE

Here we stand. That is the situation.

NIETZSCHE

The desert grows.

In which a dead man is resurrected.

DURAS

Let the world perish—that is the only politics.

The world should go and meet its downfall.

“REFRAIN” SPOKEN BY SEVERAL OR ALL OF THE ACTORS

God survived on the capital markets.

God is not dead.

MATERIAL 5: WORLD THEATER

God is dead, the transcendental subject and the grand other do not exist, which means that the absolute guarantor of consistency—the bank with inexhaustible reserves—does not exist, or only as a player in a world theater that negotiates its *realities*—its evidences and consistencies, its symbolic and economic valences, i.e. the entirety of its *facts*—above the abyss of ontological inconsistency, instead of manifesting them within a divine horizon of meaning.

SCENE 6: WITHOUT A FIXED POINT

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**PRISON.**”)

Enter: Gramsci, Badiou, Duras, Müller, Derrida, Deleuze, Nancy, Adorno, Duras, First Marxist.

GRAMSCI

I’m going mad.

I need resistance.

Who will give me resistance in?

BADIOU
The state.
Business.
The banks.

DURAS
Or money.

GRAMSCI
Money steps out of line.
Money is step dancing like mad.

MÜLLER
Money is a dancing harlot.

GRAMSCI
Or a floundering God.

DURAS
I'm getting dizzy.
Who am I?
Who is in my place?

DERRIDA
You are not what you are.
You are not in anyone's place.

MÜLLER
You are an automaton.

DELEUZE
A machine.

NANCY
The only presupposition of the self is that it cannot presuppose itself.

MÜLLER
Man has no fixed point.

ADORNO
No identity.
Like money.

DURAS
The only fixed point is the insight that there is no fixed point.

MÜLLER
If you no longer have reality under control because it no longer offers any firm ground where you can safely stand, you look elsewhere for a point to stand on.
That takes imagination.

DURAS (facing the First Marxist)
You don't belong to yourself.
No one is in your place.

FIRST MARXIST
Fuck you!

MÜLLER
Having no future spawns aggression.

MATERIAL 6: SUBJECT

The dimensions of radical passivity and hyperbolic activity intersect in the subject. The subject is the arena of this intersection. Translated into ontotopological categories, this means that the subject is the place where the future intervenes in the past and the past determines the future. Intervention and determination are strictly compossible no matter how mutually exclusive they seem to be. The subject is neither a self-transparent *ego cogito*, nor a calmly collected sense of self, of auto-affection unclouded by hetero-affects. It is rather the arena of self-mediation with its object-shares, which mark its status in the fact-world. Subject-shares and object-shares intersect in the subject. There is no reason to reduce it to one of these sides. It belongs to the complexity of the subject to be irreducible to its status as subject and as object. It oscillates from here to there. As long as it thinks its object-being, it is a thinking object that is already a subject. And yet, as a subject that explores its object-being, it thinks the limitations of its self as subject. Subject is what thinks itself as object and, by so thinking, accesses its subject-being. That does not mean that it is pure thought, intellectual outlook, pure reason. It certainly does not mean that it is in possession of its self, identical with its self, and grounded in a substantial selfhood. The subject is not a self that can be certain of its self, like a given. It is the scene of a self-experience, which proves to be an experience of inconsistency inasmuch as it experiences the lack of a self as a condition of the possibility of its self.

SCENE 7: ONTOLOGICAL POVERTY

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**LIBRARY.**”)

Enter: Adorno, Nancy, Derrida, Müller, Nietzsche, Deleuze, Gramsci, Duras, Nancy, Heidegger, Badiou, Hegel, Derrida, First Marxist, Brecht

ADORNO

No man matches the image of man..

NANCY

Man does not own himself.

DERRIDA

He possesses his possessionlessness.

That is not nothing.

NANCY

No more to it than that.

MÜLLER

There is positive nihilism.

NIETZSCHE

Active nihilism.

MÜLLER

Nihilism that activates.

DELEUZE

Spinozism.

GRAMSCI

Activism.

DELEUZE

The affirmation of reality.

GRAMSCI

You take it as it is.

NIETZSCHE

Saying yes to it does not mean that you endorse it.

DELEUZE

Saying yes is not the same as endorsement.

NIETZSCHE

I'm dreaming of a new enlightenment.

DURAS

What is enlightenment?

MÜLLER

Enlightenment is a new look at the world.

DELEUZE

Enlightenment made the mistake of thinking that man is not an animal.

NANCY

Man does not blend into the humane.

GRAMSCI

We mustn't lose hope.

We must concentrate.

MÜLLER

The only hope are the mistakes, the accidents—the things that don't work.

GRAMSCI

The only chance we have is to enlighten the enlightenment about itself.

HEIDEGGER

Fucking enlightenment.

NIETZSCHE

Humanism's mistake was to separate man from animal.

BADIOU

Man is the animal that has ideas.

HEGEL

A terminally ill animal.

GRAMSCI

A brain with balls!

DERRIDA

More monstrous than any animal.

MÜLLER

More bestial.

DERRIDA

The man beast.

HEIDEGGER (quoting Sophocles)

There is much that is uncanny, but nothing is uncanner than man.

MÜLLER

Reconciliation with our animality is a requisite of a more humane civilization.

HEIDEGGER

Reconciliation with our uncanniness.

DELEUZE

Becoming animal and becoming man are complementary.

HEGEL

I am not talking about the animal in man .

I am talking about the man in animals.

FIRST MARXIST

What about morals?

BRECHT

First a full stomach, then morality.

MATERIAL 7: FRACTURE

The new thought, which is indebted to *Nietzsche's Revolution*, fractures all humanisms that rely on a stable identity of *homo humanus*. It fractures all those phantasms that promise the finite subject an infinite future and that guarantee an absolute origin. Starting with the fracture in man, it starts to think this fracture itself, and fractures man as such, not in order to make him disappear without a trace but rather in order to define him as a dwindling trace of his self (of that which he never *really* was). "This fracture cannot be eliminated because it is the greatest subject matter of thought: man can neither eliminate it nor patch it up, because in man the fracture is the end of man or the origin of thought. A cogito for the dissolved self..." (Gilles Deleuze). Thought after the death of God must start with the impossibility of man, with an originary, empty subject, and a primally dispersed cogito, whose task, from now on, lies in confronting this emptiness and dispersion, instead of working at a substantial beginning and a grounded finality.

SCENE 8: CHAOS PRODUCTION

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "GYM.")

Enter: Gramsci, Müller, Adorno, Kluge, Second Marxist, Nietzsche, Deleuze, First Marxist, Duras.

GRAMSCI

Changing from one order to another is madness.

MÜLLER

A madness that makes life worth living.

GRAMSCI

How are you going to organize this madness?

MÜLLER

By creating disorder.

Art produces disruption.

Art is resistance.

Art comes from discontent with the world.

ADORNO

Art is chaos production!

KLUGE

Chaos begets enlightenment.

MÜLLER

There is only one way, a potentially fatal one.

You can't change from one order to another without passing through disorder. There is no seamless transition.

Just as there is no pure disorder, no chaos as such.

But there is the experience of a certain blindness and turbulence.

KLUGE

In danger and dire distress the middle-of-the-road leads to death.

MÜLLER

Art should always be a disruption of politics, of consolidation.

Sometimes a joke, a provocation will do.

Sometimes deliberate loss of control.

In art, you have to take your hand off the railing.

The gaze expands and the gaze sharpens when control lessens.

SECOND MARXIST

I do not want to be a living death, doing everything right and, by never doing anything wrong, doing nothing at all.

MÜLLER

The mistake is the logic of avoiding mistakes.

Mistakes are sources of possible experience.

GRAMSCI

How do you organize mistakes?

MÜLLER

By making lots of them.

That's another word for life: mistake-accumulation.

DELEUZE

The logic of avoiding mistakes is the enemy of art.

MÜLLER

I know that from writing.

Often, I don't know what I'm doing.

You can't write without taking risks.

Experience can only be gained blindly.

NIETZSCHE

That is the courage to tolerate contingency.

MÜLLER

The courage to tolerate disorder.

DELEUZE

The helter-skelter dynamics of thought.

MÜLLER

Knowing what you're doing nips art in the bud.

DURAS

Art is the open door toward abandonment.

MÜLLER

If art has a function, then it is to make reality impossible.

FIRST MARXIST

You're all romantics.

GRAMSCI
You can't anticipate experience.

DELEUZE
Experience is what you do.

DURAS
Experience exists only as excess.

NIETZSCHE
Art combines precision with excess.
That is what I call the Dionysian—this combination.

DELEUZE
Which is tantamount to being responsible for your irresponsibility.

NIETZSCHE
Yes.

MÜLLER
Yes.

MATERIAL 8: ART

The work of art belongs to the empirical, social sphere by marking a distance from it. Part of it is obviously a critical detachment from the world of options, evidence, and balances. Art takes a critical view of the socio-symbolic reality of fact without disputing its facticity. The work of art participates in this reality by being at an infinitesimal remove from it. It has to oppose it in order to be art but it cannot deny its involvement with socio-empirical realities in order to indulge in ivory-towered idealism.

SCENE 9: RELIGION AS GOD ERSATZ

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case **"IN THE COURTYARD."**)

Enter: Müller, Lacan, Nancy, First Marxist, Deleuze, Nietzsche, Gramsci, Second Marxist, Duras.

MÜLLER
What's left when religion goes?
Is everything allowed if God is dead?

LACAN
Is everything forbidden?
You should not be too quick to stick God and religion in one file.

NANCY
Instead of confirming the existence of God, religion is God ersatz.
We are religious because God doesn't exist.

MÜLLER (pointing to the FIRST and SECOND MARXISTS)
Those smiling idiots believe in happiness!
Ideology is false consciousness.
It is created by simply ignoring essential aspects of reality.

FIRST MARXIST
Money is the problem.
But what is the solution.

MÜLLER

There is no solution.

Negative, positive – those are categories that exclude reality.

That doesn't exist anyway.

That has nothing to do with reality.

Those are concepts for decency's sake.

LACAN

That is what I call the real.

Reality beyond good and evil—as an incommensurable reality.

DELEUZE

I say it's chaos.

NIETZSCHE

You have to measure your thoughts against chaos.

There is still chaos within you.

DURAS

Every existence is an insoluble problem.

MÜLLER

Optimism is only a lack of information.

GRAMSCI

Optimism of the will, pessimism of the intellect.

NETZSCHE

The pessimism of the intellect implies being enlightened about yourself.

The most astonishing thing would be: glowing affect and a cold, bright head and will.

FIRST MARXIST

You frighten me!

MÜLLER

Fear forces solutions.

You won't get rid of it by suppressing it.

SECOND MARXIST

The solution is the problem.

You can't cope without a solution.

FIRST MARXIST

Solution, solution.

SECOND MARXIST

Must you?

FIRST MARXIST

I need a solution.

SECOND MARXIST

There is no solution.

FIRST MARXIST

I will not relinquish happiness.

NIETZSCHE

You're looking for happiness in the wrong place.

Happiness means to stop looking.

MÜLLER

Anyone who is really alive needs neither hope nor despair.
Anyone who is really alive doesn't give a shit about happiness.

GRAMSCI

I cling to hope like a disease I don't believe in.

MÜLLER

No one lives at the height of his insights anyway.

DURAS

Happiness means being a little bit dead.
A little bit absent from the place where I am.

MÜLLER

There is a need for ultimate justice.

DURAS

That contradicts reality.

GRAMSCI

But it is a reality.

MATERIAL 9: SPECTRAL PRESENCE

The subject evidently borders on something non-subjective, on an element that may be blind or dull, that may be clear-sighted, but that always demands to be present. It could be addressed as the elementary itself, as chaos or wild nature, as a pre-subjective layer of unordered materiality and as a Dionysian, archaic *Ungrund*, which never lets thought come to rest because it appeals to all thinking to be thought, as long as it corresponds to the status of the unthought. In fact, in its own essential being, every thought, every subject has probably already stepped out of itself. (M. Foucault) An abyss opens up within it and it realizes that to think itself—to be self-awareness, to be thinking that thinks itself—means to face this crack or this fracture, this wound that will not close. That makes thought—as Foucault says—a "dangerous act." Opening onto an element that ultimately closes itself off, that refuses full self-awareness, that destabilizes the subject as a whole and makes it fall out of step by eluding it in order to propel it toward a self-understanding that leaves behind the phantasms of a specterless present and self-presence. That the subject moves along the traces of its disappearance, that it meets up with itself along the line of its rampant absence like a spectral double means that it is itself a phantasm that does not stop harassing itself by riddling itself with questions that it cannot answer. The legacy of metaphysics might possibly be nothing but this riddling, which drills a hole in the subject and keeps drilling until there is a hole or a cavity large enough to accommodate all kinds of specters, which begin proliferating in the subject until they finally replace it altogether. And yet—as Derrida has shown—it would be a mistake to rely on the deferred action of specters as if there had ever been a non-spectral subject whose untroubled self-certainty and self-presence could ever be shaken by a spectral power.

SCENE 10: THE WORLD—A HOLEY CLOTH

(The location of the scenes is to **be** announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "**WHILE RUNNING.**")

Enter: Gramsci, Nietzsche, Brecht, Müller, Duras, First Marxist.

GRAMSCI

The financial crisis as a crisis of confidence is a crisis of reality.
It leads to the critical point of our reality.

NIETZSCHE

Of our reality or our realities.

Of our divided world without a back world.
There is only a here and now without a beyond.
It is not grounded in any kind of superior authority.

NANCY

Your immanence has holes.
The world is a cloth full of holes.

DELEUZE

And chaos whistles through the holes like wind.

GRAMSCI

How can anybody have confidence in this world?

BRECHT

To invoke confidence is to exhaust it.

GRAMSCI

Will you all concentrate? Once again: What is reality?

MÜLLER

Reality is a broken promise of consistency.

DURAS

Reality is a narcissistic wound..

FIRST MARXIST

It can only disappoint.

MÜLLER

The way out of disappointment is not to escape it but to work at it.

NIETZSCHE

It always costs more than you can pay.

FIRST MARXIST

I hate paying.

MÜLLER

Pull yourself together.
Not even your grave is for free.

NIETZSCHE

Only those who pay more than they can pay actually pay.
Debts balance accounts.

GRAMSCI

Death ruins you.
It costs you everything you've got.
Death doesn't give you an advance.

"REFRAIN" SPOKEN BY SEVERAL OR ALL OF THE ACTORS

God survived on the capital markets.
God is not dead.

MATERIAL 10: CREATIO EX NIHILO

God survives on capital markets provided that a permanent *creatio ex nihilo*—value created out of nothing—is part of their dynamic. Nothing is a synonym for the inconsistency of a system whose consistency is based on the interactive dynamics of promises and confidence. It seems there is a structural homology between the philosophical metaphysics of concept and the financial metaphysics

of economy. It was Alfred Sohn-Rethel who proposed the seminal form of a transcendental subject or human reason within an economy of equivalent exchange, which prompted Adorno to say that philosophy contests the principle of equivalence. What Adorno does not see is that the same applies to the economy and has done so for a long time: it has also abandoned the principle of equivalence in order to generate nonequivalence. That is its speculative nature: the autonomization of real values and even of economic reason. Within the context of God's inexistence, the hyperbolism of the financial dynamic is equivalent to reason gone mad in speculative metaphysics. While Adorno warns against the economic infiltration of philosophy, he overlooks (or cannot yet see) what is really happening: the philosophical infiltration of the economy and its drift toward speculative operations.

SCENE 11: STARDUST

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "GYM.")

Enter: Müller, Nietzsche, Deleuze, Derrida, Gramsci, Duras, First Marxist

MÜLLER

What counts is the intensity.
The intensity of thought.
The precision of your interests.
The rigor that you invest in your passions.
You need a will for that.
You need to envision something.
Call it an idea if that makes you happy.
I don't need a system.

NIETZSCHE

The will to a system is a lack of integrity.

DELEUZE

There is no bankruptcy of systems.
Nothing is more vital than an open system that incorporates its exterior.

NIETZSCHE

The exterior is the reality that we don't want to think.
The world in which we live.
We have nothing but this world.

MÜLLER

Heraclitus says the universe is a scrap heap.
That is the most likely theory.
The world is rubble.
We live here.

GRAMSCI

You have to think at the height of the scrap heap, otherwise it is not thought.
Your lungs breathe dust.
Your head is buried in the rubble.

MÜLLER

Dirt is life.
I hate the smell of soap.

DERRIDA

I call it originary contamination.

DURAS

Intensify your detachment from reality by intensifying your relationship to it.

GRAMSCI

You're dreaming. .
You have to be able to afford detachment!
Where am I supposed to get the time and strength for it?
I'm buried in the midst of things.
In the midst of the pile.
In the midst of this world.
There is no alternative.
There is nothing but the pile.
A bucket of stardust.

MÜLLER
Man is dust in the stardust.
A dead star is a dead landscape.

GRAMSCI
But a star.

MÜLLER
Yes.

FIRST MARXIST
You and your fucking theories!

MATERIAL 11: ORIGINARY SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

The question is: *What part of the subject has survived its death—its critical disempowerment, decentering, and digitalization?* It's obviously not a matter of restituting the fiction of a self-grounded, self-transparent and analog subject. Instead of the restitution of a conventional concept of the subject, the category of subject is updated with a view to the conditions of its impossibility (or permanent deconstruction) on one hand and, on the other, its confrontation with the subject-affirming propositions of contemporary philosophy. It is understood that the subject, far from being a *self-transparent ego cogito*, has never been anything but the index of an indeterminacy that belongs to it by definition. It is the subject of originary self-transcendence on the level of the subject-exterior, which you might call the real, the incommensurable, or chaos.

SCENE 12: VIEW FROM OUTER SPACE

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case "**COURTYARD.**")

Enter: Lacan, Nietzsche, Müller, First Marxist, Deleuze

LACAN
What fascinates me about God is that he doesn't exist.

NIETZSCHE
Considering that he doesn't exist, he is frightfully efficient!

GRAMSCI
That is the pragmatism of the dead.
Their infinite perseverance and patience.

NIETZSCHE
Death lives on in us.
We already belong to him now.

MÜLLER
The view from outer space is the only credible view.
Everything looks different when seen from the moon.

FIRST MARXIST

Who sees you from there?

MÜLLER

No one.

There is nothing but chaos there.

A pile of stones flying around.

Indifferent to language and to man.

– like the cosmos, like the sun, like the sea.

MATERIAL 12: CHAOS

As long as we define chaos as incommensurability, which, instead of describing a crazy world, indexes the truth value of this world, which is our divided world with no exterior, it will never be an external Anywhere.

It is the world without a back world, world without guarantees, world without God. The world as a non-homogeneous universe of explosive heterogeneities and implosive intensities. A world collapsing into itself and catapulting out of itself with no ultimate boundaries. A world, not subject to any final measure; a world of entropic processes, which destabilize even the most minimal of regulatory procedures. The subject has incorporated this world. It belongs in the midst of this world without marking its middle. It is in the midst of chaos and chaos is in the middle of it.

SCENE 13: REALISM VERSUS IDEALISM

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**PRISON.**”)

Enter: Gramsci, Müller

GRAMSCI

Once again: what is reality?

MÜLLER

Reality is that which opposes realism.

In art you have to break realism.

Art itself is a form of reality.

Art sabotages reality and itself.

GRAMSCI

Realism relies on givens by remaining blind to everything that escapes its sense of fact. Idealism dreams the dreams of the beautiful soul that experiences reality as a narcissistic disorder. It is more convenient to temper one's reference to reality by means of moral value judgments than to articulate oneself at the height of conflicts that resist being neutralized.

MATERIAL 13: OPPOSITION TO FACT

The subject resists the quietism of assimilation to fact. It is more convenient to take cover under facts than to oppose them. Actually, a subject exists only as a figure of such opposition to fact. Which does not mean that the subject denies its share of fact, which would be ignorant and dumb. It means that it acquires its hard-won self through active suspension of its factual identity: *I am not what I am. I am the excess of my self.*

SCENE 14: JOKE

(The location of the scenes is to be announced by an actor holding up a sign, in this case “**STAGE.**”)

Enter: Gramsci

GRAMSCI (facing the audience)
I know a joke:

The son informs his parents: "I want to become an artist."

His parents are dismayed and the father says: "I will support you under one condition, first you have to do something sensible, like training as a banker. You can pursue your artistic interests afterwards."

Today the son would say: "I'm going to train as a banker and be a stockbroker." The parents' reaction: "God forbid, look for proper work, become an artist or a philosopher; you can always devote your free time to the excesses of the financial markets."

TUTTI

God is not dead.

God survived on Wall Street.

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