



The European Graduate School EST. 1994

Seminar with Professor Branislav Jakovljevic (4.5 ECTS credits)
Division of Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought
August Session/August 12–14 2019

Performance Apparatus

This seminar is positioned at the intersection between discourses of apparatus and of performance. Both of them are closely tied to vicissitudes of advanced capitalism, which they seem to approach from different directions. While initially informed by theatrical practice, the discourse of the apparatus, which emerged from tensions within progressive political philosophy of the late 1960s, quickly became indispensable for analysis of art forms that rely on technology, primarily cinema and video, and more recently, digital technologies. At the same time, because of its ephemeral nature, performance was seen as inherently resistant to capitalist logic of commodification. Quickly distinguishing itself from traditional performing arts such as theater and dance, performance was identified with institutional critique before itself entering art institutions. In this seminar, we will use Louis Althusser's texts on theater and ideology as a starting point for a broad investigation of apparatuses of performance, from theater, to dance, to performance art, to non-aesthetic performances. We will engage the idea of apparatus, as well as its border concepts such as scene and machine. Ultimately, it is our hope to move beyond questions of political performance in order to engage the question of the politics of performance. We will ask not only what is performance and how it relates to ideological apparatuses, but also, among other things, what is its relation to performativity as a central concept of subject formation, to what degree it retains its subversive potential in the process of institutionalization, and what becomes of it outside of representational practices.

Day 1: Apparatus

Morning Session:

Bertolt Brecht: "Speech to Danish Working-Class Actors on the Art of Observation" in Poems.

Bertolt Brecht: "Modern Theater is the Epic Theater" in Brecht on Theatre (Bloomsbury edition, 2015)

Luis Althusser: "The 'Piccolo Teatro': Bertolazzi and Brecht. Notes on a Materialist Theater."

Luis Althusser: "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"

Afternoon Session:

Bert O. States: "Performance as Metaphor"

Jean-Louis Baudry: "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," "The Apparatus"

Day 2: Scene

Morning Session:

Judith Butler: "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion," "Critically Queer" in Bodies that Matter.

Frantz Fanon: "The Fact of Blackness" in Black Skin, White Masks

Afternoon Session:

Saidiya V. Hartman: Scenes of Subjection, "Innocent Amusements," "Redressing the Pained Body: Towards a Theory of Practice."

Day 3: Machine

Morning Session

Antonin Artaud: "No More Masterpieces," "Theater of Cruelty Manifesto I, II," "Letters on Cruelty," in The Theater and Its Double. "To Have Done With the Judgement of God" in Watchfiends and Rack Screams.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: Anti-Oedipus, Part 1: "The Desiring Machines"

Gilles Deleuze: "What is a Dispositif?"

Afternoon Session

Jon McKenzie: Perform or Else, "Part 1: Performance Paradigms"

Seminar Videos:

Ralph Lemon, How Can You Stay In The House All Day and Not Go Anywhere?, available on www.ontheboards.tv

Jennie Livingston, Paris is Burning, available on Youtube

Recommended Listening:

Antonin Artaud: "The New Revelations of Being," performed by Patty Smith and Soundwalk Collective (available on youtube)

"Yoko Ono's 'Cut Piece'" on Lonely Palette podcast, also available on <http://www.thelonelypalette.com/episodes/2018/3/29/episode-28-yoko-onos-cut-piece-1964>