

# THE GRAMSCI MONUMENT.

## NEWSPAPER



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"A periodical, like a newspaper, a book, or any other medium of didactic expression that is aimed at a certain level of the reading or listening public, cannot satisfy everyone equally; not everyone will find it useful to the same degree. The important thing is that it serve as a stimulus for everyone; after all, no publication can replace the thinking mind."  
Antonio Gramsci  
(Prison Notebook B)



**August 1st, 2013 - Forest Houses, Bronx, NY**

The Gramsci Monument-Newspaper is part of the "Gramsci Monument", an artwork by Thomas Hirschhorn, produced by Dia Art Foundation in co-operation with Erik Farmer and the Residents of Forest Houses

## GREG TATE



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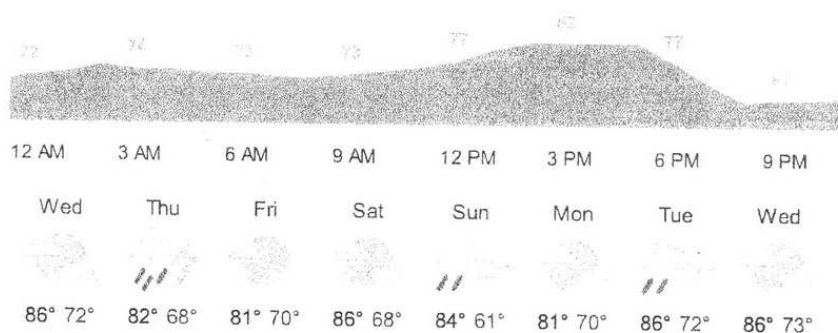
Bronx, NY 10456

Thursday  
Thunderstorm

 **82** °F | °C

Precipitation: 70%  
Humidity: 71%  
Wind: 11 mph

Temperature	Precipitation	Wind
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## Greg Tate

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Greg Tate** is an African-American writer, musician, and producer. The focus of his writing has been African-American music and culture. He is a founding member of the Black Rock Coalition and the leader of Burnt Sugar.

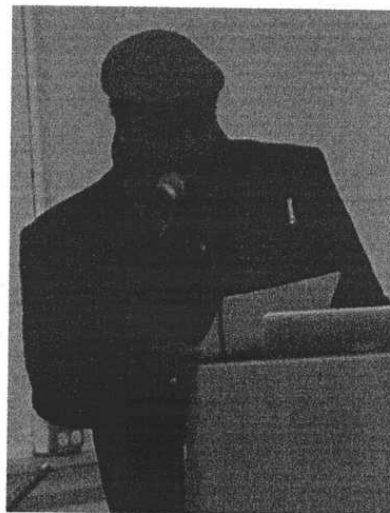
Tate was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. When he was 13 years old, his family moved to Washington, D.C.<sup>[1][2]</sup> He credits Amiri Baraka's *Black Music* and *Rolling Stone*, which he first read when he was 14, with stimulating his interest in collecting and writing about music.<sup>[3]</sup> As a teenager, Tate taught himself how to play guitar. He attended Howard University, where he studied journalism and film.<sup>[4]</sup>

In 1982, Tate moved to New York City, where he developed friendships with other musicians, including James "Blood" Ulmer and Vernon Reid. In 1985 he co-founded the Black Rock Coalition with some of the African-American musicians he knew who shared a common interest in playing rock music.<sup>[4]</sup>

Tate became a staff writer for *The Village Voice* in 1987, a position he held until 2005.<sup>[5]</sup> His work has also been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Artforum*, *Down Beat*, *Essence*, *JazzTimes*, *Rolling Stone*, and *VIBE*.<sup>[6]</sup> *The Source* described Tate as one of "the Godfathers of hip-hop journalism".<sup>[7]</sup>

In 1999, Tate established Burnt Sugar, an improvisational ensemble that varies in size between 13 to 35 musicians.<sup>[5]</sup> Tate described the band in 2004 as "a band I wanted to hear but could not find".<sup>[8]</sup>

Tate has been a visiting professor of Africana studies at Brown University and the Louis Armstrong Visiting Professor at Columbia University's Center for Jazz Studies.<sup>[6][7]</sup> In 2010, he was awarded a United States Artists fellowship.<sup>[9][10]</sup>



Greg Tate reading at NYU in February 2013

## Top 10 Reasons Why So Few Black Folk Appear Down To Occupy Wall Street

By Greg Tate

published: October 19, 2011 villagevoice

Like The French, radical black folk are genetically predisposed to support all signs of insurrection, insurgency, and revolutionary suicide wherever in the known universe they rear their lovely and indignant little heads. That said, some observers of the current American progressive scene have accurately noted OWS's paucity of participants proudly gleaming signs of African descent and dissent. Herewith a few of our idle speculations as to wherefore art thou anti-capitalist Negroid rabble-rousers riled up over any of the causes now being featured at Zuccotti Park.

**10. YOUR BASIC SOAP-AND-WATER THEORY** We love the funk—metaphorically speaking. Ditto goes for colored folk's oft-stated ardor for all things "gully", "gritty", "grimy," and "dirty south." But you out your nat'chall black mind if you think hordes of y'all people will be thronging any protest site that gotta be quarantined, evacuated, and sanitized before the party for rights can continue. Whether from the boogie middle rungs or the bootylicious lower depths, black folk generally refuse to accept the bummy notion that good politics and good grooming need be mutually exclusive. And that whole open-air-food-prep-and-serving-line thing? Not so good a look in many a woogie's book. Strictly family backyard barbecue action. Bottom line: Black folk do demos, but they don't do dirt—especially all those white-gloved and odoriferous-sensitive sisters who easily account for 80 percent of OWS's sideline African Friends Group.

**REASONS WHY WE SHOULD ANYWAY** Nomadic African women can make a lean-to look palatial in the outback. OWS could surely benefit from an Afrocentric woman's touch. OWS would become known instead as "Occupy and De-Uglify Wall Street." Imagine the difference made by scented candles, patchouli, potted plants, and colorful fabrics. Imagine her rage for spotless and sterilized surfaces set loose on Liberty Street. A rage so bordering on OCD, Pigpen himself would be too shook to leave behind one speck of unconsecrated crud. Yoga in the morning, African dance in the afternoon, prayer and meditation before bed, goddess and ancestor worship all the live-long day. That OWS shiznit would get friggin' spiritual. OWS would get closer to godliness than the Garden of Eden. No silly housecleaning

**9. OUR ABSENCE AS RADICAL LOVE** Our sincere desire to see OWS stay alive has us coordinating scant, sporadic, barely visible visits to Zuccotti Park. Hence OWS doesn't come off as "A Black Thang." Because we know that once deemed so, Mike Bloomberg and Ray Kelly would feel compelled to set more upon the movement than decrepit desk sergeants with pepper spray. No longer would cops find the heart to wade alone into the crowds of wan young figures with no backup and meaty fists a' swinging. As Sterling Brown once observed, when they come after even one Stagolee, "They don't come by Ones/They don't come by Twos/They come by Tens." Trust. Thanks to our overwhelming no-show of numbers, 49,000 shots haven't been fired at OWS yet.

**8. THE NIGGAS ARE SCARED OR BORED OF REVOLUTION THEORY** Say whut? Since when? When it comes to showing radical heart, we damn sure got nothing to prove. Protest history shows our folk couldn't be turned around by deputized terrorists armed with dynamite, firebombs, C4, tanks, AKs, machine guns, fixed bayonets, billy clubs, K-9 corps, truncheons, or water hoses. Stop-and-frisk has prepped most brothers to anticipate a cell block visit just for being Slewfoot While Black. We ain't never been skeered of fighting the good fight. We love a good dust-up on pay-per-view or in the street just on GP! Out there on the street, though, all we need is to feel like you got our backs like we got yours. Herein might lie the rub. People fresh to daily struggle may need to earn our trust more. Clearly we're in no hurry to make loads of new friends spanking new to police brutality.

**7. THE OWS BEST GO GET A LATE-PASS THEORY** The sudden realization by OWS-ers that American elites never signed the social contract and will sell the people out for a fat cat's dime—hey, no news flash over here. Black folk got wise to the game back in 1865 when we realized neither 40 acres nor a mule would be forthcoming. Also, as one sharp strapping ready for whatever you got youngblood recently put it, "I ain't about to go get arrested with some muhfuhkuhs who just figured out yesterday that this shit ain't right."

**REASONS WHY WE SHOULD RECONSIDER BEFRIENDING NU PEOPLE VIRGIN TO DAILY NYPD ASSWHUPPINGS** Repeatedly finding oneself on the business end of a NYPD nightstick and expecting the same result is either a sign of madness or a sign of virtual blacknuss. Either way, even your most hardened Pan-Afrikanist should now be open to giving the OWS-ers a hug of solidarity. Maybe if organized, this form of outreach could function as the larger community's first olive branch. (Air kisses and arms length for some snooty African noses still, I know).

**6. THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX CRICKETS THEORY** The predominant age range of OWS's paler male participants is roughly 18-29. This age group among African American cats accounts for 40 percent of the country's prison population—a national crisis which predates the bailout by several decades. This disgraceful disparity could likely continue after every OWS-er has been gainfully reabsorbed into the American workforce. Although Wall Street profits from our brothers' massive enslavement by incarceration, so does Main Street. Perhaps OWS should ponder putting prison abolition on their unformulated list of demands. Until then, some black progressives, though duly sympathetic, might not hear a roar coming from Zuccotti but simply crickets.

**5. THE MOM AND POPS AIN'T HAVING IT/I NEED MY PAYCHECK THEORY** Currently employed grown-ass black folk will tell you they can't spare not one day off the plantation for this worthy cause. More than a few young black folk now in college have an inbred fear of being cut off by mom and pop if caught on camera decrying capitalism and inviting arrest when they need to be hitting those books. Such parents might even harbor high hopes of their prodigal progeny becoming well-paid corporate shills. Coming out Rad, Green, and Anti-Goldman Sachs in some black families can require more heroics than coming out punk rock musician. Or even sapphic Muslim MC. One just imagines the fallout that might occur in the Herman Cain household, for example.

**4. THE GREAT RACE AND CLASS DIVIDE/SCHOOL-LUNCH-TABLE THEORY** It's hard to locate many instances in American radical or cultural history where goo-gobs of black folk leapt to join predominantly non-black movements. Or even school lunch tables. Post-racial as Obama's voting bloc might have been, America remains a country more divided by race than class. Even the most progressive non-black folk tend to only have that One Good Black friend in their social clusterfuck. Radical politics can make for less



estranged bedfellows, but OWS still has America's mucky river of racial segregation and alienation to cross. Not to mention a certain perception, right or wrong, that OWS is white privilege gone wild again. More enlightened self-interest than interrogating whiteness on the agenda.

**REASONS WHY WE COULD AT LEAST OFFER OWS A SPARE BAG OR TWO OF C-TOWN KALE OR COLLARDS** Although we used to have the dibs on kick-starting revolt, these OWS kids are onto something big and quite necessary here. The groundswell looks globally awesome from here in Harlem. How many times have you, à la Malcolm X said, "White folk need to get their own people organized and out on the frontlines." Well alrighty then! No danger of anybody being the next Crispus Attucks here. Not unless you wanna step to the front of the line that is.

**3. THE IT AIN'T CALLED SHIV GANK STOMP OR ROB WALL STREET THEORY** This rather romantic and lumpen proletarian conceit is worthy of the studio gangsta Thug-Life era. Especially since, as we all know, real thugs don't do demos or entertain police assault for abstract carnivalesque goals. Death Row Tupac's target audience is, as we speak, in fact more likely to be joining that 40 percent in G-Pop after putting in work on "Black Wall Street."

**2. THE 'WHAT WOULD JORDAN OR JAY-Z DO?' THEORY** Sleeping when not shouting in Zuccotti Park with scruffy haired, fair-faced young hippies is one way to register one's sudden disquiet that hyper-capitalism just ain't working for ya. American black folk, though, have had more than 400 years to neurologically process the whole profits before people thing as The Game that Federal Reserve apparatchiks are most ready to die for here. From this hard-knock-won life-wisdom evolved the kulcha's own 1 percent-ers—rappers, ballers, and George Clinton's 3 P's: preachers, pimps, and politicians. These free-booting outliers' drive and commitment to Being On That Grind, Getting One's Hustle On, and Putting In Work also acknowledges we best gaffle three times harder (and take 100 times more risk) than any Wall Street schmuck. Fervently lounging along said schmucks daily footpath expecting a fair shake is simply beneath the hustler's code, Zip Coon dignity, kool trickster-genius, and ride-or-die bootstraps. The racism and disenfranchisement others see as massive obstacles, these sly devils seize upon as photo pops for personal gain. Minds like these were plotting exit schemes and expropriations before they hit the auction block. Such types haven't been preoccupied with getting a hand on Wall Street since they docked slave ships down there.

**1. THE ISM SCHISM THEORY** Simply put, capitalism is not the "ism" whose evils tends to motivate most American Negroes to radical action, per se. Experience shows that racism can trump even greed in Amerikkka—especially in the workplace. White dudes with prison records get hired over more qualified bloods with not even jaywalking citations. You don't have to be as high up the food chain as banker-scum to benefit from white supremacy or profit sideways from the mass povertization of the Negro. Cornel West identified 9/11 as the event which affected the "Niggerization" of all Americans. OWS's lack of melanin demonstrates that the n word's first despondents have yet to experience all this widespread mutual sharing of sufferation and American Niggerdom. Possibly because all the non-black folk we see slumming about our gentrified neighborhoods with dogs, strollers, and condos are soooo not the 99 percent.

**REASONS WHY WE SHOULD BE MORE DOWN ANYWAY** If Zionism can equal racism, then why can't capitalism equal racism, too?

## Excerpt of "Flyboy in the buttermilk" by Greg Tate, 1992

### *The Atomic Dog: George Clinton Interview by Greg Tate and Bob Wisdom*

**W**here it all began is a barbershop in Plainfield, New Jersey, back in the early '60s. Before he was cutting vinyl, George Clinton was cutting hair; before he got involved with the recording process, my man was chemically processing hair—mixing down wave, curl, and conk jobs for all the slick splib hustlers that ran the streets of Plainfield. We know now that this cat had a lot more on his mind than snipping naps and knotting up doo-rags for the rest of his natural born life.

Along with a couple other barbers and a few high school chums, Clinton organized a doo-wop group named the Parliaments. Modeling themselves after groups like the Temptations and the Four Tops, they gigged around until Clinton one day got the bold idea to head for Detroit and try to bogart his way into a Motown recording deal. So Clinton and crew wind up in '67 with a minor hit, "(I Wanna) Testify," on Motown subsidiary Revilot. For whatever reason, Berry Gordy decided he had enough male vocal combos in his stable, and the Parliaments languished on the label until Clinton decided to strike out on his own. Problem was, Motown owned the name the Parliaments, and so Funkadelic was born—out of desperation, the Parliaments' back-up band, and Clinton's warped

*The Atomic Dog: George Clinton*

leader as Duke Ellington, as hardworking a showman as anybody else this side of James Brown.

Listen to Clinton's lyrics and you find him playing plenty roles: hustler, preacher, poet, pimp, professor, psychoanalyst, student of politics and sexual manners, carny barker, soulman, swingmeister, bebopper, doo-wopper, druggie, subliminal seducer, free spirit. And the band he leads is the best rock band in America.

Like some folk live for Sunday morning prayer meeting, I live for the gestalt achieved by these virtuosi. And for the image of Clinton—his living deathhead's grin spreading across his Nubian mug like the stitchings on the Frankenstein monster's neck, teeth strung cadaverously from jawbone to jawbone, his limbs and torso madly whipping the crowd's emotions until they're all feeling the funk as much to the fullness as he is. Ain't nobody got fans that know as much about pure musical possession as funkateers, unless we talking disciples of vodun, juju, or hoodoo. We are a tribe unto ourselves, y'all, with our own language, lore, rites of passage, and articles of faith. One nation under a groove.

If George's rap is the positive side of P-Funk, the down side is what you'll find in the margins from the mouths of the men who've propped up Clinton's thang for lo these many years and are now crying the blues of unpaid-for dues, misspent youths, and sacrificed creative muses. You're gonna ask yourself why, if this cat seems so righteous, has he treated these bloods so badly, and why, even more outrageously, they keep hanging in for more abuse. Ahh, but I told you we're talking church here, family even, as well as cold-blooded business. And as much as George took from these guys he gave back. And dem's da facts. Now, here's the funkies.

*Why are you into such a heavy Thomas Dolby trip these days?*  
He's a motherfucking genius, man. He is so baaad. The only thing about his show is that it's too slick. It was so slick that when he got to "Hyperactive"—which shoulda been the one to tear it on down—it was only three minutes long. That chick who sings and plays the keyboards is baad. Not only can she play her ass off, but she has style. When she opened up, it was Patti LaBelle all up and down. White chick, too. She burned that mother down, and soon as she did it they ended the song. People got

*Flyboy in the Buttermilk*

notion of fusing the hippie counterculture with parodies of black pop, pimp, and prayer culture.

Between 1968 and 1975, you opened up a Funkadelic record and you couldn't guess what was coming next—a straight-faced take on the Fifth Dimension, like "Can You Get to That," or a heavy-metal hydrogen bomb test like "Superstupid." And go figure *Cosmic Slop*, where the title track, about a welfare mother who pimps for the devil, is followed by a country-swing ditty, "No Compute (Spit Don't Make Babies)," about a hard dick on the prowl who raps like a poolhall version of Jimi Hendrix and waxes philosophic the morning after about being turned out by a transvestite. If that's not enough there's "March to the Witch's Castle." A fairyland goof? Nope, a holy-roller preacher's benediction for soldiers returning from Vietnam—and maybe the only song of the period that embraced the Vets as wounded mortals rather than as baby-killers.

Get the picture? If so, you're doing better than the mass record-buying public of the period, black and white. Funkadelic was too wacky for the souled-out splibs and too black for the spazz whiteys who believed hard rock only came in caucasoid and got nothing to do with bloods getting happy feet besides.

Then Clinton struck the mama lode with 1975's *Mothership Connection*. This one was the turning point, all right. Not only did it give Clinton his first gold album and launch P-Funk as damn near a musical genre in its own right, but most important, it provided the impetus for the Mothership tour, which in turn begat the Flash Light tour, which begat the Clones of Dr. Funkenstein tour, which gave rise to the One Nation Under a Groove antitour—all barnstorming black guerilla theater extravaganzas that between roughly 1977 and 1980 made P-Funk seem a cross between the old Apollo and the circus.

Having written off Clinton as a has-been in 1981, few expected the success he found upon the release of 1983's "Atomic Dog." Those few who weren't surprised weren't just diehards, they were folk who knew that if nothing else, George Clinton was a longtime survivor of the vicissitudes of the American music business. George Clinton is as cagey a ringmaster and self-promoter as P. T. Barnum, as charming a stage ham as Fats Waller, as charismatic a band-

*Flyboy in the Buttermilk*

mad, too. You gotta know what to do with an audience, man. I don't care how slick you are: if you get their dicks hard, you better make 'em come. Know what I'm saying? That's why we don't do encores. If there's even a possibility of an encore we don't waste no time leaving the stage and coming back. We just stay up there and do it. Like one night when the crowd thought it was all over, we let Maceo and them go off into that heavy jazz shit they do. See, Dennis and Skeets, the drummer and bass player, are seriously into that. They were about to go with Weather Report when we first got 'em, but their dream had always been to play funk. And man, that tickled the shit out of me to find that musicians of that calibre wanted to play some funk. I went to school with Wayne Shorter [of Weather Report] and we used to laugh when he played that crazy shit in school. I went to school with Larry Young, the organist, too. Matter of fact, he used to sing bass with the Parliaments before he got seriously off into the other thing. I used to cut his hair.

*The first time I heard "Maggot Brain" back in '71, I said, "This is the only shit out here that picks up where Jimi left off." It was acid funk, taking all the hip R&B of that period and then throwing psychedelia on top of it. Eddie told me y'all did it in just one take!*

Yeah. I knew we needed one of those serious sad songs, so I told Eddie, "Imagine your mother died"—and me and his mother Grace are real close—"and then you find out she ain't really dead." And he said, "Man, that's fucked up." But I knew the idea had been planted. Matter of fact, the whole band played on the record, but they weren't as intense as he was so I had to take them off. And that's been the classic ever since.

*After listening to "Free Your Mind and Your Ass Will Follow" the first time, I thought that record had one fucked-up mix, but now, in the light of Jamaican dub, it was really ahead of its time.*

I've always said I really didn't know what the fuck I was doing. That was the first time I was really turned loose in the studio. So I found out like, wow, I can pan. Well, shit, lemme pan the foot over here [laughs]. We did the whole album in one day,



mixed it and all, on three or four tabs of yellow sunshine. Both the first and second albums we did in one day, tripping out of our minds like a motherfucker. When I heard 'em six months later, I said, damn, this is sloppy. I could never let myself do that again—and after that, engineers wouldn't allow it. They'd say naw, man, there *has* to be a better way. Sly told me there was an easier way to do a tape loop, which is to do it on two-track and then bounce it back.

*How is Sly doing?*

He was in the hospital, but he's doing fine now. First time he's ever wanted to be alone, and he's working now. I got him one of them Linn drums, because he don't know nothing about all this new shit! He's *never* played synthesizer.

*Did you know that the Mothership Connection album, which became a gold record, and the tour, with all those flying saucers and funky extraterrestrials, a kind of black sci-fi extravaganza, would launch funk as a musical movement?*

Oh, shit yeah! This business is run by association and money. When you can say you've spent \$350,000 on something, and Jules Fisher did the spaceships, and Larry Gatsby did the costumes, you've just associated yourself with the Rolling Stones, the Who, Patti LaBelle, *The Wiz*. The magazines know those names, so we made *People* the first week out and *Newsweek* the second. We're gonna have to bring the spaceship out again, because there's a whole bunch of new kids who never saw it.

*Kinda like the black Woodstock?*

Or like Barnum and Bailey. We took it to Japan last year. They got a big club over there called Bootsy.

*Yeah, I've been there. It's out. Everybody walks around with big sunglasses on and their hair dooed up. It's deep. Man, they got Japanese Rastas over there with Japanese dreadlocks.*

They say they got all black music covered over there. I saw a Japanese chick singing, sounded just like Sarah Vaughan. This girl couldn't speak English too tough, but when she sang she had Sarah Vaughan *down*.

a big machine they only know records by numbers. The record came out before Christmas, and usually they like to get rid of records that come out before Christmas. We forced the record to stay around. I went out on a promotional tour for Capitol, and while I was out I promoted both records, and that kept it alive. I had to send a bunch of clippings over to Walter Yetnikoff [CBS president].

*Well, you know all his eyes could see then was Michael Jackson.*

Well, shit, he had to. I can't blame him. I understand—Michael sold 35 million records. Shit, that's like having 35 smash acts selling a million albums apiece. I just hope that now they got all that money they'll spend some of it on the rest of us.

*P-Funk is an institution now, though, like James Brown. Maceo Parker once said that James Brown doesn't need a hit record to get the people out.*

The boy has got energy up the asshole. I mean, he don't just stand there, he don't just make it, he *mashes*. I was talking to him and said, "Hey James, give me 17 splits." The boy gave me 18 faster than a motherfucker. And *hard*, too, like bam, bam, bam! My nuts go crazy just thinking about a mug doing that many. But, oh yeah, P-Funk is beyond commercialism now.

We got off in Minnesota and there was nothing but white people at the gig. See, that's what's weird now—a lot of white people come to the shows. And all they want to hear is *Let's Take It to the Stage*, *Maggot Brain*, *Standing on the Verge*. One girl came in one night with 51 albums. I didn't know I'd been on that many records. And she came in there talking about, would you please sign these for me. I said, baby, I really appreciate you got all these records, but I tell you what I'm gonna do: since all the members of the group are pretty much stars, I'm going to give each one two records to sign. Well, she was elated. Little bitty white girl couldn't be no more than 19. And that's been the trip all around the country with white people lately. Their thang is to come up to me and say, "I got all the records P-Funk ever put out."

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*Where did that Zulu coat and headgear you wore on your last tour come from? That's a powerful thing. It's a totem boy.*

Ain't that a baaad motherfucker, with all them feathers on there and that spear and that shield. Larry Gatsby made that one. He does David Bowie's costumes, too.

*You done much study of the Egyptians and Nubians?*

Just after I did the record "Nubian Nut," a Chinese guy called me that, a Nubian nut. I didn't know what the fuck that meant. Thought it meant a naked motherfucker. I went to look it up in the dictionary because I liked the rhythm of it. It said African, so I said cool. Then I went out and got some books by this German chick, Leni Riefenstahl, *Last of the Nuba* and *The People of Kay*. There's one motherfucker in one picture looks just like me. I decided to make that the lead tune, since rapping was happening and it needed another elevation. In New York, the only allies to the funk are the rappers and the breakdancers, and rap is a good thang. It needed to go somewhere else, because it's like hopscotch music. After you do that for a few years you gotta take it somewhere else or it'll get stale. So when we did "Nubian Nut" we said, "Let's do a song and rap to that."

34 *You took it back to the church on that one, because a preacher ain't nothing but a rapper.*

Preachers, pimps, and politicians.

*Isaac Hayes did 25 minutes of rap, remember? "By the Time I Get to Phoenix She'll Be Gorgeous." Mug went through three divorces before he got there, too.*

*Seems like now, for the first time, the press is finally giving you all the serious push.*

Ain't that something? And in Europe, "Pumping Me Up" was the No. 1 record. You know, CBS acted like they didn't even know we were there. The record was selling like a motherfucker—busting out in Dallas, Houston, Chicago, L.A.—and CBS acted like it wasn't even theirs. Dude over there told me that I was embarrassing him with that news, because over there, it's such

*Which is cool, but man, I saw you all at Howard University back in 1969 when you came out with nothing on but your jockstrap. Nobody knew how to handle it then.*

And we cleaned up considerably for those shows, because back then we used to come out naked for real. I did that again five years ago when we were out with the Mothership and Sly was with us.

*I was there, man. That was in D.C.*

Sly came out cool as a motherfucker and people was screaming because I came out behind him with no clothes on whatsoever. Sly said, "Man, I thought they was loving me because I was back, only to turn around and find you with your motherfucking dick hanging out."

*I tell you, though, y'all were rag-ged-y as a mug on that tour.*

Well, what it was about then was that the record company was treating us so bad, trying to destroy us. So my thang was like, well, since this was a farewell tour and wasn't nothing going right anyway, I said fuck it. And then Sly, his whole thang was just to get on stage and face people. He wasn't really trying to play or nothing, just psyching himself up to get out there again. I told him, "Man, don't worry about doing the show. If you can make it through the whole tour and just don't quit you'll be all right." And he did. Sometimes he played good, sometimes he played excellent. The band didn't even think he could play, because most of them were too young to even know him. They didn't pay him too much attention, but every once in a while he'd get off and they'd say, wow, he is a baaad motherfucker. And right after that he started playing a lot. But on that tour he was just in the band and was getting paid like \$20 a day. Everybody left the tour with \$20 and a bus ticket to get home from Detroit. That's how bad the industry was dogging us on that tour.

*I remember that when you got to Madison Square Garden, everything had gotten lost.*

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Yeah, motherfuckers sent our shit to *Milwaukee*, on purpose. They were really trying to fuck us up, but we did the show anyway.

*So they were messing over you because you were getting your own business thing together?*

Oh, yeah. Because we fired all the managers and lawyers who were fucking us up. I knew they were doing it, but I wasn't going to fire them until I got the Mothership tour off the ground. No way we were going to get that motherfucker up in the air if we fired them motherfuckers before the tour. But once it got out of the reach of gravity I said fuck 'em. And once I did that, everybody was, like, hands off. But we weren't going to quit the tour. That was the main thang: nobody quit. But when it came time for the Atomic Dog tour [in 1983], even I had to wonder who was going to show up. Because I knew that the '79 tour had been rough. See, we don't do a whole bunch of communicating, we just *know*, and it's cool. And when I got to Miami for rehearsal and saw everybody was there, I cried. Because they had gone home with 20 motherfucking dollars. I mean, me and Sly didn't get nothing. We was like, give us a gram a night, you know, that was the joke. Sly said we ain't no one-gram niggers now, man. But I said, man, ain't no money for us to do it no other way. I mean, I was retiring and he was *definitely* retired, so we was just out there hanging out. So, if we got a gram and a room, we were cool. Did the whole tour and didn't get shit but something to eat every day, and usually didn't get the gram [laughs]. But everybody went through the whole motherfucking tour. And when it came time for that Dog tour, everybody had the vibe, and they played with a vengeance. First show was the Red Parrot in New York, and we tried to kill, because everybody knew everybody could play, but our show had never been about any seriously articulate playing. We had a vibe. But this time out we said, "Let's do it articulate and let's give 'em the vibe."

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*The tapes from that concert you all did for the Budweiser festival out in Beverly Hills are awesome. It's like funk on the Ellingtonian or symphonic level. You have to release that commercially for all the funkateers.*

Oh, yeah, because chemicals start moving the minute you hear certain words.

*What do you think about what happened to Bob Marley?*

I know they wanted him dead two or three years before he died. It was inevitable that something was going to happen to him, because there were too many different attempts being made on him. He was putting out too much vibe that they had no control over. So I knew something had to happen to him. Because even if they didn't literally do it, they can, like, put a vibe around you so deep until, like with John Lennon, they can make somebody come up in the name of love and kill you. I mean, they can do that now.

Commercials made people dislike Michael Jackson. Like, they had a contest where they asked are you getting sick of Michael Jackson, but what they really meant was are you getting sick of his *face*. Michael needs to change his face again. Because they've shown so many pictures of him now that it'll be beneficial for him to come up with a whole 'nother anti-Michael Jackson look. And he has got to do it for himself. Because if he waits for them to do it, it's gonna be negative. He had to be going through one helluva head trip when the machine started trying to come between him and his family. I have no doubt that they'll maintain, because they're close and basically too funky and rough. They might look cute and have been through Motown, but they ain't that vulnerable. Don King was a good thing for them because he could do nowhere near the damage of the sophisticated corporate machine.

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*When you think about that one cat being bigger than the Beatles and not even having three other cats in there to take the weight, it's frightening.*

You know, when him and Paul got together he was like the fifth Beatle to me. I liked that concept when they hooked up. The Beatles are my all-time favorites. They were at the right place at the right time, and they made the best out of it. Sly was my next favorite, but there was just one of him, and there was nobody

Oh, did you hear that? Ain't that baaad? That is our baaadest shit, man.

*What's up next?*

Next Funkadelic album, *By Way of the Drum*, has got an island vibe to it. Not reggae, but more like junkanoo and calypso. Done that one with the band and some drummers down there in Nassau. Then Parliament has a real interesting one coming out called *Upsouth*. It's about—like, are you hip to lobotomy? They tried to legalize it about four or five years ago as a treatment for so-called violent criminals. There's a place out in California called Vacaville Medical Correctional Facility. You dig, that's where they're gonna *correct* you *medically*. And now they can do it with a laser beam. They don't even have to open up your head any more.

People like Hinckley and all the political prisoners from the '60s went there: Leary, Cleaver, Huey Newton. And if you notice, every one of them is acting very strangely now. Walking around with dick suits, beating chicks and getting busted, doing stand-up comedy, hanging out with the Moonies and 700 Club and shit. They couldn't get followings of a radical nature again or be leaders of revolutions again, I don't think. So the album is about upsouth, where a dude dies of a headache because he vows never to pick another lick of cotton out of a pill bottle. See, it's about funny farming, hoeing in concrete, and the Vacaville Thrill, where they drill into your will, cut into your consciousness, and dissect your dreams. Because that's what they're all about now. The Hinckleys and all those that go out and shoot people—they're not just nuts. They are the product of somebody pushing buttons.

Like, you ever see *The Manchurian Candidate* with Frank Sinatra? Well, now they can push buttons and set two or three folk off at once without even making contact with them.

*There's a brain research scientist up at Columbia University who says just having a normal conversation with someone can run strange changes on your brain cells and metabolism.*

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to bounce shit off of. Jimi was the same way. But the Beatles had the right opportunity and that vibe that comes through all of us to make us write that shit. That shit just comes through your ass, and if you can take advantage of it, you're doing pretty good. And the Beatles were able to take advantage of it, four at one time. Each of them had a different drummer, and they was on the one. Michael right now has that chance. I hope he knows more than the politics of the music and his own energy, because he has that. But, see, his manager is somebody from the motherfucking record company, and that ain't no accident.

*That's about charisma control, man.*

You know what I'm saying, that's all it is. And it's good, because it's given him access to 30 million records. I'm not saying that's wrong, but he should be aware that that is what it's about and that he ain't got to be grateful to the motherfucker. He should still be the one to direct his own image. At a certain point you have to change before you reach the point of saturation.

That's why when we finished the Mothership tour we said, now let's go on the antitour immediately. Soon as we had finished four years of all that glitter we said let's go to all these little bitty places and play three hours for *us*. No limousines, get to the gig the best way you can, and just get your ass out there and jam. Or else you'll start believing that star shit. And when a motherfucker says you ain't shit, you will die of a heart attack. Especially after you have psyched yourself up to believe you are the equal of 30 million albums. Right now I say fuck a limousine. I'll take a cab in a minute. I *walked* to see Thomas Dolby. And that gives you strength. Because people ask, man, ain't you tired, and I say I don't feel like I've done shit. I rehearsed for this for 17 years of my life. When I was younger I used to walk down side streets in Newark on Sunday when the stores were closed, screaming, "Parliament, Parliament!"—just so I could hear what it was going to be like when I made it to where I wanted to be. So if I'm crazy now, I was crazy then.



# A DAILY LECTURE BY MARCUS STEINWEG

*32nd Lecture at the Gramsci Monument, The Bronx, NYC: 1st August 2013*

**WHAT IS SEX?**

*Marcus Steinweg*

INSTEAD OF AN ABSTRACT A POEM FROM 1999:

**DID I TELL YOU**  
*Marcus Steinweg*

DID I TELL YOU ABOUT THE SEVEN SISTERS, ABOUT THE FLOOD OF THEIR PROMISES, ABOUT THE TRIALS, ABOUT THE IMAGES OF MY DREAMS?

I HAD TO EVADE SOME PROHIBITION. A COUPLE LAWS, TO STILL BE HERE NOW WITH YOU.

THAT WAS THE GAME OF THE MANY CHANCES: I HAD TO CATCH BIRDS FOR YOU. WITH LOOKS, WITH WORDS, WITH THE FINGERS OF MY HEART. BECAUSE THERE IS ONLY YOU AND THE DESIRE TO WISH WHAT YOU WILL NEVER EVER FORGET TO WISH.

UP TO THE TIP OF THE TONGUE OF YOUR NAME I AM SO WRAPPED UP IN THESE DREAMS. UP TO MY TEMPLES I AM BURIED IN YOUR PRAYER. RESTING INSIDE YOUR HANDS WHICH ARE FOLDING INTO WITH LEAVES, WHICH ARE BLOSSOMS, EYELIDS, OR SHOVELS.

YOU DIG YOUR WAY THROUGH TO ME LIKE A BURROWING ANIMAL. WITH OPEN LIPS, BARING YOUR TEETH AND ROSY FLESH. AND I START KISSING YOU LIKE YOU HAVE TAUGHT US. LIKE YOU WOULD KISS A KITTEN, FROM BEHIND, RIGHT BENEATH THE EAR.

WITHOUT HESITATING, WITHOUT A BREAK.

YOU WILL HAVE GIVEN YOURSELF TO ME THE WAY ONE CAN ONLY GIVE HERSELF. WITH THE RECKLESSNESS OF A LOVER WHO HAS TO RECOGNIZE HERSELF IN THE OTHER. WHO BREAKS FREE FROM HERSELF EVEN IN THAT.

SO THAT YOU CUT YOURSELF ON THE EDGES OF MY LANGUAGE. AND YOUR HOPES ARE WOUNDS, AND THE DAYS DISSOLVE INTO NIGHT. AND YOU PRETEND TO BE ASLEEP, AND THE NIGHT IS OUR BED, AND I TAKE YOUR LITTLE ANIMAL IN MY MOUTH UNTIL IT GETS TIRED INSIDE ME.

RACCOGLI E PASSA

**Italian American Monuments, Gramsci-style**

LAURA E. RUBERTO (July 30, 2013)



Inside the Archive room of the Gramsci Monument, Forest Houses, Bronx, New York City

Laura E. Ruberto

Upon visiting Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument in the Bronx, passing reflections on impermanence, aesthetics, and what makes something Italian American.

"In the convulsions of the commodity economy we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled."

- Walter Benjamin

Thomas Hirschhorn's temporary Gramsci Monument, constructed mainly out of plywood in the middle of **Forest Houses**, a public housing development in the Bronx, seems to be in the press almost daily this summer. *New Yorker* art critic Peter Schjeldal wildly praises it as "art in the mind," whereas the *New York Times*'s Ken Johnson characterizes it as "dismally decrepit."

My concern, instead, is in imagining the monument as part of a larger fabric of Italian Americanness in New York City and to reflect on its redefinition of what a monument is or what a "work in public space" (as Hirschhorn has called it) means.

The entire concept of the monument—a temporary structure built in an unusual location, in the name of an influential thinker, with the stated goal of rethinking dominant philosophical ideas and incite dialogue—intrigues and energizes.



Outside one of the Forest Houses buildings

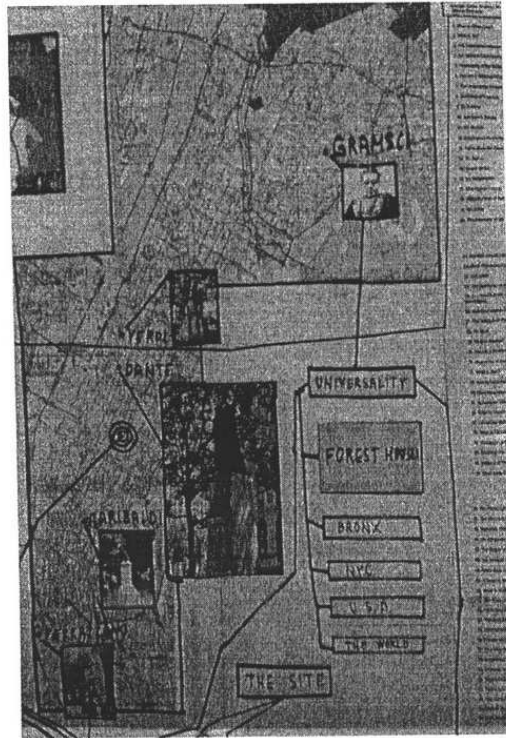
On the monument's website, reprinted mainly in stark red and green into a neatly folded pamphlet available on site, Hirschhorn has created a criss-crossing tagged map of its inspirations and development. The result is a dizzying, text-heavy connect-the-dots of places, people, and ideas.

# WHAT'S GOING ON? FEED BACK



When I read through the pamphlet-map I am inevitably drawn to the parts that read Italian—and I don't just mean the fact that he calls the lottery that will be held when the monument comes down *tombola*. Instead, there is a subtle way that for me Hirschhorn has marked his "presence and production artwork" (another way he has described the space) as part of a larger Italian diasporic cultural manifestation in the city.

In one corner of the map, marked in green capital letters are other monuments (all variations on the standard statue variety) in New York City made to Italians: Verdi, Garibaldi, Dante, and Verrazzano. He's added Gramsci to the map, constructing both a novel parallel between these other Italian figures and Gramsci and countering the drastically different ways they have been memorialized in the States. Adding Gramsci in this context certainly reads as a politicized gesture.



Detail of The Gramsci Monument Map/Pamphlet

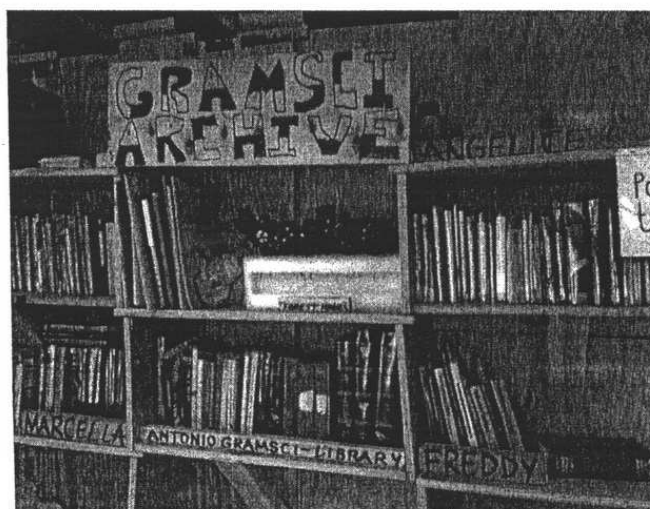
Hirschhorn, though, leaves off of his map a number of other Italian monuments to be found throughout the five boroughs (i.e., there are at least three permanent monuments to Antonio Meucci to be found in the city\*). And I find it particularly revealing that Hirschhorn did not tag New York City's Christopher Columbus statue on his map (a space recently reshaped by an artist which received

comparable media attention).

Less surprisingly, Hirschhorn also left off of his map a number of other kinds of Italian American monuments found throughout the city, sites that are, like the Gramsci Monument, similarly impermanent or otherwise not conventionally read as monuments (i.e., the yearly chalked memorials to the victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Grotto in Staten Island, or the yearly, temporary tower built for the Festa del Giglio in Williamsburg, Brooklyn).

All of these monuments and spaces (those on or off Hirschhorn's map) representing in different ways Italians in New York were constructed with at least some support from Italian American individuals or organizations.

And here lies another way, then, that the Gramsci Monument is woven into a pre-existing Italian American cultural narrative. Near the other side of the map/pamphlet lies a bubble describing the separate constructed details of the monument (archive, library, bar, Internet corner, etc.). The first, the archive, is tied via a blue line to a copy of a business card, for Dr. Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean of the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute of CUNY Queens College. In fact, Calandra supplied some significant portion of the books on loan to Forest Houses as well as some of the other ephemera at the monument.



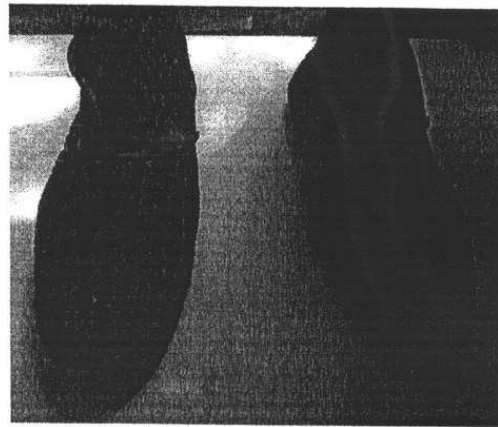
Part of the Gramsci Archive and Library

Calandra's involvement both supports the institutional structure behind the monument (along with the **Dia Art Foundation**—who footed the bill, the **Gladstone Gallery**, the **Casa Museo di Antonio Gramsci** in Sardegna, etc.) and, for me, further strengthens its connection to an Italian American notion of identity, aesthetics, and history. That it boosts Calandra's leftist cred and connects it to the international art world shouldn't go unnoticed as it counters the staid position of far too many Italian American organizations as solely invested in retrograde identity politics rather than serious and engaged cultural work such as that which Calandra supports.

(That Dia has its own historical connection to Italian Americans vis-à-vis former chairman **Leonard Riggio** goes unmentioned here although it'd be a stretch to connect that history with this current project.)



**"Antonio Lounge" at the Gramsci Monument**



**Gramsci's slippers on display in the Bronx  
(on loan from the Casa Museo di Antonio Gramsci)**

And the idea that the monument is cultural work and that Hirschhorn is an artist, not an activist, brings me to the significant Gramscian angle in this *new way of being a monument* (to riff off of Pier Paolo Pasolini's line, "a new way of being Gramscian").

The Forest Houses Gramsci Monument is impermanent. In September it will be dismantled, becoming a physical unraveling of the hegemonic need for "durable admiration" (a la David Hume). Instead Hirschhorn has created a monument to Gramsci that is alive and thus fleeting.

The site asks us to experience it in the here and now. It asks us to make of it what we want, pulling most profoundly from the Sardinian thinker's discussions on the potential within the routine of everyday life and within every individual to reposition the dynamics of power and resistance.

I visited the monument on a weekday in July.



**Pleasantly surprised author upon finding herself in *The Gramsci Monument Newspaper*  
(no.22, July 22, 2013)**



It was hot and muggy—a thunderstorm was on its way—but there was a buzz in the air beyond the cicadas. It was not crowded but a woman was sitting at the small Gramsci Bar, kids filled the Workshop Space, teenagers were clicking away in the Internet Corner, hip hop was bumping from the radio station, a few other visitors were roaming about, noshing on fresh apples picked up from the basket left in the library, snapping photos of the banners and the like.

I ran into Hirschhorn outside of the library and we chatted a bit. “It’s a different kind of monument,” he began. In his artist statement he clarifies:

I try to make a new kind of monument. A precarious monument. A monument for a limited time. I make monuments for philosophers because they have something to say today. Philosophy can give the courage to think, the pleasure to reflect.

When I asked him the question that many are asking: “So what do the locals think of this? What’s the reaction been?” he refused to speak for others, encouraging me to ask them myself. But I knew that the answers could not be found so simply.

This problematic was one I was personally familiar with as it had played out for me in a project I was a part of in **Southern Italy in 2010** with other academics and artists in the small, rural village of Cairano (province, Avellino). (See **Raffaele Maglione's photographs of the *Carro Migrante*, *Migrant's Cart***, and other happenings from Cairano 7x.)

The effect of Thomas Hirschhorn’s Gramsci Monument will not be visible in any singular way. It matters not at all that in the initial building of the monument only one Forest House resident, Erik Farmer, it seems even picked up Gramsci’s books to read.

In fact, the desire to think, create, or act because of the Gramsci Monument in the end has very little to do with Gramsci’s words from prison. But rather it lies in the day-to-day witnessing of the physical transformation of a city landscape—created by Hirschhorn and the residents of Forest Houses who have together momentarily placed a humanitarian thinker who died in prison at the hands of a Fascist dictator at the center of a major U.S. inner-city neighborhood. The Southern Question has emigrated to the South Bronx.

It is an improbable juxtaposition. It is an aesthetics of hope.

~ Many thanks to Mike Henry. ~

\* Information for the three sites memorializing Meucci can be found at the following three websites: <http://nysosia.org/museum.html>, <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/B242/history>, and [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meucci\\_Triangle\\_monument\\_jeh.JPG](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meucci_Triangle_monument_jeh.JPG).

#### TAGS

Antonio Gramsci art autobiography Bronx Cairano Cairano 7x Columbus Dante Forest Houses Garibaldi giglio Gramsci Italians in New York Our Lady of Mount Carmel Staten Island Thomas Hirschhorn Triangle Fire Verdi Verrazzano Williamsburg

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# RESIDENT OF THE DAY



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