



**THE INSTITUTE
FOR THE ART
AND PRACTICE
OF DISSENT AT
HOME**

2008—2018



10

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2008–2018

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INTRODUCTION
10 AND ITS TOO-MUCHNESS
Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home has run for 10 years. To celebrate this anniversary we decided to pose ourselves 10 problems. These are the most relevant issues for us today as we write, but they also have a decade's history and were chosen for two reasons: they document the last decade we have spent together working on the Institute AND we have enough energy to tackle the problem again. In other words there are a lot more than 10 problems in our lives, but those selected and worked on are the only ones we are capable of tackling right now. We admit that the problems remain stubbornly active. The problems overlap and imbricate and there is a conscious effort here not to separate

them out, but place them strategically enough so that they speak to each other. Hopefully the dots of joy scattered here and there make the reading of it bearable. Each chapter (except for Labour which is too big to handle and needs its own book) has at least one invited guest to offset the self-indulgent nature of a couple writing about their last decade together. The intention is the invited guest writer can open things out in ways a couple couldn't.

So, with help from dancer and scholar Michelle Man we begin Chapter 1 on the idea of the couple – the common problem of that heteronormative and conveniently neoliberal method of getting through life with as little damage as possible to each other. Obviously the opposite is usually true. Working with and against Julia Kristeva and Phillipe Sollers slightly over indulgent book *Marriage as a Fine Art* (2015), we attempt to face up to our own impossible relationship, our sense of ourselves as project workers and that we ourselves are a project. God only knows how long that will last. Time will tell. Feminist activist scholar Kim Solga gave us time to work things out for her blog 'The Activist Classroom' in Chapter 2 'Time'. There we lay out the parameters of the time we do not have to slow down in and how that finds articulation in the 10% of time stolen from our employers' 35 hour working week to complete the book. To make the problems of the couple and time more explicit Chapter 3 gives a detailed breakdown of our modest financial history together and the labour of sharing everything, documenting everything, keeping the books clean, transparent and open, and how this is a labour of love for us. Our designer Constança Saraiva's budget breakdown for her labour also features here. This leads us onto Chapter 4 Labour – both the work we do and the political party we have become over-involved in. We have become so involved in fact that it has taken up far too much of our time and has made us realise that this chapter would be best if we created the impression that there is simply too much going on for us to squeeze into this book. Speaking of labours of love and placed centrally in the book, and in our lives, are the children, part of Chapter 5. We framed the writing exercise for them in this chapter, to reflect on the Institute in 10 points between them and they ran with it, for financial reward of course, £10 each. We can not always buy our guest writers, but we have put money into investing in our networks and collaborators and for Chapter 6 we asked people from various collaborations to say something about how they cope with their net-

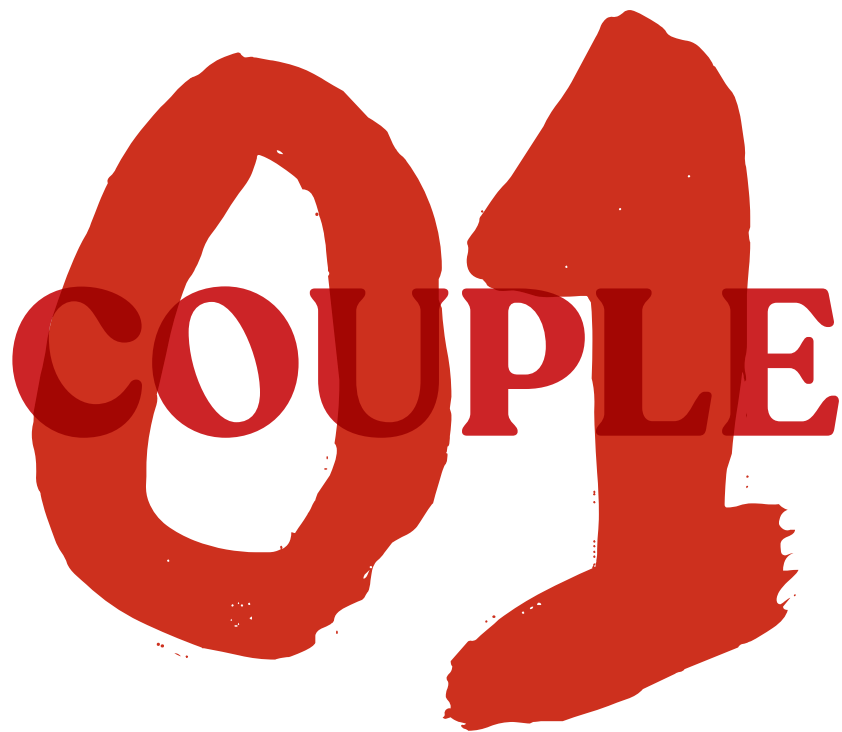
works. This chapter features 10 guest writers all of whom we have collaborated closely with over the past decade: Jennifer Verson, Jane Trowell, Mike Finn, Adam Byrne, Steve Shakespeare, Paula McCloskey & Sam Vardy, Tim Jeeves, Ian Byrne, Deidre Donoghue and Lois Keidan. Chapter 7 features a new collaboration with Elena Marchevska, The Live Art Development Agency and the Library for Performing Rights and the work by performance practitioners, part of Two Language Destination, Katherina Radeva and Alister Lownie. As such this chapter offers the beginning of a new network, paradoxically on the topic of no network: Exile. As the book starts to wind down in Chapter 8, we enter into the perennial headache of archiving everything. James Leadbitter aka the vacuum cleaner designed our website a decade ago and kept up the annual payments for us – we are deeply grateful but realise this has been an unasked for challenge to him and wished to relieve him of it. So we designed our own website hosted for free – changed the outdated name www.twoaddthree.org to www.dissentathome.org. The necessary energy required to archive is something always in short supply, so we look at the problem of Energy for our penultimate Chapter 9, which delves into the archives of The Institute's work on climate change for the past 10 years. Featuring James Marriott's script *The Commonwealth of Wind – Taking Possession of the Windfarms* this chapter asks where could our energy come from and if the region of Liverpool could be run off the windfarm Burbo Bank, just off Liverpool Bay. This chapter also features Zoë Svendsen's handwritten letter on energy and its democratisation.

Overall, we feel the elephant in the room with this book is how much we have done over the past 10 years. It all feels a little excessive when you spread it out in front of you. So the final chapter tries to talk about what that means. Featuring our closest collaborator over the years Lorena Rivero de Beer, an artist and psychotherapist. Lorena speaks of the impossible lack at the heart of the Institute's excess. This chapter 'Surplus' is our way of admitting that we have been overworking for the past 10 years. For us the book emits its own too much-ness.

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home, based in a family home in Liverpool, UK, founded in 2007, is an intervention into normative family life and raising kids. The Institute identifies as anarchist, anti-capitalist and feminist. Our interventions happen by way of performances, conversations, protests,

conferences and publications. We also take each other to political demos and learn how to be critical citizens rather than passive consumers. We are funded by 10% of the family's net income (two university lecturer salaries, child benefit and any other artist commissions), and currently stands at around £524 per month.

- Gary Anderson (47)** a happy amateur Spinozist, flawed Dad and half-baked cultural activist.
- Lena Simic (44)** academic, activist, artist, foreigner, feminist, mother, pedagogue, researcher, writer, www.lenasimic.art.
- Neal Anderson (18)** doesn't define himself by the reductive words of this statement.
- Gabriel Anderson (16)** is hard-working, loyal, hot-headed, ginger, stubborn, reasonable, amusing, aware.
- Sid Anderson (11)** is instigator, encourager, performer, cook, rule-breaker, socialite, centre of attention.
- James Anderson (5)** is wilful, nuclear, cool, happy, powerful and jumpy superhero fighter.



COUPLE
Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

In December 2017, Michelle Man gifted Julia Kristeva and Philippe Sollers's book *Marriage as a Fine Art* (2015) to us, with the inscription:

Dear Lena (and Gary)
for the super sexiest paired academics, love and respect
Michelle xx

We read the book over the Christmas and New Year period in Dubrovnik, stealing time away from the children, enjoying coffees and critiquing the words of Julia and Philippe. We thought this literary celebrity couple super privileged, pretentious and very French. Nevertheless, we enjoyed being them, reading them, as well as rejecting them. And yet, certain ideas on marriage and coupledness really pushed us and engaged us.



Lena and Gary reading
Julia and Philippe
in Dubrovnik, a selfie,
December 2017.

COUPLE

On the opening page Philippe Sollers says: 'Love is the full recognition of the other in their otherness.' We'd like to be able to say we live that, but we have to admit that we don't. We struggle with this, with the recognition of each other's otherness. We are also struggling with each other's energies, and the licence to operate the Institute, to keep it running. On the morning of 9 January 2018 following our first Institute meeting of the new year, we ended up in a massive argument about the stopping of the Institute. In the end we decided to write for 10 minutes on the question of the couple.

Gary wrote: Lena, you have just put on the timer.
Lena, you have just come up with this idea.
Lena, you have just said I'll start the timer again.
Lena, you are leading, leading, leading.

Lena, you lead with charm and aggression.
Lena, I let you do that.
Lena, I think you want to do things that way.
Lena, because you lead and because I let you.

Lena, I don't have the privilege of initiative.
Lena, I don't mind not having it,
But Lena, there are consequences.
Lena, remember Domagoj.

Lena, remember how you could never be on time for him?
Lena, remember how you always kept him waiting?
Lena, remember how I went for a run even though we were supposed to be working?
Lena, you are my Domagoj.

Lena, we are wired differently, which is no surprise to anyone.
Lena, not only are we wired differently but the everyday methodology is to polarise each other, in order to facilitate the possibility of living together, but also the reality of dealing with all the energy we

need to get through everyday.

Lena, we have different energies. Your energy is often used in initiating, leading and managing. When you feel the injustice of it you blame me and my energy – which looks like a lack of dedication, of an inability to initiate, or just laziness.

But Lena, we are a couple whose energies are co-dependent, co-alive, co-ours.

Lena, that's why things have been happening between us which don't work.

Lena, I'm not leaving. I'm just saying that from my point of view, our conflicts are a question of our misreading of our energies, which are themselves co-created. An initiator and a facilitator.

Lena, I don't want to sound abstract. I don't mean it abstractly. I mean it really concretely. Right here and right now, as usual.

Lena, the clock is ticking and Lena, you will say stop in about 20 seconds and I will stop.

Lena?

Lena wrote: Who can be bothered? Honestly. Again. To drag it from under the table, to get up to it on the first floor, to sit in its coldness, to manage it, to admin it, to keep it alive, kicking and screaming, dissenting. The kids don't really care. They do a bit, when asked, but I fear that's out of guilt not real dedication. It's Tuesday morning, 9th January. Gary and I have decided to spend 1/10th of our working time, 3.5 hours a week, on the Institute, on its management, on its aliveness, on keeping it going, on producing it, on re-starting, re-igniting. A new beginning. To begin again...

It's hard, I can't be bothered. I fear entering the mess of the room, it screams more domestic labour all around. The Study Room in Exile

library is not catalogued; there are new entries to be added on libl, or whatever the app is called. I don't know my login name, nor password. The archive looks good when closed, but it hasn't been sorted since 2011, at least. All around are some kind of pockets of activity, different shelves, different memories, different distractions. All it takes is time, to spend time, to be bothered once again, to take care. To begin again...

Gary and I are differently wired. He said he wants to write about wiring. He will say I am highly strung, and relentless, a Volkswagen Golf, he called me. I never stop. For Gary things happen, they happen around him. He bumps into them. He picks up whatever's available around him and transforms it into something. As for me, I invent new problems, new things, new beginnings. I like order. I like a prompt start. We said we will start at 9am. It's 9:18am and Gary's just got back home from running. Running is a new idea for him in 2018. It is for running that he has energy. The Institute just rolls on, and I have to ignite it, I fear, again. Come up with a frame – oh, I know, let's just write about what happened this morning, our first domestic argument in the timeframe of the Institute work, for 10 minutes.

Let's start something, again. This morning 9th January 2018, 10:50. 10 minutes well spent. Now, that's productive.

LOVE OF THE OTHER, WITH A SOUR ENDING

Michelle Man

Love of the Other is the fourth chapter in Kristeva and Sollers' account of *Marriage as a Fine Art* (2016). It opens on a page number 69 that is eroticized across cultures, as well as evoking the symbol of the yin yang, which the Joyaux¹ couple intertwine into the intimacies of this lovers' discourse. As I listen to Kristeva and Sollers through the touch of their words on these pages, I wonder at the serendipitous nature of the editorial layout. I am drawn to page 81; it bears traces of touch – a printer's crease and a corner folded by a previous reader, where Kristeva shares a climactic divulgence: 'in the heat of the passion, during orgasm, when the lovers project themselves into time and into death, exuberant draining of energies and identities, "I am the other", fusion and confusion of the man and the woman' (2016:81), a well-worn glorification of heterosexual communion.

In this chaptered interview, within the density and scrabble to critique love in

1 Joyaux is their married name

a myriad of guises and affective dynamics across time and cultures, Kristeva and Sollers offer flickeringly vivid accounts of their own key encounters - meetings where the space of in-betweenness is charged with the 'unnameable'. Their erotically loaded moments of memorabilia are littered with a sense of familiarity - a metro platform, a specific restaurant, a scholar's office. There is no mention of a table, but this is a tale of philosophers' love, so in my mind's eye such a piece of furniture has to be present, semi-cluttered with volumes of this and that, and pages full of hand written notes. Familiarity lends itself to an easy visualization, allowing an imaginative stepping into the skin of their encounters, of another's meeting with the other.

In what she self ascribes as a 'brainy overview' Kristeva wishes to convince her listener that '[I]ove leads us into a tireless investigation of language' inviting us 'to consider that love only abides, only exists, by virtue of our capacity to strain toward the telling of this unfathomable, unnameable back and forth *between two*' (ibid:73). Her intellectualization of love brings forth a tension that comes from striving towards the seductive impossibility of its articulation. The lovers tread and laugh through psychic spaces, attuned silences and the alchemy of love that distils and suspends 'temporal phases of life' from whence emerges 'the concern of the childlike part of the other' (ibid: 85).

But then the lovers' rub doth twist: there are blunt confessions where distinctions of love as 'black magic' or 'white magic' (ibid), and simplistic binary charged notions around 'a continuation of the war between the sexes' (ibid:88) are made. Kristeva's discourse on love of the other from the perspective of the foreigner reaches a point of critical disintegration. She falls foul of her own thesis of revolt as she attempts to apply a new reading of the abject to what she brashly labels as 'gangster fundamentalists or jihadism' (ibid: 92), accusing 'fragile, uncertain youths... and splintered adults' of spreading 'radical ailment' (ibid). The urgency to critique such otherings requires more space, and multiple perspectives. Kristeva is, to quote a political activist and friend 'at her very worst' (Gary, Facebook 03.01.18). On my page here, there is no love for the other as irresponsible intellectual.

Michelle Man is a UK based choreographer,
lecturing in Dance at Edge Hill University.

02
TIME

TIME

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

LENA

It was September 2014 and I was on my maternity leave with baby James. I was in Dubrovnik visiting my parents for a couple of weeks. We fell into a routine. After lunch, James would splash about in his little green boat and I would go, on my own, to the beach. I was lucky enough to have James looked after by my parents. I was alone. I'd go to Banje, Dubrovnik's central beach, somewhat too crowded for my liking, but it was September, the light was gorgeous, really sharp, and I was alone. I had my book with me, *Tender is the Night* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. It was one of those books that I was reading very slowly in order to live in it and with it for longer. Deleuze spoke about the water-ski episode in the book as 'ten pages of total beauty of not knowing how to age'. I was keen to learn about the disgrace and the shame of ageing, of trying to stay young, appearing fit. I was 39. My 40th birthday was in November that

GARY

Lena's already started. Half an hour of writing in response to Kim Solga's blogging. Lena's furiously tapping away on her keys and I'm stuck writing about her getting ahead of me.

OK. 10 per cent. I have a problem with the way we are always compartmentalising stuff – like time, and schedules and how to divide up a day – because in the end I naively believe in a Spinozist universe of infinite substance. I want integration. I don't want separation. Lena, correctly, tells me that this world view suits somebody who is actually quite lazy. It means I don't really have to prepare for anything, structure stuff or plan. I can bump into things and try to transform them. Lena suggests this is my *modus operandi*. I don't know if that's fair but I do like the sound that bumping into stuff makes.

However, we've decided to divide our

year. On the beach, I swam (3 times to the red buoy and back) and I read the book. Suddenly, I realized. I am not alone. I am with Dick and Nicole Diver. All my time is managed. I am swimming furiously, making the best out of my time. What if I just lay on the beach? I couldn't do it. It was too crowded and too hot, a total waste of time.

In preparation for my 40th birthday performance *40 Minutes* I used to go to the Institute every day for 40 days before my birthday, for 40 minutes and fill out a page of a 40-page notebook. I was creating 40 notebooks for my 40 invited friends. The time of 40 minutes was my methodology of creating/stealing time, being alone in the Institute and thinking/writing/performance making. I only worked on this performance in that given time – 40 minutes for 40 days, my 40th being the actual performance.

The Institute combines life and art, as well as life and work. Everything's a project. This is exhausting. Last year, I wanted to quit the Institute. I wondered what it would be like not to frame our family life through it. It is true that the children are less involved these days, but they have grown up with the Institute, with a very particular activist fam-

time into two portions: a 90 per cent and a 10 per cent. The 90 per cent is where our contractual obligations are fulfilled (our jobs at university) and the 10 per cent is where all the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home work for 2018 gets done. We made this arrangement under some duress whilst we argued and argued about who is the lazy one and who is the one who maintains everything – at our 2017 AGM in Dubrovnik – at the Biker's Café.

There's a history of decimation in world religions; the churches of the late middle ages thought it wise to decimate all parishioners to the tune of 10 per cent of their wealth. The churches grew astonishingly rich from this levy whilst the consequences for dissenting parishioners were severe. Penalties were dished out exemplar-fashion. Retrospectively, we've applied the word decimate to mean the killing of every tenth Roman soldier who dissented. Whether in Rome or elsewhere everyone soon got to know what being decimated meant. From the perspective of hegemony – you were 'saved'. We have a similar methodology at home. All monies that come through us, from lecturer salaries to child benefits for our four children to any invited commissions, are decimated and put into the Institute. It's a

ily life. At our 2017 AGM Sid (10) said: 'I don't want it to end-end, I just don't want to participate in everything.' His other wish was to do a presentation again – he enjoyed being a part of Playing Up symposium with our presentation 'Being and Things' at Tate Modern in 2015.

The other day I got an email from a colleague who said that she can only, at the moment, perform her 'basic contractual work obligations'. I found such liberation in that phrasing. It's 'work to rule' – Gary said, reminding me about union disputes. Everyone knows we academics work so much more than our contracts' stipulate. I am multitasking and channelling my energies into different work spheres: research, performance making, producing, teaching, mothering. Am I doing any of the activities well enough? And yet, all is so over-combined in my life.

One of my best friends from Zagreb works as a civil servant, with the Ministry of Finance. I am not actually sure what her job is. She studied law. She never talks about her work. It's a waste of our time together. For her, work is elsewhere, compartmentalized into a different world. I envy her. In my world, all is too combined, too much fusion.

way of saving ourselves from the full onslaught of the current equivalent of the Roman Empire or the oligarchy of the late Middle Age Christian Church. We need saving from our late capitalist living all more or less 100 per cent covered by legal contracts and insipid insurance structures.

We've decided to extend the metaphor into our time. We are contracted to operate as full time employees of higher education establishments in/around Liverpool. That's 35 hours per week. On Tuesday mornings we spend 3.5 hours on the work of the Institute. This short writing exercise, in response to Kim Solga's blogging is part of that 3.5 hours. We said we'd get everything done by then, between 9am and 12:30pm. The kids are all in school. We are at the kitchen table trying out a writing exercise 'Write. Just write. And be amazed' part of The Activist Classroom blog. I've about 10 minutes left...

This is part of a book project we have decided to work on called '10'. A book of 10 'chapters' each talking and writing through a key problem. We might call the book '10 Problems'. We don't know yet. We need to decide everything within the 10 per cent of our 35 hours on a Tuesday morning: get the con-

Yes, I'm so good at not checking work emails after 5pm and never ever at weekends, but I have three more email addresses, WhatsApp, Viber, Instagram and a Facebook account. I think about my children and their future jobs. I am not sure my career is the one I'd advise anyone to follow.

I was inspired by Kim's post 'Write. Just write. And be amazed.' I was reminded of my own methodologies of working with students on their essays and research papers, and myself in performance making. I remembered that my favourite writing is always in relation, when I write with/to my research collaborator Emily Underwood-Lee about maternal matters, when I write letters to my friend and colleague Zoë Svendsen. I was reminded of Virginia Woolf's quote in *A Room of One's Own*: 'the habit of freedom and the courage to write exactly what we think'. I am yet to achieve either. The habit of freedom might be an ability to let go and be truly alone and unproductive. The courage to write exactly what I think is going to take a while, at least a little longer than 30 minutes.

This writing was published on Kim Solga's blog The Activist Classroom under the title 'Finding Precious Time!'. On 12 February 2018 Kim responded to the writing under the title 'Finding Precious Time! (Pt 2)'.

cepts of the book clear, do all the writing and thinking together and make sure everything is in place until publication and dissemination. It's fun to work in this way sometimes. Feels like a joke at our employers' expense, one they wouldn't even be interested in, would just ignore or brush off as incomprehensible or 'it's what drama teachers do...' That gives me a little bit of energy and focus.

This will go through a re-reading now, after the half hour is up, then will be shared with Lena, then we'll try to pick out the best bits, then we'll write a proposal for Kim's blog based on what we've learnt or produced from this writing exercise. We started off with the idea that all of us, and all of our strategies and tactics for working, are simply over-productive; that we are struggling with a paradox: we need time in order to slow down, but that time would have to be scheduled into what is already no time left, again.

Time's up.

FINDING PRECIOUS TIME! (PT 2) **Kim Solga**

Whenever anyone asks me to sum up the ethos of my teaching, I talk about collaboration: the students and me, working together to make new ideas. I do this, too, when I'm asked to talk about my research: I usually say I am a collaborative scholar, most at home co-writing or editing. I don't identify as a typical academic: I'm not itching to write another scholarly monograph, and I don't really like being in the archive or the library all by myself. I even get lonely in my office after everyone else goes home.

Time is a perennial problem for me, the way it is for so many of us: there are not enough hours in the day to do all the things that we need to do in order to fulfil the expecta-

tions of our academic jobs. But when I'm alone, time sometimes seems to creep, not rush: that creeping feeling reminds me of how lonely, isolating, and insular the labour of academia can be. I don't, at those times, feel like I'm in a bobsled tunnel whooshing toward a hard, bumpy finish; I feel like I'm hanging in outer space, frightened about what's below me. (Not even sure which way is up or down, truth be told.)

There's a paradox here, I think: I'm at once incredibly harried, rushed all the time, exhausted. And yet at other times I feel suspended in air, rudderless, unsure that anything I do makes any difference. Both of these feelings are, for me, connected to outcome expectations: we must work more/harder/faster to do the job well; we must produce, just produce, more STUFF ANY STUFF to do the job well. Which means both of these things – rushing through time, suspended in time – are connected to feelings of dissatisfaction with my job. Both are connected to the pain of over-worked isolation.

When I feel that suspended-and-drifting feeling, to ward off the terror, I usually jump back into the work, always more work, surrounding me: at those times, I work to insulate myself from breakdown. That means time is also an emotional problem for me: afraid of the stillness, the silence, its loneliness, I seek the race and rush. At least it is familiar. And I have coping mechanisms.

I have just started commuting between my new home in Hamilton, Ontario and my job in London, Ontario. This is the first time in my life my commute to work has been longer than an hour, and dependent on a vehicle. Now, I race to get into the car to race the 85 minutes to my campus office and then I race through the day's tasks in order to jump back in the car to race home again. Or anyway, sometimes it feels like that.

But what do I feel when I finally get home? I experience a rush of calm. To start, I unpack and undress. I walk the dog, who is thrilled to see me. I shower, I eat dinner. Later, I head up to my home office, which I've designed carefully to be as supportive and sustaining an environment as possible. It includes my desk and office cabinet, arranged against a long wall papered in a gorgeous graphic rendition of Charlotte Brontë's garden. It includes plenty of books, neatly filed on shelves. It includes a chaise and coffee table for reading. It includes my dressing area, too – a place I can unwind as I undress, or as I dress up to reinvent myself. It's a space of imagination.



My office wall/
Charlotte's
garden

As I've been writing this I've realized that, in my new space, I am at ease more often than not. It is a place I have carved out in order to shape the time I spend there into calmness, and into the kind of productivity that I want to direct my energies toward: public writing, writing for students, collaborative activities with friends and colleagues, and lots of rejuvenating activities for me (cycling and walking my dog and spending time with my good friends nearby).

I have realized, while writing this, that my new home, and especially my new office, could (should) be characterized as a collaborator in the life I am working towards living – the (new) life that prioritizes my needs and well-being first, the new life that makes space and time. (Those are its productivities.)

My commute, come to think of it, may also be a collaborator in this strategy. It's easy to conceptualize the time that I now spend driving to and from work in another city as wasted or lost or barren time. But from the start I knew I would value that time, somehow – I sensed it would be good time. I knew that, alone on the road, just me and the drive, I would have space to breathe. Time to think. Room to decompress a bit. I

asked around for awesome podcasts and loaded a bunch up onto my phone. These are windows on other worlds, lives, and experiences – worlds I otherwise might not have the time to visit or even recognize as a part of my own.

(Sidebar here: Ear Hustle, from Radiotopia, is simply outstanding.)

Maybe my car is now also a space of imagination, then: as I drive, it makes time. Time for me to be by myself, but also time for me to be other to myself. The commute offers me time to do nothing but go home. It offers me an hour and a half to leave the rush that is not sustainable, and to approach the space I am building to be, to become, sustainable.

(Another sidebar: the dog is totally a collaborator, too. You cannot rush a dog with a nose like Emma's. The sniff takes the time it takes, yo.)



I began this reflection about time, improbably, by talking about collaboration. What does collaborating with others have to do with time?

First, it transforms work time into social time, community time. Time to share. Time to be alive to otherness, to be outside of ourselves – rather than to be deeply, cruelly sunk into ourselves, the way we are when we are in the race and the rush, preoccupied with the crush on our shoulders.

Second, it makes time to spare: shared work is a load lightened. Yes, collaborative work creates other labours; when you work with someone else, the negotiation process can add to the overall time-to-product (time measured as productivity, maybe). But collaboration also creates a bond, a shared investment – time spent together with another thinking and feeling person, talking and thinking and building ideas. There is a gift in that bond: it is worth far more than the work that emerges.

Finally, I don't know about you, but I am most proud of the work I have done in my career with others – both colleagues and students. So when I look at that work I think: that was time well spent, in every way – ways that can be measured, but lots of ways that cannot.

I'm still adjusting to my new commute, and to my new home. But I am going to keep thinking about my time in the car as a collaboration, my time in my comfy home office as a collaboration – moves towards sustainability, towards a new conception of how my work life is organized, both spatially and temporally. And I am going to continue prioritizing working with others over working solo – because I'd rather be in this together, with you, than in this spinning space, alone.

Kim Solga writes in public at <http://theactivistclassroom.wordpress.com>

02
MONEY

MONEY

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

The Institute operates on 10% of all household income. This includes parents' salaries and child benefit, and any other additional work we might undertake. The Institute's money as of 1 May 2018 was £524. This is 10% of Gary (£2348.88) and Lena's (£2639.29) salaries as well as child benefit (£247.20).

Here is a financial history of money matters between Gary and Lena. It starts from the day they met and runs up to the finishing of this publication.

After that there is an income/expenditure breakdown for the Institute as it stood in May 2018, and our book designer Constança's labour budget for the production of this book.

TIMELINE: Money Matters between Gary and Lena

31 March 1995

Gary and Lena meet for the first time in the Danglár pub in Bratislava, Slovakia and by the end of the evening are arguing over who will foot the bill.

September 1995

Gary and Lena return to Bratislava where they work and study from a hitch-hiking summer in Croatia, Belgium, England, Scotland and Ireland, totally skint. Lena gets her summer months' stipend from the Croatia-Slovakia Ministry of Education's partnership grant and they blow it on books in Big Ben bookshop on Ventúrska and treat themselves to a meal at the French Institute. Gary and Lena make a light-hearted vow to share everything they've got financially. This lasts up until June 2018.

October 1995 – December 1999

Gary and Lena make their money teaching English at The Academy of Education in Bratislava, Slovakia. Gary tops up their joint monies with extra work at Slovenská poisťovňa, an insurance company based in Karlova Ves, Bratislava and Lena through her monthly stipend. In December 1999 they marry in Bratislava and buy

everyone at the wedding a bottle of cheap bubbly. With their joint savings they honeymoon in Morocco but feel skint all the time unable to convince local traders of their genuine lack of funds.

January 2000

Gary and Lena return to the UK with no money and no recourse to public funds due to Lena's 'wife' visa. They move in with Gary's Mum in Tomintoul in Scotland. Lena starts work as a kitchen porter and Gary as a heather beater. They aren't able to earn enough money to leave Tomintoul. Lena is pregnant.

May 2000

Gary and Lena move in with Gary's Dad in Widnes whilst they search for a place to live in Liverpool. Gary gets a job in telesales and they move into rented accommodation in Toxteth. Gary gets sacked from Telesales after six weeks for not making enough money for the company. Fiona helps them both get a job at Bridgefield Forum sports centre summer playgroup in Halewood.

September 2000

Gary starts working for sorted.com – an internet company specialising in entertainment and leisure. Lena gets an hourly paid teaching job at St Helens Community College, teaching for the Saturday Drama Club, and for National and Higher National Diploma in Drama.

October 2000

Neal is born and an elderly lady puts a pound coin in his hand as Gary and Lena push his pram through the park. Gary and Lena move into a housing association property. The rent is affordable. Gary works for sorted.com, Lena continues with her hourly paid job at St Helens Community College.

April and May 2001

Gary and Lena are both made redundant and panic about not having any money, having a baby and feeling that their days of glory in Slovakia where they were dreaming of film and theatre directing careers were an illusion. They decide to look for jobs abroad, and spend the summer in the small flat Lena grew up in, in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

September 2001

Gary and Lena find jobs teaching English in Thailand and move there earning 35,000 baht each, 5 times the average local salary. Gary earns a little more than Lena for reasons neither of them can explain away.

April 2002

Lena is pregnant with Gabriel. They plan and execute a midnight escape from Thailand back to the UK knowing they'll not be allowed back in the country because they took an advance on the salary at the school they were working for to pay for the airplane tickets. They move back to Scotland with Gary's Mum, where they receive a letter from Venture Housing informing them about an empty flat near Sefton Park, Liverpool.

27 May 2002

Gary and Lena rent a white van cheaply and drive their belongings down to Liverpool to move into their new housing association flat. They ask around friends and find the rent is affordable and a little cheaper than everyone else's.

June 2002

Gary starts teaching for Liverpool Language Academy, teaching English to non-English speaking LFC players. He also prepares students for their A level exams.

4 October 2002

Gabriel is born. Lena says you couldn't put a price on the fish, chips and mushy peas she got afterwards for her tea at Liverpool Women's Hospital.

June 2002 – June 2003

Gary's teaching hours are few and the family are really skint, they have £2 a day to spend on 'treats' (ice-cream, chocolate, coffee). They decide to revisit a conversation they had in Thailand about going back to university for secure incomes. They look for scholarships in national newspapers.

September 2003 – September 2006

Gary and Lena start PhDs in Plymouth and Lancaster, with fully funded scholarships, starting at £9000 a year, but increasing to £10500 and then £12000. Lena also gets some Arts Council England funding for her performances. They've never had this much money before. They share everything, and furnish the flat with IKEA products.

July 2006

Lena gets a part time job as Lecturer in Drama at Liverpool Hope University. She is also touring her performances with Arts Council England funding.

July 2007

Gary gets a part time job as Lecturer in Drama at Liverpool Hope University. Gary and Lena decide they have spare money and should do something political with it. They start the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home and pledge 10% of all monies that come through them to the project. At this point 10% is £238 every month.

7 August 2007

Sid is born. Gary and Lena call him their first middle class baby because his parents are both lecturers at university. He's also a proper Institute child, born into it.

10 January 2014

James is born, Gary and Lena's second middle class baby. He's also a proper Institute child.

August 2007 – May 2018

Gary and Lena along with their children do lots of artworks about financial transparency. The Institute budget increases from £238 to £524 a month thanks to Gary and Lena's progress up the union-endorsed national pay spine, promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer and Reader.

June 2018

The reasons are cloudy but Gary and Lena decide to have separate bank accounts, in addition to their joint one, which covers the mortgage, food shopping, utility bills etc. Their separate bank accounts help them feel a bit of personal freedom.

A breakdown of income/expenditure
for the Institute household
as it stood on 1 May 2018

INCOME	
Lena's salary	£2639.29
Gary's salary	£2348.88
Child Benefit	£247.20
Total:	£5235.37
EXPENDITURE	
Institute	£524
Mortgage	£483
Children	
Instant access savings accounts for Neal, Gabriel, Sid, James	£200
Neal Trust Fund	£125
Gabriel Trust Fund	£72
Sid Trust Fund	£52
James Trust Fund	£50
Neal pocket money	£80
Gabriel pocket money	£40
Total:	£619

Household Bills	
Liverpool City Council	£120
Energy (estimate, Ecotricity £60, Leccy £52)	£100
Water	£51
Total:	£271
Insurances	
Life Insurance	£33
Pet Insurance	£10
House Insurance	£12
British Gas service	£15
Bank Account Fee (Travel Insurance, Road Assistance etc.)	£13
Total:	£83
Union and Political Parties	
Subscriptions	
Momentum	£5
Momentum	£3
Labour Party	£5
Labour Party	£8
UCU	£22
UCU	£22
Catalyst media	£2
Total:	£67
Food	
Food (£150 a week including toiletries and dog food)	£600
Organic Direct	£80
School dinners	£120
Milkman	£40
Total:	£840
Entertainment	
Broadband	£45
Five mobiles	£70

MONEY

TV Licence	£12
Netflix	£8
Total:	£135
Travel	
Solo travel for Neal and Gabriel	£40
Total:	£40
Extras	
Xmas or extras	£50
Kids clothes	£100
windows	£16
Total:	£166
Some of Gary's regular extras	
Platform Donation	£10
Rev Billy	£9
DVLA	£17
Cleaner	£180
Car petrol/tax/insurance	£100
Total:	£316
Some of Lena's regular extras	
VW	£191
Spotify via Paypal	£10
Migrant Artists Mutual Aid	£10
Car petrol/tax/insurance	£100
Total:	£311
Grand Total:	£3855

Since June 2018:

Gary pays £1530 to joint account every month and spends the rest of the money on his car upkeep and whatever he pleases.
Lena pays £1690 to joint account every month and spends the rest of the money on her car upkeep and whatever she pleases.

DESIGN LABOUR BUDGET
Constança Saraiva

February	Content	Receive content (texts + images)	1
March	Book concept	Concept research	4
		Layout research	4
		Skype meeting about book concept	1
		Sketch of book layout	4
April	Layout	Final proposal for the book	8
		Skype meeting about final proposal	1
		Layout for the book	48
		Layout for book cover	16
May	Final Design	Image corrections	2
		Layout corrections	2
		Text corrections	2
		3 rounds of revisions and corrections to the final versions of the book	6
June	Printing	Prepare file for printing	4
Total hours			103

Price	£1,048
VAT (0%)	£0
Total	£1,048*

* £1,048 equals two times a monthly fee of £524 — the monthly budget for the Institute funded by 10% of the family's net income.

04
LABOUR

LABOUR

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

Notes taken on preliminary conversation on 23 January 2018

Labour saved our marriage.

What's your labour? What do you do that is labour for you?

Labour is such a juicy word. Too good a word to work with. To begin on the topic of labour is difficult because you want to say it all at once. Labour is one of the best words there is.

In the 80s posters said 'Labour Means Work'. Compare to 'Labour Isn't Working'

The labour of The World Transformed.

The labour of Momentum.

This is our social movement.

04. LABOUR

How are all these activists now in the Labour Party?

Do we get involved in the Labour Party and create policy, actual policy?

The labour of the Paris Accord.

Government Department of Energy and Climate Change (now Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) needs to be in the hands of people who are fundamentally suspicious of multinational corporations.

Why are we in the Labour Party? Because we think it's possible to have a socialist Prime Minister whose influence on policy will be central.

Labouring under someone else's leadership, Dan Carden, Jeremy Corbyn rather than designing one's own labour.

There's a problem with being bored of participating in the Labour Party, things becoming laboursome.

The flavour of industrial disputes feels a bit like direct democracy sometimes.

There's an Occupy-like energy on the picket lines because we are part of Liverpool Walton CLP.

The Labour thing has a life of its own and it carries you to the abyss. It would make a perfect play – or TV boxset.

The context of the Labour Party is a world entire and it does its work on you.

The labour of getting ideas into the Labour Manifesto.

The admin trail of your labour.

The inevitable factions within the CLP and the labour of the maintenance of safe borders.

Narrate our coming into Labour. Tell the anecdotes of what happened.

Go through our Labour Photo Book 2017 and remember how we got involved.

The WhatsApp groups.

The Artists4Corbyn banner actions.

Final note:

This is too much. Labour needs a book on its own.



James at a John McDonnell event launching GE2017 campaign at St George's Hall, Liverpool.

05
CHILDREN

CHILDREN
**Neal Anderson, Gabriel Anderson,
Sid Anderson and James Anderson**

On 20 March 2018 it was decided that we will ask children to write 10 points together about the Institute for £10 each.



The children in
Spinoza's garden,
Rijnsburg,
Netherlands,
29 March 2018.



The children
in The Gaffe,
Dubrovnik,
Croatia,
26 December
2018.

On 26 December 2018 we finally persuaded them all to do it, and the children composed their 10 points, together, starting with 3 from Gabriel, 2 from Sid, 1 from James and 4 from Neal.

7. The institute has provided a "family-friendly" framework to follow when pursuing a career in art.
8. It is best to induct children when they are young and oblivious to the true nature of ~~what they are~~ meaning behind the nice holidays and family picnics.
9. As children get older and more self-aware, Parents may find ~~diffin~~ it difficult ironically difficult to deal with the "dissent at home"
10. When all is said and done, it is a solid way to "institutionalise" your children in the obliquette of protest and sensibilities of radical left-wing thought.

① The Institute ended symbolically at "the gaffe" - the institute was a gaffe! If you will

② It was lovely having strangers paid to stay at our house. Loved that!

③ In-Bright Street, All three kids stayed in one room while there was a whole room dedicated to the institute

④ I liked about the institute about how we went on them fun and also educational holidays.

⑤ The Institute is like a second family we are all so close and we can all rely on each other. We have up and downs but the institute will help us with that.

⑥ The Institute
makes
bigger

10 Points

1. The Institute ended symbolically at 'the gaffe' – the institute was a gaff! if you will. (G)
2. It was lovely having strangers paid to stay in our house. Loved that! (G)
3. In Bright Street, all three kids stayed in one room, while there was a whole room dedicated to the institute. (G)
4. I liked about the institute about how we went on them fun and also educational holidays. (S)
5. The Institute is like a second family, we are all so close and we can all rely on each other, we have ups and downs, but the Institute will help us with that. (S)
6. The Institute makes our house bigger. (J)
7. The Institute has provided a 'family-friendly' framework to follow when pursuing a career in art. (N)
8. It is best to induct children when they are young and oblivious to the real meaning behind the nice holidays and family picnics. (N)
9. As children get older and more self-aware, parents might find it ironically difficult to deal with the 'dissent at home'. (N)
10. When all is said and done, it is a solid way to 'institutionalise' your children in the etiquette of protest and sensibilities of radical left-wing thought. (N)

- Neal Anderson (18) doesn't define himself by the reductive words of this statement.
- Gabriel Anderson (16) is hard-working, loyal, hot-headed, ginger, stubborn, reasonable, amusing, aware.
- Sid Anderson (11) is instigator, encourager, performer, cook, rule-breaker, socialite, centre of attention.
- James Anderson (5) is wilful, nuclear, cool, happy, powerful and jumpy super-hero fighter.

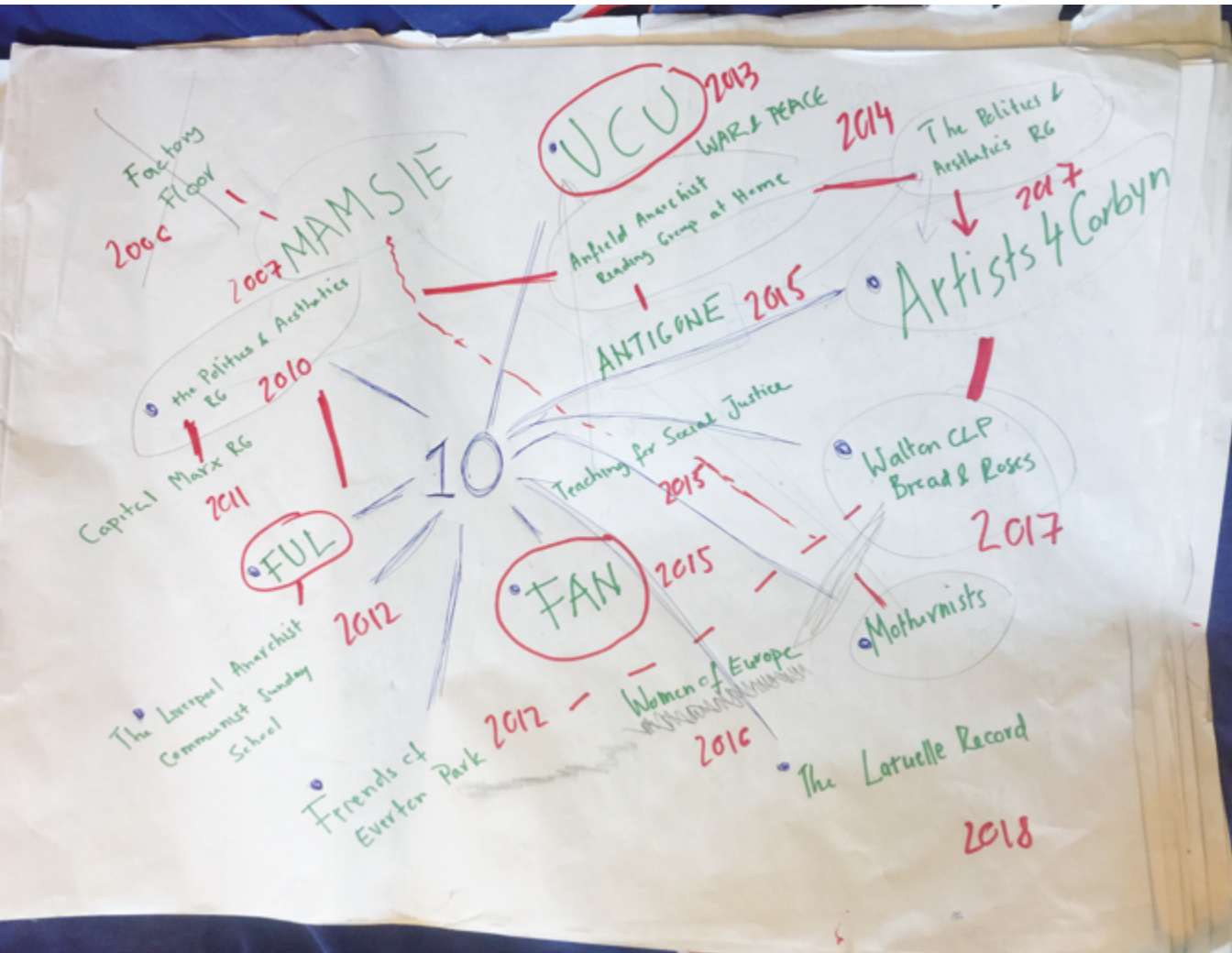


NETWORKS

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

Dear Collaborator,

- The Politics and Aesthetics Reading Group 2010 – **Jennifer Verson**
- The Free University of Liverpool 2011 – **Jane Trowell**
- The Liverpool Anarchist Communist Sunday School 2012 – **Mike Finn**
- Friends of Everton Park including Everton Art Group and Everton Heritage Group 2012 – **Adam Byrne**
- UCU 2013 - **Steve Shakespeare**
- Family Activist Network 2015 – **Paula McCloskey** and **Sam Vardy**
- Artists4Corbyn 2017 – **Tim Jeeves**
- Walton CLP 2017 – **Ian Byrne**
- Mothernists 2017 – **Deidre Donoghue**
- The Laruelle Record 2018 – **Lois Keidan**



Mind map of the 10 Networks

Gary and Lena (and the kids) are working on a book about the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home, preliminarily called '10 Problems' - this is for the Institute's 10th anniversary.

It's been a decade of problems and among those 10 we would like to explore the problem of Networks - groups/communities/audiences we are engaged with. Networks will be one of our 10 chapters.

Over the past decade it is something we've been uplifted by, desperate for, harassed because of, eager to run away from, haunted/saved/resurrected by and just about fed up with. Networks and being in them is obviously a blessing and a curse. In other words it's a problem.

As you have been a part of at least one of the networks (please see photo for a mind map of the networks we have been in over the past decade) we would be really grateful if you would be so kind to answer this question:

How do you negotiate your position in a network/community/group that currently matters to you?

Please write about any network you are involved in (not necessarily the one we are together in). We are interested to learn how you cope.

Your answer together with 9 others will be published in our book '10 Problems' - you will receive a free copy. The answer can be as short or as long as you like. Deadline is May Day. Please let us know if you would like to contribute to this.

Many thanks
The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home

Jennifer Verson

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

The Identity Cupboard

What you will need:

A4 paper

You are going to make an 'Identity Cupboard'.

How to do it:

Place the paper in front of you in landscape position and fold the two sides so they meet in the middle, like the doors of a cupboard.

On the front of the 'doors' write what someone sees in you if they walk past you on the street.

On the inside of one of the doors, write two (or more) things someone could find out about you if they spoke with you for 5 minutes.

On the inside of the other door, write two (or more) things that an acquaintance (e.g. neighbour, classmate, friend) could know about you.

Inside the cupboard (on the back page) write something that only someone who knows you really well would know, or you might only know yourself.

"Do you think your identity cupboard will be the same as anyone else in the group/ in the world? What do people miss when they look at the outside only? Would you be happy for anyone to look at your identity cupboard?"

The back drawer of my identity cupboard is particularly grim.

Pulling out the dirty underpants of your identity is not much fun, but it can allow for moments of the most sublime connection with others.

It was in 2011 when I first started attending my local progressive synagogue. I remember being asked to read the prayer for the Royal Family. I blurted out that I couldn't because I was an anarchist. Without batting an eyelid I was offered an Aliyah (reciting the Barechu blessing at the reading of the Torah and a special honour).

I think there is a lot to learn from this moment about negotiating networks.

I used the phrase 'blurted out'. For me a synagogue is a liminal space where all time collapses, my defences are down, it is difficult to diplomatically negotiate identity. If I had made another choice and decided to hide my Emma Goldman self from my Temple Beth El Bat Mitzvah girl self, I would not have been my authentic self and this would ultimately have harmed me.

So back to the question how do I negotiate?

Badly?

With courage?

With lack of diplomacy because I am swirling around in liminal memory and not making reasoned decisions?

How do I find courage?

Building and participating in networks that matter, networks which enable me to survive, and networks which care about me. They care that I show up.

The networks I am part of are institutions which co-produce my transgressive identity. They create and occupy public space for radical and unpleasant identities. Identities don't have to be disclosed here. Networks make the world safe for our whole selves. They are places where people who have wrestled with their identity are not only welcomed but needed.

I often have to resist my urge to silo.

In November 2017 Migrant Artists Mutual Aid produced their first book *Stories*

of Survival, Recipes for Resistance. The book chronicles our intimate and political struggles for justice in the asylum system over a harrowing five years. It also raises money for much needed legal fighting funds. This is how I found myself on shabbat morning reading from the newly published book, a story about collecting my friend's things from her flat when she was detained. I was half way through the passage and looked up to see people wiping their eyes.

I don't like making people cry, all I did was resist the urge to silo.

Our capitalism relies on our silent complicity, not speaking about the dirty socks and knickers in the back of our cupboards. This silence fragments us and prevents solidarity with each other as humans. Whether it is early death from cancer, sexual violence, genocide, illicit love, poverty, building networks based on our deeper and often unspoken identities creates radical cultural shifts and keeps us alive.

Post script November 5, 2018 to December 23, 2018

I have been unable to finish final edits. I was horrified that I equated being a Jewish person who goes to synagogue almost every week with dirty socks in the back of my identity cupboard. I am walking a knife edge between privacy and honesty. I am in the second year of my PhD and have been thinking about reflexive auto-ethnography as part of my work in performance and inter-religious peace building. It is incredibly difficult to critically interrogate why I feel that I want to hide my Jewish practice.

Jennifer Verson - Artistic director of Migrant Artists Mutual Aid,
cultural activist, scholar.



Trilogy,
digital drawing
by Jane Trowell,
2014.

Jane Trowell

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

My musician dad used to tell us a joke that went something like this:

[Setting – Manhattan; older woman and traffic cop]

Older woman: “Excuse me, can you tell me how to get to Carnegie Hall?”

Traffic cop: “Practice, lady, practice.”

As an ex-musician, I know it takes practice to make beauty happen. But what I'm coming to realise is that it also takes beauty to make practice happen.

A while back, I sent an email round to a group of activists and artists who I'd been working with, asking them what they do to keep going, to keep sustainable. I was

struck by the number of responses that included music, dancing, walking, swimming, writing, making things, growing things, tending things, from people I didn't expect. I collated them all in the blog 'Keeping On: Sustainable Art-Activism' [i]. Perhaps, as artist Clare Whistler, writer Fyodor Dostoevsky and many others have said: 'Beauty can save the world'. The fact that only two people signed up for Clare's workshop of the same name at a big conference on art and environmental sustainability [ii], illustrates the challenges we have. Social processes are hard won, constantly evolving, and can be so achingly beautiful. Being in and making beauty is soulful self-care and other-care. It too is under-discussed. Yet only when we live in both can we build a better world.

I'm now in my 50s. I've seen many people - friends, networks, and myself - burn out or become cynical through the impacts of confronting social injustices, racism, poverty, sexism, human rights abuses, environmental degradation and climate change in complex political and community contexts. Some of the damage is done because external systemic forces such as welfare cuts, immigration law, institutionalised racism, Islamophobia are too shockingly brutal and unremitting. But some of the damage happens inside our movements and networks where abuses of power — racism, sexism, and other acts of oppression - go unchallenged or are left unresolved; or where actions have been planned by those with power who marginalise or coopt the diverse needs, perspectives, experiences, creativity, capacity of the very people on the frontline.

Some of the worst damage is done where people's stress, political anger, urgency, and mis-enacted commitment subsumes every corner, starving out the possibility of regular time and space where nourishing self-care, self-awareness – and other-care, other-awareness — could be. That's the same self-care that can lead to thoughtful solutions, grounded decisions, sane commitments of time, solidly built alliances, effective challenges to power, and... a sustainable life.

I believe there is a political necessity to invest in how we healthily navigate this work and each other, not just in the doing of it, but the work in our heads and hearts and souls. We need to keep ourselves self-critical, aware, able to acknowledge our mistakes, celebrate good moments, able to learn from each other, as

well as fiercely speak truth to power. And we need to legitimise the vital time to nourish ourselves as individuals, and to encourage time for group nourishment in our work with others. Too many group processes — and therefore people — get brutalised by the urgentocracy of the campaign goal or the immediate pressure. Brutalisation literally means 'making ugly'. We need exactly the opposite of this to sustain ourselves, our networks.

I've been reading Paulo Freire's 'Teachers as Cultural Workers, Letters to those who dare teach'[iii]. As an educator, I'm thinking about teaching as activism. Freire talks about what it means to dare, to dare boldly 'in order to say no to the bureaucratisation of the mind to which we are exposed every day'. This speaks to me as a white middle-class woman brought up in England, whether I like it or not benefiting from a racist, classist country that made its wealth from imperial plunder and overlordship. What are my defaults, bureaucratised into me from birth, that I must repeatedly challenge? And what am I doing to amplify the powerful voices of those who have been marginalised, invisibilised and abused by a racist, classist, heteronormative country? By 'me' in fact? What part of me is brutalised and brutalising, uglified and ugly-making. What part of others?

Self-care is also about honesty with the self, otherwise I risk dis-integration. I risk falling to pieces, acting out my dis-integrated self in my networks and collaborations. As soon as a response becomes dis-integrated and disproportionate, it's time to step back, take stock, be silent, de-brutalise, re-member beauty. How to remember this? It is not easy. *Practice, lady, practice.*

Freire also talks about 'lovingness' throughout our actions, and that 'lovingness' requires work. 'It is impossible to teach without the courage to love, the courage to try a thousand times without giving up' [iv]. I relate this lovingness to our work with each other, with our networks. I relate it to making beauty and beauty making us. It speaks to me of *the practising of beautiful processes and making beauty* that can keep us sane, humble, make us strong, bold, enduring. I realise I'll always be practising, and that stepping up is not always wise and that stepping back is not failure. Burning out on the other hand can burn too many bridges for our vulnerable souls (and sometimes our networks) to recover from. What a gift to those who

are willing us to defeat.

I recently met Dee Woods, an award-winning chef who co-founded *the Granville Community Kitchen* in West London, a place of community sustenance, creativity and healing. The kitchen is playing a crucial role after the unspeakable state- arson of Grenfell Tower. Woods spoke about herself as a phoenix, overcoming the multiple shocks of living in this society as a person of colour. She talked about encouraging the young people she works with to find transcendence, to cherish the phoenix in their beings, in order to more than survive, in order to thrive. To be able to work together, sometimes in this configuration, sometimes that, without toxicity, and with beauty.

I'm also arrested by the Healing Justice workshops that have been initiated by the people of colour and youth-led programme *Voices that Shake!*. I learn from these processes. They meet the profound need for beauty in times of deep struggle – in the food we eat, the convivial space, the holding of pain, the sharing of angers and anguishes, the demand for justice, the making of powerful writing, the reading of powerful words, art, music, body-nurturing work. This is building networks of humanity and nourishment in brutalising times without losing political fierceness. bell hooks' humane, gripping and rigorous trilogy of books *Teaching to Transgress*, *Teaching Community*, and *Teaching Critical Thinking* comes to my mind.

Dee Woods, *Voices that Shake!*, Paulo Freire, bell hooks and others offer something vital about practice to those of us who are trying to work together, in our ever evolving networks and communities. I learn this: if, in the face of massive state oppression and corporate control, we acknowledge our flaws, to-be-examined-behaviours, moments of group breakthrough, group breakdown, mistrust, repair, inspiration; if we practice making beautiful processes with each other, and we practice *being in beauty for our own souls' sakes*, we can better refuse, outwit and outlast this troubled and profoundly unjust world.

Dedicated to Granville Community Kitchen, Voices that Shake!; and to Clare Whistler for our journeys around 'Beauty can save the world'.
<https://granvillecommunitykitchen.wordpress.com>

<https://voicesthatshake.org/healingjustice>

Further reading: 'Embracing failure, educating hope: some arts activist educators' concerns in their work for social justice', Jane Trowell, in *artWORK, Art, Labour and Activism*, edited by Jessica Holtaway, Alberto Cossu, Paula Serafini, Rowman and Littlefield: London & New York.

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- [i] <http://platformlondon.org/2012/03/27/keeping-on-sustainable-art-activism/>
 - [ii] <http://events.cat.org.uk/index.php/emergence-2012>
 - [iii] Freire, Paulo (2005) *Teachers as Cultural Workers, Letters to those who dare teach*, Westview, Persus
 - [iv] Quotations from Freire (2005) p6, and p5

Jane Trowell is an arts educator and works with www.platformlondon.org.

Mike Finn

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

*Part One:
The Authoritarian University*

More than a century ago, a Scouser called Jimmy Dick helped set up an Anarchist Communist Sunday School in Liverpool, England (Shotton, 1993: 43-48). The mission of this school, and others like it, was to - in Jimmy's words:

Break down prejudices which are set up in the weekday school. To teach a child to think and act for itself. To spread the idea of Internationalism. To point out to them that humility, patience and submission are no longer virtues, if ever they were; and that they must own themselves. So long as the nation to be

really believes that Jesus Christ and...kings, MPs, priests etc., are its divine shepherds and rulers the present state of serfdom is secure. (Dick, cited in Shotton, 1993: 44)

Jimmy Dick was writing and working in the heyday of the 'modern school', experiments in libertarian education that flourished in the wake of Francisco Ferrer's pioneering work in Spain (Suissa, 2010: 78-82; Shotton, 1993). Such schools were set against what Paulo Freire would later condemn as 'banking education', the simple inculcation of 'knowledge' into pupils and students (Freire, 1970), something Charles Dickens himself had satirised in the mid-nineteenth century in the form of Mr Gradgrind and his mantra that 'facts alone are wanted' (Dickens, 1854).

Jimmy Dick's school was ahead of its time. The experiments varied; they were more or less innovative in curricula or content, but they shared a common commitment - to 'education as the practice of freedom' (Scapp, 2018).

I begin with this vignette for two reasons. One, because it foreshadows my personal connection to the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home. I met Gary Anderson on a picket line, when I was a lecturer in education at Liverpool Hope University. Over the years since, I got 'educated' along with Lena and Gary, the Institute's founders, on picket lines, marches and demos, in boozy conversations, and over dinner at the Institute itself. As one of their many initiatives, they attempted to relaunch the Anarchist Communist Sunday School, and it was through them that I first learned of its prior existence. Free education, in every sense, and freedom of thought, is critical to the Institute's project.

We became part of a formal network, in that all three of us served together on the branch committee of the University and Colleges Union, along with another close friend and comrade, Steven Shakespeare. And, like many educators, all of us grappled with the same problem that Jimmy did; how to facilitate an educational 'experience' (denuded of the neoliberal overtones of that word) which allowed all of us participating, student and lecturer alike, to increase our freedom.

The second reason is where the personal joins the political. Jimmy Dick saw him-

self as an anarchist communist, contending with a state which used the educational apparatus as a means of state-formation. In Dick's view, one I share, the role of the state in education was (and remains) to indoctrinate particular forms of citizenship into children. In Britain, these 'norms' have become arguably more pernicious recently, with the rise of neonationalism in political culture accompanied by – and in a relationship with – the introduction of compulsory 'British values' teaching in schools and educational establishments from nursery onwards (Sant and Hanley, 2018).

During Michael Gove's tenure as Secretary of State for Education, attempts were made to remake humanities' curricula in the service of a nationalist agenda, with both English and History reformed at the direction of the state in the service of a particular vision of the past, and as a consequence, the future (Burn, 2015; Finn, 2015; Smith, 2017). Gove's Prime minister, David Cameron, for his part, championed initiatives to supply copies of Henrietta Marshall's Edwardian (and racist) imperial apologia *Our Island Story* into schools (Wellings, 2016). This was in addition to copies of the King James Bible inscribed by Gove himself (Finn, 2015).

Whilst universities have escaped 'British values' directly, they have not escaped the broader agenda of ethnocentric neonationalism. Though nominally 'autonomous' institutions (in a curiously British reading of the meaning of the word 'autonomous'), they were increasingly subordinated to the state through a variety of means. The Prevent counter-extremism duty was imposed upon them, despite a resolution of UCU Congress to refuse compliance (Espinoza, 2015). This meant that individual academic staff became *de facto* spies, as they were now obligated to report utterances and behaviour continued to be 'extremist'. The UN subsequently condemned Prevent wholesale and demanded its removal (UN, 2017). A key aspect of the UN's concerns lay in the breadth and lack of specificity of the UK government's definition of extremism, one which appeared to potentially criminalise a wide range of political opinions which may not in themselves have any connection with violence or terrorism.

In 2011, this climate of repression reached an apotheosis when the Metropolitan Police asked citizens and business owners to report the names of self-described

anarchists to them. They withdrew the notification and subsequently apologised, but it reflected the reality of a pervasive 'governmentality' where 'extremism' was conflated with any political opinion that refused the orthodox. The art and practice of dissent, or merely the discussion of political topics, is increasingly regulated, even in the home – where the UN claimed that:

The spectre of "Big Brother" is so large, in fact, that some families are reportedly afraid of even discussing the negative effects of terrorism in their own homes, fearing that their children would talk about it at school and have their intentions misconstrued. (UN, 2017: 5)

Universities have themselves come under consistent assault, increasingly so after the neonationalist outcry that was the 'Brexit moment' (Finn, 2018). Even prior to this, the 'hostile environment' introduced by Theresa May as Home Secretary, had turned academics into border guards – required to report on the movements and attendance of international students to university authorities so these could be referred to the Home Office. At one university, academics themselves – rather than HR departments – were personally asked to check passports of graduate students they sought to engage for teaching work. The classroom, always in traditional form an authoritarian space, became still more so. The British university was never in truth the 'utopian place' Edward Said once characterised certain American universities as being (Said, 2000: 435), but even insofar as it remained a heterotopia in the Foucaultian sense (Scapp, 2018) – a place where difference was possible – it was being remade against difference and in favour of conformity.

This was true in terms of opinions as well as bodies. With May as Prime Minister, the government was hand-in-glove with the rabid right wing press in an assault on democratic institutions. Anarchists cannot be friends of the judiciary by default, given their absolute opposition to the state and its institutions, and in particular the courts and police. Yet it is worth noting that the branding of senior judges as 'Enemies of the People' in the *Daily Mail* newspaper following the High Court's decision to allow Parliament a say on the Brexit process in late 2016 was motivated by neonationalist imperatives. It foreshadowed the onslaught which other institutions of an ostensibly-representative democracy would subsequently suffer.

In late 2017, the Conservative government whip, Chris Heaton-Harris, requested the names of academics teaching on Brexit, and copies of their course syllabi, from university vice-chancellors (Fazackerley, 2017). When a public furore broke out over government censorship, the right wing press thundered ‘Our Remainer Universities’ and named-and-shamed academics known to hold views supportive of Britain’s continued membership of the European Union (Fox, 2017).

Universities were dragged into a ‘culture war’, where the right characterised them as in the grip of a left-wing elite, indoctrinating students; the groundwork had been laid for this in the coalition years with Gove’s sustained attacks on the ‘blob’ as he called them – namely university-based educationalists (Finn, 2015). Universities were supposedly policing speech, through providing ‘safe spaces’ where students would not find their views challenged. In short, this was a self-serving manufactured myth on the part of the right, who found that their views were increasingly rejected by the younger generation. The government, under a draconian piece of legislation (the Higher Education and Research Act 2017), arrogated to itself the power to discipline universities for failing to protect freedom of speech. There was apparently no awareness of the irony of this, given that the government had formally restricted freedom of speech in universities through the Prevent duty. The government sought, in effect, to force student bodies to listen to the views of right wing extremists.

In the face of all this, and the emphatic subordination of the British universities to the dictates of the state, a rebellion was born.

*Part Two:
The Anarchist University*

In February 2018 academics and academic-related staff began the biggest strike in the history of British universities. The historian of industrial relations Jack Saunders estimated that more days of work were lost in the ensuing weeks than in all disputes combined which had taken place for the previous two years where records were available (Finn, 2018). It was a ‘revolt’.

Nominally it was triggered by pension reform. The employers tabled proposals which in effect would slash retirement incomes for those academics employed at pre-1992 universities in what is known as the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). For some academics, this could mean a cut of half their pension benefits. This was *prima facie* a case for industrial action, and even in the face of Britain’s restrictive trade union laws (amongst the most restrictive in the Western world) the decision of the UCU membership was overwhelmingly for strike action.

But, as picket lines were manned by thousands of academics across the country, one comment was universal - this isn’t just about pensions.

For academics, this was an opportunity to draw a line and take ownership of themselves and their institutions. With universities in the age of marketization now highly-corporatised authoritarian bureaucracies, policing staff behaviour through regular audit and regimes of discipline, the critical voice was stifled and their pretensions to being self-governing corporations of scholars were, for the most part, ridiculous.

This contradiction between the academic self-image – as critics able to speak their mind under conditions of academic freedom, facilitating the education of students as a public and social good – and the reality of a group of workers marginalised from decision-making in their own institutions and increasingly exploited, erupted.

Under the hashtag of #wearetheuniversity – a rejection of the casual managerial elision that the views of managers were automatically synonymous with those of the institution they claimed to ‘run’ – academics, academic-related staff and students did indeed ‘unite and fight’. At universities across the country, students occupied buildings, organised solidarity demonstrations, and participated in and co-organised ‘teach-outs’ with academic staff. These instances of dissent hark back to past eras of university revolt in the UK, dating to the 1960s or to the ‘student revolt’ of 2010 (Myers, 2017). But these usable pasts did not mean that the contemporary moment wasn’t novel. This was the largest scale mobilisation of academic staff Britain had ever seen. That in itself was a rejoinder to the assumption

of neoliberalised senior managers and elites who felt that the university was now firmly in their possession.

The picket line became, as it always does, the best kind of classroom. Not the performative rhetoric of ‘flipped’ classrooms which marketise social justice discourses in the service of edubusiness, but a real, open world of discovery where students and academics learned from one another in a democratic university that did not need multi-million pound buildings or the latest technological offerings of ‘HiEdBiz’ (Collini, 2003).

This was, to borrow a term from neoliberal holy writ, genuine ‘disruption’.

As a small aside, the Said reference I cited earlier I learned during the strike from a student who was attending a teach-out I was speaking at. Instantly it encapsulated thoughts I’d had about the university and started me rethinking the present situation. Given the strictures of disciplinary curricula and the nature of departmentalism, this was the only situation in which I would have met him – both of us now citizens in our own *heterotopia*, or even ‘utopian space’.

The strike as a whole, and the associated initiatives and communities it spawned, created a new network, amounting to an anarchist university fostered and supported by the disruptive technology of social media, yes, but principally located in the rethinking of citizenship and the university polity emphasised in the very acts of striking, solidarity and occupation (to name but a few) which amounted to a rejection of the authoritarian university in favour of a new one.

The term ‘anarchist’ will scare some people who do not identify as an anarchist, as I do. Ron Scapp, in an excellent essay which this piece draws on (Scapp, 2018), follows Paul Feyerabend in noting that you don’t have to be an anarchist to practice anarchism (Feyerabend, 1975). As Colin Ward, the preeminent anarchist thinker of postwar Britain argued, anarchism is not merely a rejection of government and hierarchy, but it is also a positive force – ‘a theory of spontaneous order’ – whereby people are able to organise themselves without sovereigns to engage in all manner of activities (Ward, 1996). Ward, following Gustav Landauer, famously argued

that this meant that anarchism was not, as many of its adherents and critics have sometimes argued, simply a millenarian gospel which waited on the arrival of the revolution, but an ever-present reality:

an anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism. (Ward, 1996: 18)

One such seed bloomed in the form of the anarchist university of 2018.

Conclusions: Practising education, practising freedom

The strike ended. We went back to work, with the dispute unresolved in the classic act of a craft union, the matter kicked into a Joint Expert Panel to be discussed further. This unsatisfactory outcome resonated on more levels than just the pension. The fact that the UCU leadership saw the dispute narrowly in terms of the technical issue of pension benefits, rather than the much more dynamic range of issues which had spawned #wearetheuniversity – the popular movement which underpinned the industrial action – illustrated the fact that the union leadership did not understand the issues at stake any more than managerial leadership in universities. The ‘leaderless revolution’, (to borrow Carne Ross’ phrase (Ross, 2011)) which took place in 2018 could not find its echo in the bounded rationalities of those who considered themselves ‘leaders’.

So is the anarchist university dead then? Or is there another seed buried under the snow waiting for its moment? I think that’s a false premise in this case. The ‘spontaneous order’ and cooperation spawned by the act of revolt are always difficult to sustain, but the self is still changed. As summer loomed, students and academics continued to fight within and without their institution – and even within their unions – to promote the objectives of a ‘free’ university where education was practised as freedom.

Outside the university, libertarian education never died either. Though the name of Ferrer is not known to most, libertarian educational initiatives subsist around the world. In the wake of the introduction of £9,000 tuition fees for university study in England following a parliamentary vote in 2010 (implemented in 2012), a free universities movement sprang up – including the Free University of Liverpool, another of Lena and Gary’s projects which links to the Institute of the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home.

As they have long realised, dissent at home is where all education starts. Our challenge, then, in the maintenance of an anarchist university is to practice that dissent in all our homes, in the face of all the challenges that brings. That will allow us to create a new kind of ‘dialogical’ education (Freire, 1970), anchored in the tenets of the practice of freedom. As Scapp notes, ‘we need to remember that how we are... is just as important as what we are presenting, and even why’ (Scapp, 2018).

The revolt *changed us*. And in changing us, it can also change those institutions which call themselves universities. The anarchist university subsists when we reject the hierarchy and authoritarianism of contemporary society. That means attention to the self. As Gustav Landauer (cited by Ward) noted in relation to the state:

The state is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently (Landauer, cited in Ward, 1996: 23).

‘Contracting other relationships, behaving differently’ is precisely what students and workers did during the strike. It was the antithesis of the ‘toxic university’ (Smyth, 2017) where statist imperatives of hierarchy and authoritarianism dominate. Rejecting authoritarianism and leadership in favour of an ontology of fellowship and mutual aid is both our challenge, and it is also the answer to a problem which faces all our networks.

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Adam Byrne

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

Lena Okay, so, Adam, the question is here, how do you negotiate your position in a network or a community group that matters to you?

Adam To who? To anyone or...?

Lena No, how do you negotiate your own position, because you know, sometimes there's power relations, there's problems, there's arguments, d'you know what I mean? Like, there is always frictions with - working with humans.

Adam Yeah.

Lena It's not easy, is it? [crosstalk]

Adam Absolutely yeah.

Lena It's not [inaudible 00:00:30] [crosstalk]

Adam I think it's more difficult with The Powers That Be, I think-

Lena Alright, okay.
Adam -to be honest. Um, I think it's not obvious but I can see- I don't know, I- um-- Being involved in community work for -well, half a summer in different ways, uh, with- you know, with music and community centres and helping with new clubs and stuff and, um, I don't say to meself, I'm not sure but, uh, um, [chuckle] I don't know. I think sometimes, dealing with- sometimes I think-I think I have a problem, well not a problem, I think sometimes I'm quite aware of the- what you're up against in-
Lena Oh, okay. [crosstalk]
Adam What you're up against in life, I think. [inaudible 00:01:11] [crosstalk]
Lena Right.
Adam What you're- what you're helping-
Lena Mm-hmm.
Adam -um, for when you see people who need support and stuff-
Lena Okay.
Adam -in the community. Whether it be helping at the food bank or something-
Lena Yeah.
Adam or- you know? Helping with events, community events, you know? And people's problems. And you're aware very much, you're socially aware of what's going on around you, and think-- You know right away that you're up against something, you know?
Lena Right.
Adam Sometimes when you- It's hard to sort of explain this, I'm sorry, I'm not very good at it-
Lena No, you're doing great.
Adam -explaining. I feel like just, yeah. [chuckles]
Lena No, no, it's fine.
Adam But-
Lena Yes.
Adam I think sometime I'm quite aware it- of that there is-
Lena Mm.
Adam -a higher hierarchy, is that what you sort of?
Lena Yes, absolutely, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Adam You- you wanna support it but don't, you know?

Lena Right, yeah.
Adam You- Oh, yeah I can see-
Lena Mm.
Adam -where you're coming from-
Lena Mm.
Adam -you know, but at the same time you-you-- it can be a little bit, well, you know?
Lena Yeah.
Adam Because you- you're a community organizer or you're -or sometimes it'll- you're just, mostly, um, I'm just a volunteer, you know?
Lena Mm. Mm
Adam Just a volunteer, it's not really valued.
Lena Right, right.
Adam And I think, I'm aware that-that a little bit. Uh, about positioning meself but-but it doesn't really bother me because I -you know what?
Lena Okay.
Adam I- you know it's hard- I think it can be really hard, it can be really tough sometimes-
Lena Mm.
Adam -when you're balancing your personal life as well with stuff-
Lena Absolutely.
Adam -you know?
Lena Yeah, yeah. But then-
Adam Uh, yes.
Lena -what about- are there any initiatives that- because obviously, what you're talking about is that you kind of have to fit in within the hierarchy-
Adam Yeah.
Lena -of those climbing the top above you-
Adam Yes.
Lena -as if- and that are kind of powers-
Adam Yeah.
Lena -that stand--
Adam Yeah.
Lena -might disregard you, in some sense-

Adam Yeah.
 Lena -like as the volunteer. And then the people whom you are working with, or helping-
 Adam Yeah, yeah.
 Lena -right? But then, do you ever find that it's possibly easier with the initiatives that you created yourself?
 Adam Mm.
 Lena Do you have any- do you feel like- do you also work with some initiatives that actually you created? You know, like say with the Out of the Blue?
 Adam Yeah.
 Lena How did that come about?
 Adam Well, Out of the Blue was, uh, was-was initially, uh, when I first started-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam -in 1991. It was- it was a community-
 Lena Mm-hmm.
 Adam -led festival.
 Lena Okay.
 Adam And like, uh, and it was done through-through WECC [West Everton Community Centre] -
 Lena Mm-hmm.
 Adam -and people, uh, in the Everton community and people around Shewsy and stuff like that-
 Lena Mm-hmm.
 Adam -the Everton area. And this was 1991, um-
 Lena Right.
 Adam -and it was round the same time when, that- we've had social history of the area, the physical history of the area, we've had that many clearances and- we had-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam -a lot of the clearances in the '60s-
 Lena Okay.
 Adam -and then we had the tower blocks, which were '60s buildings. There was also a clearance in the late '80s as well-
 Lena Okay.

Adam -when the tower blocks-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam -gone-
 Lena Yeah, yeah.
 Adam -knocked down. So we were left with this big, huge space.
 Lena Right.
 Adam Which somehow, some of that population dropped again and the high rises-
 Lena Okay.
 Adam -were demolished and maisonettes and flats were demolished-
 Lena Okay.
 Adam -we're left with this huge space.
 Lena Uh-huh.
 Adam And there was lot of musicians in the area-
 Lena Right.
 Adam in the community. And we said, "Well, people are just stuck-" [crosstalk]
 Lena Sorry, how old were you at '91?
 Adam Oh, I was 13, 14.
 Lena Right, okay.
 Adam Yeah?
 Lena But you lived in the area.
 Adam But I lived in the area.
 Lena Okay.
 Adam I wasn't involved in it, but I remember going to it.
 Lena Okay.
 Adam But I know people who-who were there and you know, who- and who were older than me and people, you know, people like is it John Hutch and Kenny Wignall from the Shewsy like, you know, Anne from WECC.
 Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah.
 Adam You know, people that, who- you know, you know, who I remember from that time as a- as a kid growing up. And it just comes about-- The idea was, let's just do, you know, there's musicians in the area, why don't we make use of this? It's not getting-- Why do we not make use of this space?
 Lena Mm-hmm.

Adam What's it designed for? It's actually designed as some sort of amphitheatre to put-

Lena Right.

Adam -music on.

Lena Right, right.

Adam And the big idea was, "Well, why don't we do a Glastonbury-

Lena Okay.

Adam -in the Shewsy area?"

Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adam Now, by the way, this was 1991, now. There's festivals everywhere now.

Lena Right.

Adam But go back-

Lena Yeah.

Adam -go to 2018, there's hundreds, thousands of festivals.

Lena Festivals.

Adam There's loads just in this city alone.

Lena Absolutely.

Adam In 1991, I think, there wasn't many, really.

Lena Right.

Adam You know, in the country.

Lena Okay.

Adam Certainly not in Liverpool. There might have been the- what they call The Larks in the Parks.

Lena Okay.

Adam That'd be in that late '80s, you know-- Matthew Street Festival wasn't going on-

Lena Okay.

Adam I don't think, then.

Lena Okay.

Adam And you do- they'd do like other-other sort of community gala events like the Lark in Garston and Walton but there wasn't that many and so Out of the Blue started. And so arguably, it could be the-the [chuckles] oldest festival in the city. But that-- You know, that's a case to argue. But that was about people coming together-

Lena Mm.

Adam -doing music and culture, for bringing people together in a space.

Lena Right.

Adam And I love that.

Lena Yeah.

Adam I absolutely love that. I'm like, you know- And that's why- I-I-

Lena Mm.

Adam -and I think creativity is-is a big part of life. School didn't really work out for me [crosstalk]

Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adam There was only one thing, it was creativity. I- that was a way of-

Lena Mm.

Adam -expressing meself. So anything creative, especially being in a community.

Lena Yeah.

Adam Those two things together.

Lena Yeah.

Adam That's right up my street, that's, you know?

Lena Sure, sure.

Adam : I feel comfortable with that and I wanna get stuck into it and get me teeth into it, you know?

Lena And when you did, uh, Out of the Blue, from '91?

Adam '91. And there-

Lena Was it on every year?

Adam It was two years. It lasted for two years and then nothing.

Lena Right.

Adam And then it wasn't saying "Oh, we'll do it again." It was just the end.

Lena The end. Okay.

Adam And then two-

Lena Because of the unique energies-

Adam Yeah.

Lena -to kind of keep-

Adam Yeah.

Lena -these things going. It's like-

Adam To keep it going. And lot of other things spun off though it-

Lena Exactly.
Adam -and stuff like that. And people move on and people have-
Lena You-- Yeah, yeah. [crosstalk]
Adam -different jobs-
Lena Yeah.
Adam and move away and, you know, um, but then in 19-- 2008 this was the City of Culture-
Lena Okay.
Adam -and that come again and when we went-
Lena Mm.
Adam -first heard the- well, people heard about the news, about we'd got City of Culture, it was, "Well, what's gonna happen?"
Lena Okay.
Adam And the-- One of the things, well, "Why shouldn't we bring Out of the Blue back for 2008?" And that was-
Lema Okay.
Adam : -talked about. And there was a couple of initial meetings that happened, and it didn't really-
Lena Again at the WECC for?
Adam Yeah, at the WECC again.
Lena Okay.
Adam Some of the old team got together, people like Ronny Flood, I think, he was involved in the area in 1991. And, um, and again, it didn't really materialize. It was gonna happen but it didn't quite take off [inaudible 00:06:21] we'll try it again next year, do you know what I mean? And then-- and then it- it- here was a community incident, like, here, which is hard to talk about, where no- there was a-- none of, um, we- there was a- the outside the Shewsy Youth Club the- there was-- there was a fatal. It was a killing, stabbing- [crosstalk]
Lena Stabbing. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Adam Of Joseph Lappin and, uh- [crosstalk]
Lena Yeah, yeah, that's right.
Adam And the people come together over that and said-
Lena Right.

Adam -"Well, you know, enough's enough."
Lena Yeah.
Adam And like we said, "Enough," and we come up with-- we had a-a community forum meeting. We got all the community together-
Lena Right.
Adam -and we said, "Well, you know, we've got to come together about this, this is just not on, what's-- this has gone too far, you know? There's been a couple of violent incidents before that. This is-this is it now." And like we-the-- some were getting-- we didn't have a-a- full-time work issues at the time. That-that was on the-on the wish list about more community engagements and that, and one of the things was, "What about stuff like events? Out of the Blue used to get people involved from the areas-- [crosstalk]
Lena Right, right, yeah. [crosstalk]
Adam Anfield, Vauxhall, Everton-
Lena Yeah, yeah.
Adam Kirkdale. Just get people round the table-
Lena Mm.
Adam -and let's organize Out of the Blue again. Let's come together for that."
Lena Mm, mm.
Adam So for the year later, 2009, we did [inaudible 00:07:17]
Lena 2009. [crosstalk]
Adam a meet-up. 2009.
Lena Right, okay.
Adam And then we did-- I mean, we said, "Well, let's do it-- Let's do it for Joseph." And that's-
Lena Yeah.
Adam -how it come back again.
Lena Great, okay, okay.
Adam And then we've done it every year-
Lena So you've done it [inaudible 00:07:27] [crosstalk]
Adam -since 2009. And we've had a break last year.
Lena Okay, why-why-why?
Adam Yeah.

Lena What happened?

Adam We just- because we just- it was just that we- we just felt like it 'cause we done it every year, we've done seven on the trot.

Lena Right, okay-

Adam [inaudible 00:07:37] [crosstalk]

Lena Okay.

Adam -said, "Let's just have a break this year-

Lena Okay.

Adam -and re-evaluate again." Like, you know-

Lena Okay, okay.

Adam -because we'd moved the sites and stuff like that.

Lena Okay.

Adam So, "Let's just have a break."

Lena Okay.

Adam So we're gotta return next year. [laughs]

Lena Okay, okay, so you've had two-

Adam Yeah.

Lena -three years' break-

Adam Two years.

Lena -or what?

Adam Well, we had-- Yeah, the last one was 2016 so this is actually- this is two years actually, yeah. So-

Lena Okay, okay. But there is something, isn't there though, that-that you need those breaks, I feel. You know, like, because I-I'm- I mean the reason why we are asking these questions is because there is no kind of a sustainable thing.

Adam Yeah.

Lena It's almost like for these community-

Adam Yeah. [crosstalk]

Lena -uh, activities.

Adam Yeah.

Lena You- you know? It's not like a biennial.

Adam No.

Lena You know, that has like-- brought in lots of money and then it's--

Adam That's right, yeah.

Lena -just time is ticking, go over it and employ people-

Adam Yeah.

Lena -or whatever, you know? But this is a bit more, uh-

Adam : It's-

Lena -kind of random people's energies, no?

Adam Energy and utilizing what we've got, you know what I mean? [crosstalk]

Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Adam Communal. You're borrowing stuff, borrowing like things like barriers and stuff like that and then getting the bands coming along and then-

Lena Yeah.

Adam S- and-and it just sort of comes together, you know? We're really-

Lena Mm-hmm.

Adam And it's about-- it is all like meself, completely voluntary, you know? And-

Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah. [crosstalk]

Adam -lots of people voluntary. But you know, like, you know we had like Paula Kearns. She was manager at the WECC. She was paid but like-

Lena Yeah, yeah.

Adam -that was one of their projects at WECC.

Lena Yeah, yeah.

Adam You know what I mean?

Adam But that's, I think, and it was also to build a festival. And like- and I think we made lots of connections throughout the city, especially, with the- when, you know, the Council have been supportive, especially Culture Liverpool.

Lena Okay.

Adam And they got-- they've been great and give us advice how to do it, and they were really pleased with us creating-

Lena Yeah.

Adam -it was like, you know, you're doing it on a shoestring, you do it professional, you do it right. Right through to how the bands and that, how the whole-

Lena Yeah.

Adam -with the event documents, what we have to do-

Lena Mm. Mm.

Adam -so you do it professional. It's just as good as something like, Africa Oyé.

Lena Yeah, yeah, yes. [crosstalk]
 Adam -or something or, you know the Matthew Street Festival. It's just the same.
 Lena Okay.
 Adam Even though we're much smaller. We've got, you know, volunteers. But-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam -you know, but and I think that was the idea-
 Lena Right.
 Adam -just sort of, you know, well, it's about people.
 Lena Right.
 Adam You know, here? Especially with the likes of now because it's full of-- gov-
 ernment, the cuts, their thing.
 Lena Absolutely.
 Adam Out of the Blue. You know, for the likes of us. It wasn't like a, you know,
 where it just comes in a container and it's, "Here- here we go-"
 Lena Okay.
 Adam -here's culture, here's-here's your events and then it goes away again.
 With culture, that's a way to you can train people. You can say-- well, look
 at the whole punk rock ethos, if you like.
 Lena Right, right.
 Adam Do it yourself.
 Lena Right.
 Adam D'you know? Have a go and do it-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam D'you know what I mean?
 Lena Sure.
 Adam Whether it be bands knowing three chords-
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam -or putting a festival on, an event.
 Lena Okay.
 Adam I think it's the same ethos of people coming together. I think it's so im-
 portant-
 Lena Right.
 Adam -and I love being part of stuff like that.
 Lena Yeah.

Adam You know what I mean?
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam And it's about developing me own skills, as well and developing people
 around me.
 Lena Right.
 Adam It becomes a collective thing that happens then. And that energy hap-
 pens. You know? Here.
 Lena And in a way, is this connected somehow to Out of the Blue?
 Adam The Shewsy summer thing?
 Lena Yeah.
 Adam Yeah, it is. Well what we've done is, well, because we have none of Out of
 the Blue this year, well- "We've got a music stage- let's call it, the stage,
 the Out of the Blue music stage." So we're still using the name.
 Lena Sure, sure.
 Adam So we still think its a great-- it's a great name you know, Out of the Blue?
 Lena Absolutely, absolutely. [crosstalk]
 Adam So we'll keep it going. The music stage is Out of the Blue at the Shewsy
 Summer Fair. So it keeps that goal about an event in the park in Everton.
 Lena Mm-hmm.
 Adam -It's important. It's also supports the Shewsy Summer Fair which has been
 going for a long time, you know?
 Lena Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. [crosstalk]
 Adam So- so its about that engaging and connectivity, you know what I mean?

[00:11:05] [END OF AUDIO]

Adam Byrne – actor, community activist, Out of the Blue organiser and socialist.

Steve Shakespeare

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

Look, I'm busy. And part of what makes me busy is the networking I need to do so that I get myself 'out there', known, so that what I do has an impact. Networks are what help me take the raw material of busyness and capitalise on it: generate new busyness, reinvest it, generate, reinvest . . . and all the while extracting the surplus value of my own labour. I am busy making myself busier.

It works because we – and here I mean academics, but it could just as well apply to any number of us neoliberal, self-curating subjects – *believe* it will work. If enough of us believe, enough of us will take it seriously (by our actions, I mean; our cynical disavowals while seated at the back of a compulsory university pedagogical enhancement event are merely the hiss of a release valve). If enough of us take it seriously, the network will work. That means, out of dissemination and difference, a purposiveness without purpose takes hold of us, operationalises all the nodes. That means you. And me. And not those who can't get into the network in the first place, or those who are crushed by its passage (what is empire but a kind of weaponised network? We're just making it more subtle).

So, I get networking. I get that social media has nothing to do with what I might have otherwise wanted to say, or be. I get that conferences are much the same: group performances interrupted by 'papers'.

Still, it's annoying when Gary and Lena write to me to contribute to their new Institute book. It helps if we maintain the courteous pretence that we are not relying on the exploitation of others and our own self-exploitation to further our career.

I guess I know why they have written to me. The union. Yes, the glorious University and College Union, the revolutionary vanguard of the heirs of Socrates and Archimedes. Oh Capital: read our abstracts and tremble!

The union – of which Gary has been branch chair for about a hundred years, during which time I have on and off been secretary (with gaps for various real and imaginary crises). The union is *our* network. And maybe it's a better one. It stands for struggle: for jobs and working conditions, for the hope that higher education won't get spat out and trodden into the pavement of competitive consumerism (the students don't care what you say, a senior manager tells us; they just want a leg up to get a job. Fuck, I'm inspired).

But what is it, actually? This union? People in offices sending stuff out by email, getting things printed? Me in my office trying to think up something funny to

preface another email about how shit things are? People in corridors accosting me and asking ‘did the union agree to this?’. Looking over the table at the grievance meeting, searching for the soul in personnel, the human in human resources? Or is it the more intense collectivity of branch meetings, picket lines? Is this where we transcend to a collective strength and imagination, to a new way of being with each other?

I’d like to think so. I think the reality is often different, as we say our all-too-predictable lines, and run against the hardback covers of our imagined worlds. Still, it is something: a birthing hope in our strength, stepping aside from what is useful, what can be instrumentalised and extracted.

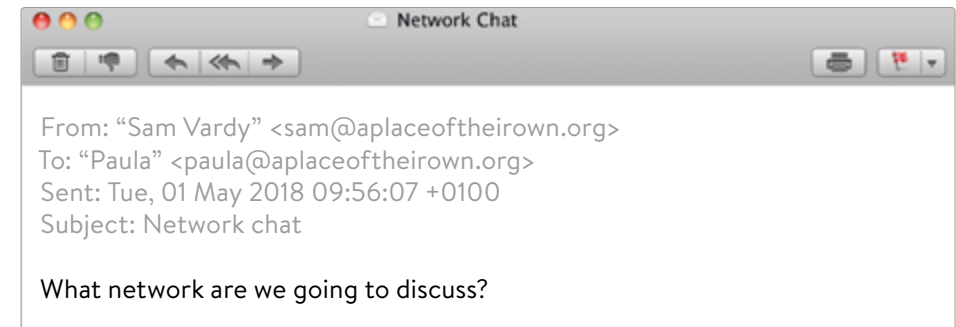
A network: maybe a weave of interconnecting lines, a fragile support for this impossible possibility. One that is not directed towards a future, progressive or otherwise, but one which holds us, which waits with us. A nest work.

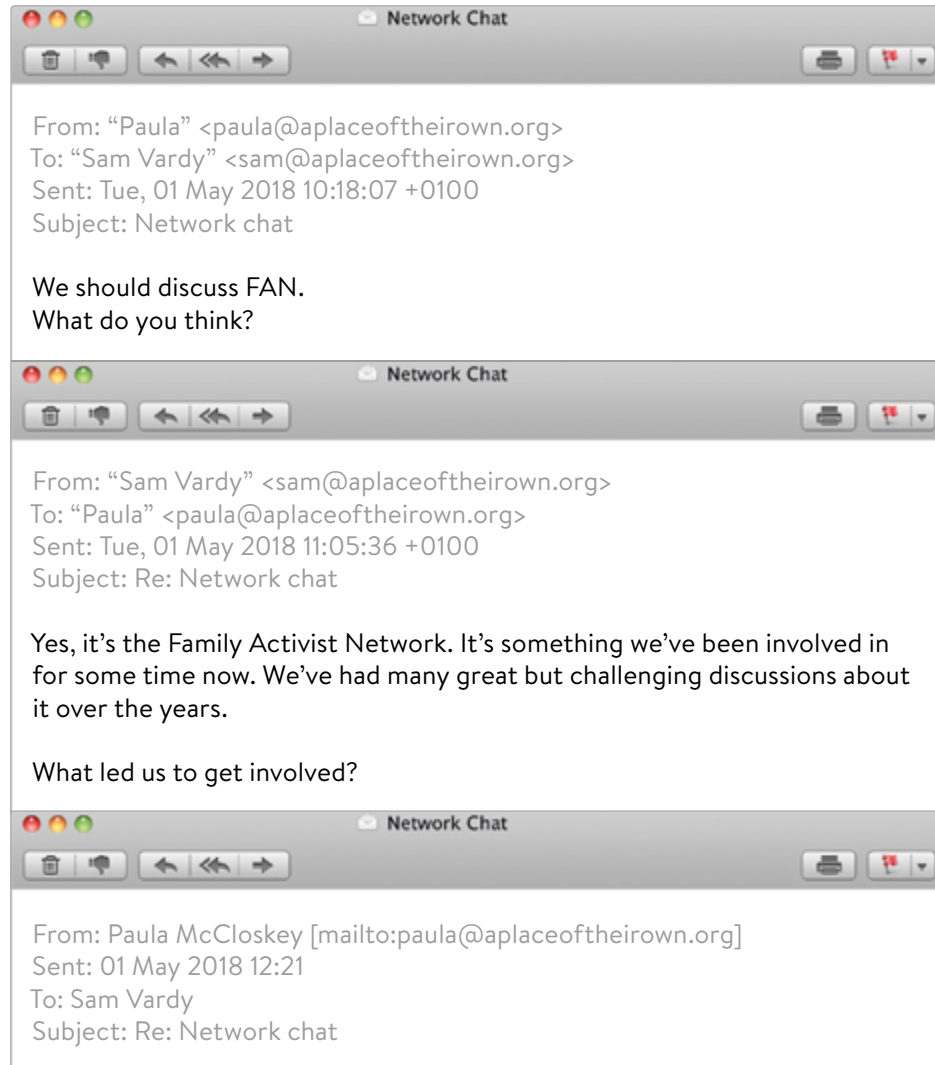
So here I am, wasting my pathetically brief research time, writing something for that bloody book after all. Because it sometimes takes a bit of work to imagine a network that joyously, sensuously fails to work. ‘Ne travaillez jamais,’ wrote the young man, as the cars passed by.

Steven Shakespeare is a philosopher and union activist from Liverpool.

Paula McCloskey and Sam Vardy

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

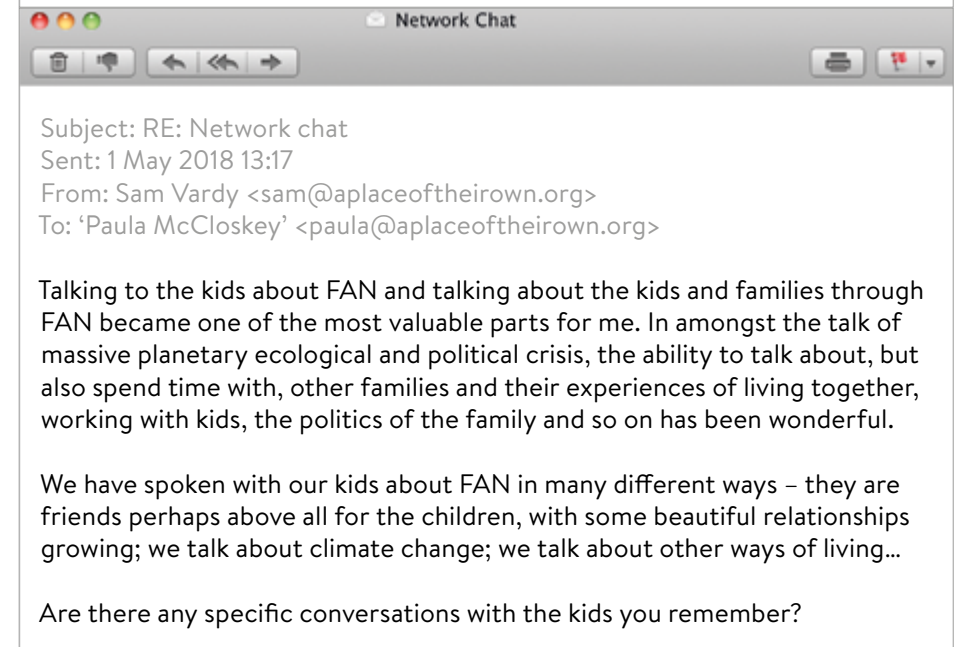


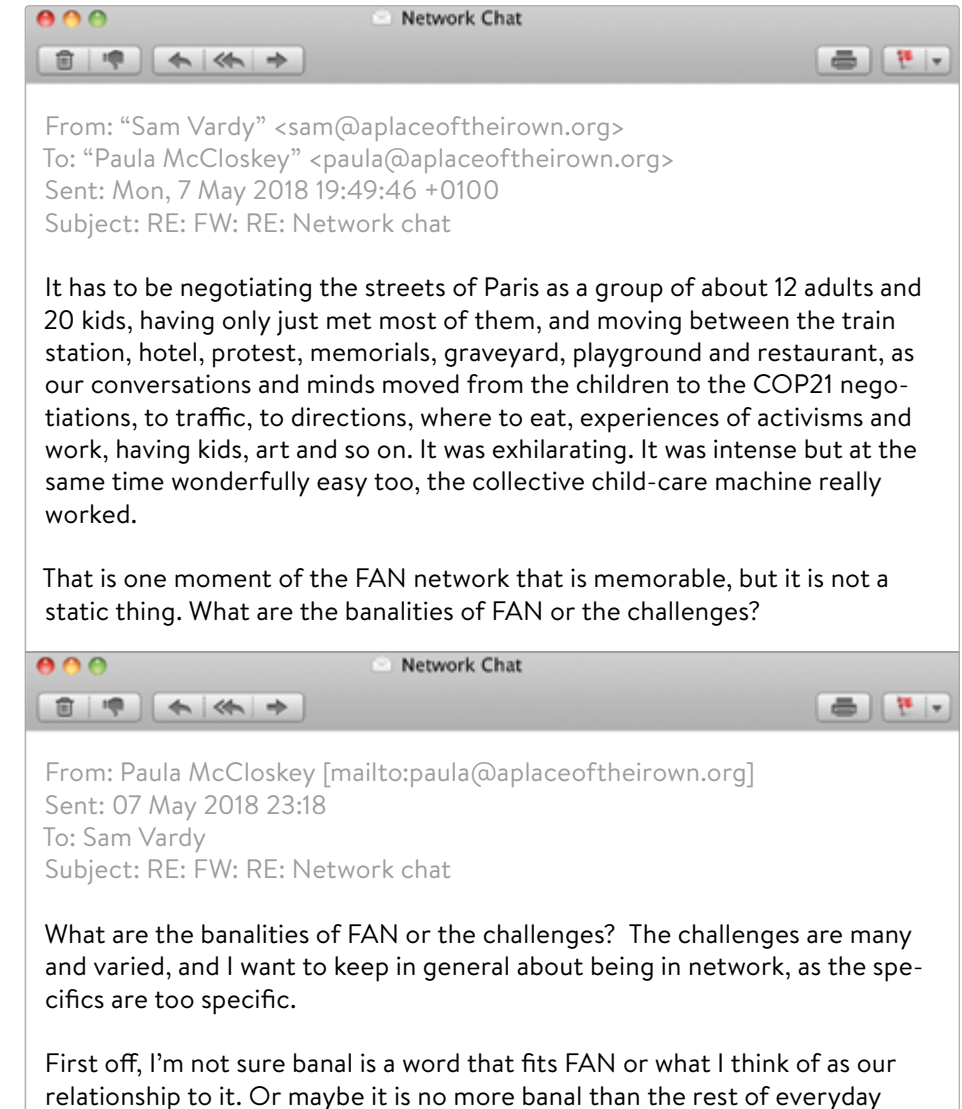
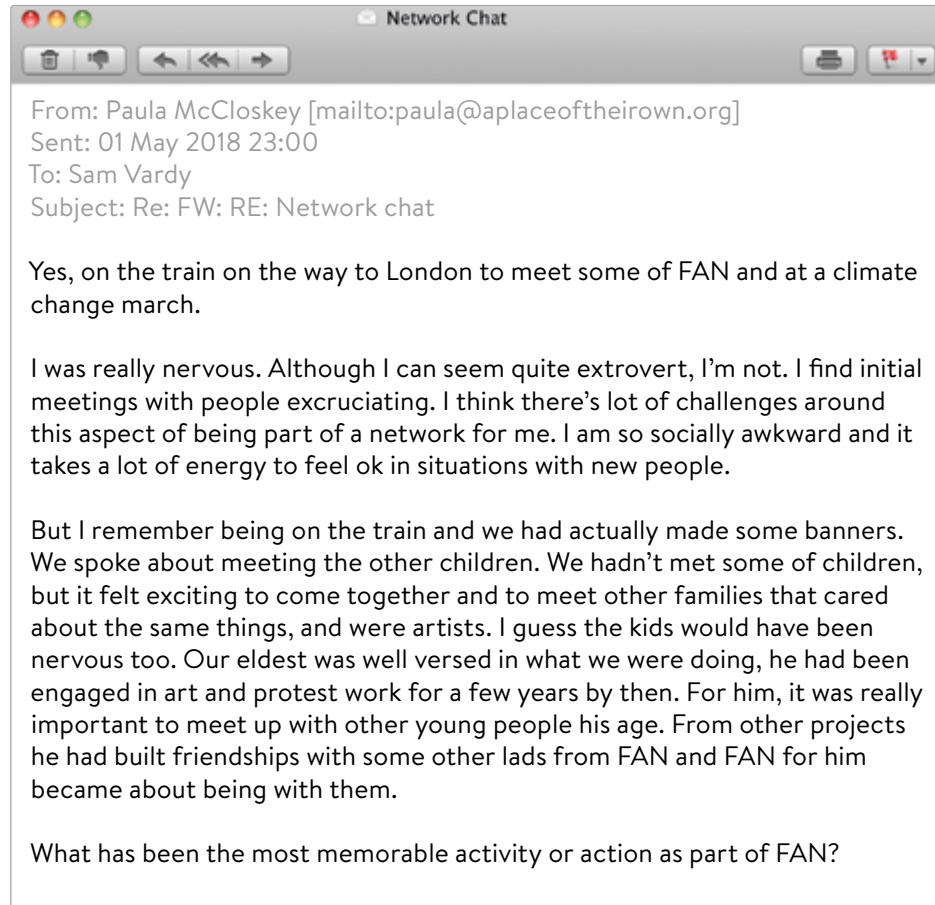


It was 2014 when we were invited by the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home to join the Family Activist Network. The idea was to connect with other families who were artists, and were involved in activist activity.

I remember not really identifying as an activist at that time. But I wanted to be part of something. I wanted to connect with other families who were trying to do similar stuff and I definitely identified with wanting to think and do more as a family concerned with catastrophic climate change.

When and how did we talk to the kids about FAN?
What led us to get involved?





family life. Which in the context of trying to be a network (being innovative, being creative, being active etc.) the banalities of regular life come with you. And it is so annoying to even mention, but all those parenting young children things, like finding food the kids will eat, entertaining them while the adults try and talk.

A lot of these challenges relate to it being with other families with young children. As a loosely defined art activist practice, what we think of as arts practice and activism as a network is different; there is a lot of energy exerted in trying to figure out are the commonalities in order to collectively act.

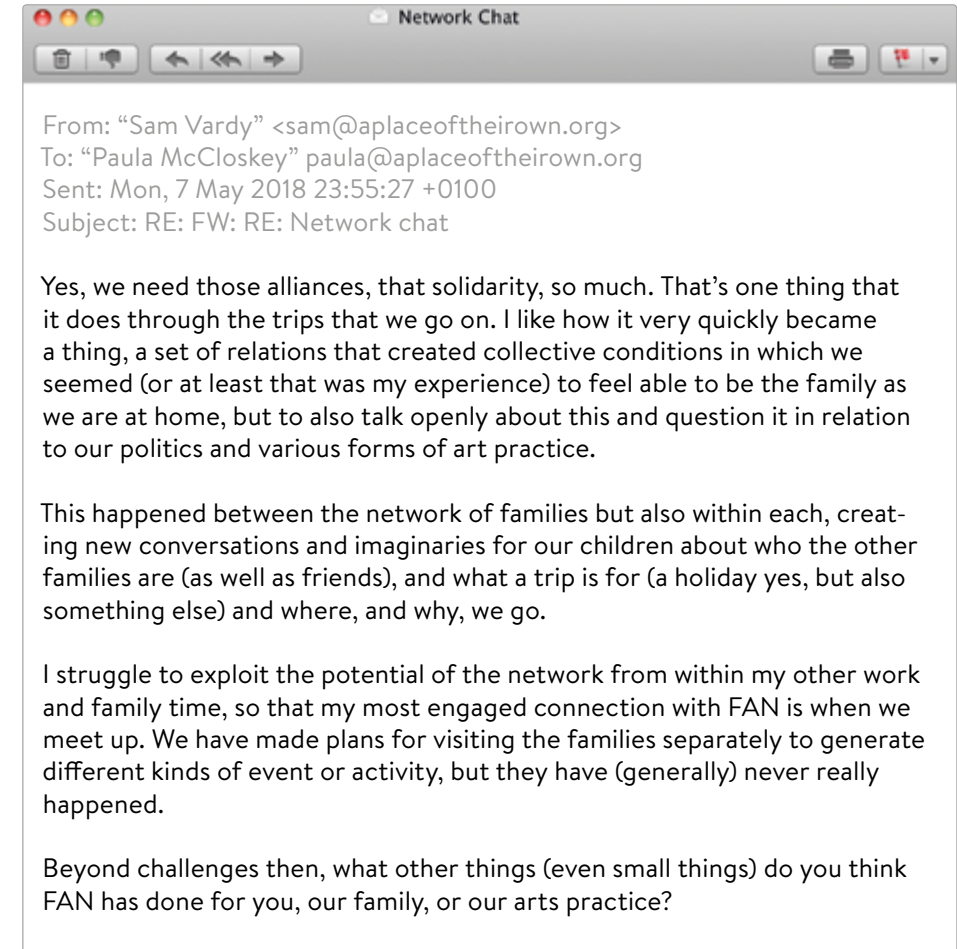
Our differences are of course really rich, but the differences also take time to work-through when we come together for shortish periods of time. I am so caught up in trying to make sense of what we do as a family with *a place of their own* that anything outside of this feels hugely challenging as I have to think about it all in different ways with others, which tries to involve young children as much as possible in the process. And maybe I struggle with more specifics, which may or may not matter for this conversation.

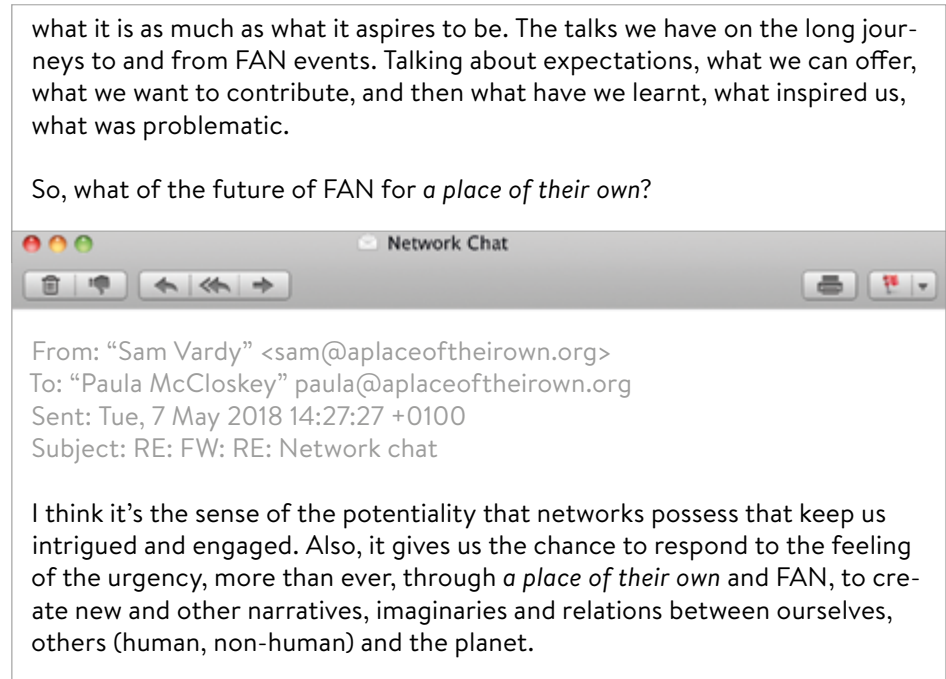
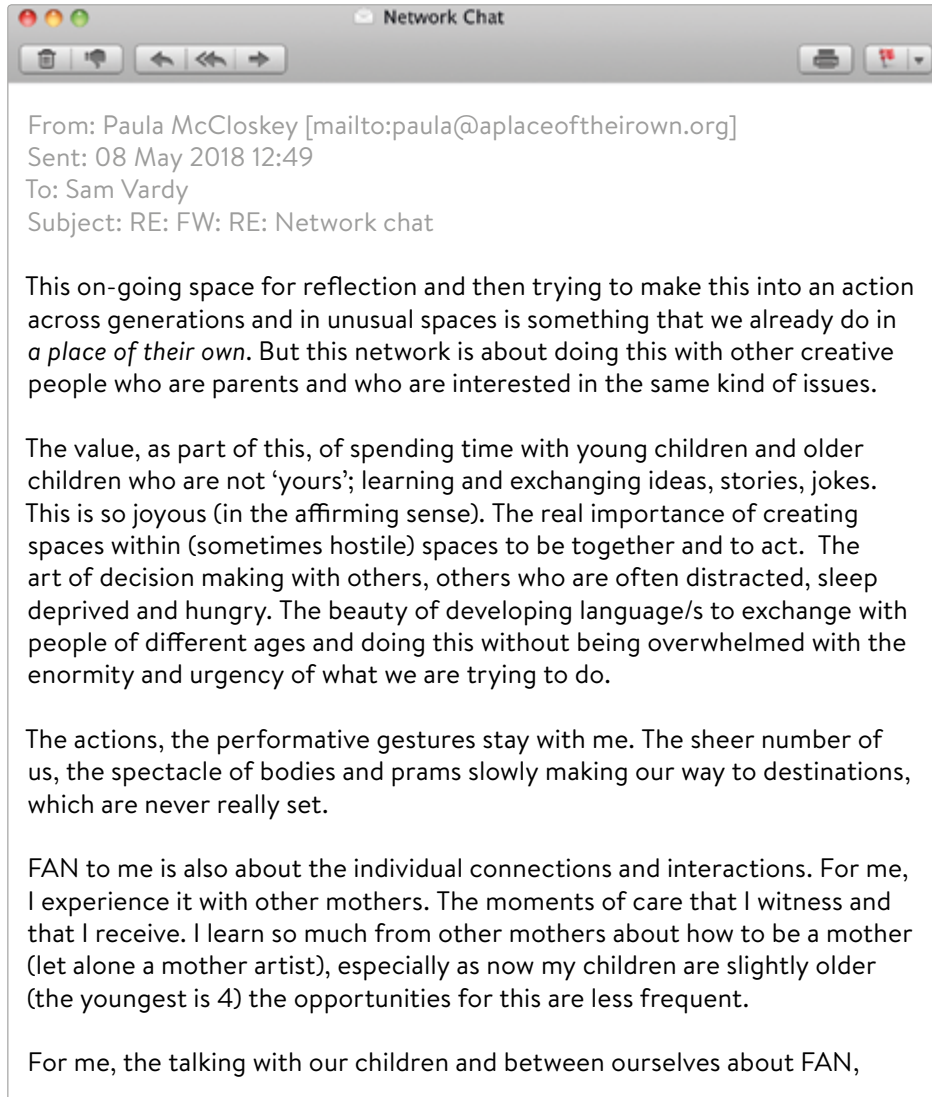
Are we activists? What is the value in what we are doing? Are we too similar? What are our ethics? What are our aesthetics? What is holding us together? How do we develop?

I question it all constantly.

I think I must sound very negative, and I don't mean to be. All of the challenges are also what makes it so joyous and hopeful. We choose to do this, with our children believing in the intrinsic value of coming together and finding that in our struggle to find commonality we may have already formed an alliance. And we do need alliance, however imperfect.

And what about you? How does this network challenge? But also, what does it do, or need to do for you?





a place of their own – art + spatial practice within entanglements of climate, capital, technology + politics.

Tim Jeeves

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

Network Theory (nodal philosophy)

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This is binary code.
Translate it here: <https://tinyurl.com/binarytoromanscript>

Tim Jeeves is an artist whose recent work has been focussed on health.

Ian Byrne

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

How do you negotiate your position in a network/community/group that currently matters to you? Please write about any network you are involved in (not necessarily the one we are together in). We are interested to learn how you cope.

I looked at this question and thought about the groups I'm currently involved in, meaning playing a full and active role.

I'm involved in Liverpool Walton Constituency Labour Party, Spirit of Shankly, Fans Supporting Foodbanks, Football Supporters Federation and Option 6 Youth

Centre building project. I've been thinking about the verb 'negotiate' and how I can understand it in the context of my experience. So I've come up with a working definition for me, which goes like this: 'finding a way through commitment to a community'. For me this consists of 3 red lines (which also act as coping strategies):

- **I actually give a fuck about the aims of the project**

With Football groups what is essential for me is the return to a working class culture within football where affordability and access are key factors. With Fans Supporting Foodbanks it's about supplying food and supporting community cohesion. With Option 6 it's about facilities for our community which we have lost over the years of neo-liberalism. These are all causes that get me out of bed in the morning. That's key for me.

- **All groups must support and assist our class in a positive way**

Corbyn's vision of a grassroots movement which lifts up the chances of our class and communities is inspiring. This has fed my involvement in the Labour movement and justifies the efforts put in.

- **Treat people with due respect, even the naysayers. The vast majority are doing this for similar reasons. Never forget that simple idiom as deviation from it can lead to the end of a successful group.**

The key to all... I always look to fuel myself on positivity and positive actions. Once a group becomes negative it loses its power to inspire people and communities. It is your duty as a member of the group to keep the flame of positivity alive and use that energy to drive advancement of your groups' aims and bring good folk along. And I would add that bit in the question 'matters to you' is everything to me, as every point I made comes back to caring. My advice would be to think carefully and make sure you care enough about a project to ensure you can be arsed to navigate its problems and not to take the easy option and just walk away. If that's not the case then don't get involved as you may become the dreaded negative!

**Ian Byrne – Community/Football Activist, Fans Supporting Foodbanks,
Everton Ward Labour Councillor**

Deidre Donoghue

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

Dear members of the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent At Home,

Thank You kindly, each and every one of you, for extending your very lovely invitation to me to respond to the question of “How do you negotiate your position in a network, or a community group, that currently matters to you?”

First of all I want to let you know that your invitation arrived safely and secondly I wish to apologise for my tardy response time due to several other simultaneous entanglements.

Unfortunately I currently have no other option than to decline your beautiful invitation. This is due to, as it turns out, having fully negotiated myself into a state of a burn-out as the result of several years of continuous high-level full time commitments and negotiations of time, energy and other personal resources to multiple and simultaneously running communities and networks that all dearly matter to me and that I feel very passionate about.

The current state of affairs suggests to me however, that I perhaps am not the best person to respond to the question put forth in your invite and so instead, I now look very much forward to reading and learning from all other people’s responses. As a matter of fact, and if possible, I would like to use the opportunity to add my own question to both, the members of the Institute, as well as any future readers of your upcoming publication:

“Networks and communities require care and time in order to support and sustain their members. In short, networks ‘matter’ as they weave. What kinds of tools do we have, use and need in order to create networks and communities that both symbolically and practically create ethical spaces?”

With Warmest Greetings!
Deirdre M. Donoghue

Deirdre M. Donoghue – mother, artist, scholar, doula,
founder of m/other voices, mothernist

Lois Keidan

How do you negotiate your position
in a network/community/group
that currently matters to you?

When the brilliant artist Dickie Beau was recently asked about his expectations of something he replied that he didn't have any as 'expectations are resentments-in-waiting'.

I sometimes feel the same about some of the more formal networks that LADA is part of, specifically the EU funded transnational Collaborative Arts Partnership Programme (CAPP) involving nine partner organisations, and Live Art UK involving 30 partner organisations. The aims of the networks are wonderful and ambitious, the partners are inspirational and generous collaborators, and many are leaders in their fields. The problem is that I expect too much – I expect CAPP to fundamentally change the nature of, and attitude towards, collaborative practices across Europe and beyond. I expect Live Art UK to address and resolve all the challenges of Live Art in the UK. As neither of those things are going to happen in the ways I'm imagining them, I find myself having tiny feelings of resentment. Amazing things are happening - and will continue to happen – with both these networks, but to really appreciate their achievements and potential I need to lower my expectations, or even have none at all.

It's different with the informal networks that LADA is part of, the groupings of artists, organisers and thinkers who come together around key issues, who collaborate on initiatives around shared values, who pool resources to make things happen, and of course our partnerships with the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home and all who sail in it. I don't really bring huge expectations to these kinds of networks, but what I get from them are a sense of community, of solidarity, and of ...dare I say it... home.

Lois Keidan is the co-director of the Live Art Development Agency (LADA).



EXILE

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

One of the themes that keeps slipping in and out in this book is ‘the other’ (see Couples, Surplus, Network). When we were doing our PhDs we came across Emmanuel Levinas and his concept of the other. Levinas featured in reading groups we set up and sort of haunted all of our thinking. We feel we’re not serious enough about the other, about exile, about how privileged we are. There’s a relationship between how easy everything is for us and how impossible things are for those seeking refuge. We know we’re mixing up all the terms here: exile, the other, migrants, refugees and that does not help. Can we create a space to think this through? What are our responsibilities to others, to the other?

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home are currently collaborating with the Live Art Development Agency on the Study Room in Exile, LADA's satellite study room. The room houses a selection of radical publications in the field of live art and performance.

The launch of the Study Room in Exile took place in September 2015, with a performative paper called 'Study.Room.In.Exile.'. This was written collaboratively between Lena and Gary during their 7-day separation. Lena wrote from the domestic sphere where she digested 7 titles from LADA publications (most of which were donated to the Institute by LADA), whilst Gary wrote from Athens where he attended 'Institutions, Politics, Performance' conference. Gary was concerned with Exile and Lena with Study.

In 2016 Study Room in Exile hosted four public events in four seasons. A study room for all seasons! Our Winter event took place on Friday 29th January 2016: a 'Motherhood and Live Art' gathering. Our Spring event didn't happen but we held two Summer events in June: 'Women of Europe' and 'Study Room in Exile at Green Park' in Athens. Our Autumn event 'The Anarchist Stammer' explored the Liverpool Anarchist Communist Sunday School and took place on 18 September 2016.

In 2017 the Institute consolidated and finished up lots of what we had started in 2016. In Spring, in collaboration with Miffy Ryan, the Study Room in Exile hosted an event called 'Motherhood and Live Art 2: Are we screwing the kids up?', a discussion about processes and ethics in performance work with children. In Summer, in collaboration with Zoë Svendsen, the Study Room in Exile hosted an event 'Women of Europe 2'. Gary and Lena published a book chapter 'At Home and Abroad: The Study Room in Exile' in *Performance and Civic Engagement*, an edited collection of essays and interviews, Palgrave, 2018.

2018 saw the Study Room in Exile participate in two projects: the Library of Performing Rights (collaboration with Lois Weaver, Elena Marchevska, Barby Asante and Live Art Development Agency) and Breaking Bread: On Otherness (a series of conversations with migrant artists and an event at Lancaster Arts including

food and gentle interventions, curated by Katherina Radeva and Alister Lownie). Additionally, in March 2018 the Study Room in Exile hosted Shira Richter's artist talk about what it means to be a feminist artist living/working in Israel. In October 2018 Lisa Alexander and Mary Paterson gifted their book *To You To You To You: Love Letters to a (Post)Europe* and discussed hospitality. The Institute have also been involved in hands-on experience of helping our Gambian friends' children obtain British citizenship with the support of the Law Clinic at the University of Liverpool.

For 10 we have asked artist and researchers Elena Marchevska (collaborator on the Library of Performing Rights) and Katherina Radeva and Alister Lownie (curators of Breaking Bread: On Otherness) to offer their thoughts on Exile.

WHY WE NEED LIBRARIES?

Elena Marchevska

As I child I experienced libraries as magical places. The smell of books, the quiet interrupted only by page turning, soft light on worn-down desks. I loved going to our local library, and rummaging through materials that looked unusual. Newspaper articles, professional journals, catalogues and maps. The unusual configuration was attractive to the curious part of me, it was hard to decipher some of the texts, but to me it was magical. Both the expanded format of what constituted a book, and what counted as knowledge. I was 12 when the local library was shut; the wars started and the city was making drastic cuts in order to make savings. Libraries were definitely unnecessary at that point of imminent economic and political crisis. On my way to school, I always lingered and looked at the books through the windows. Every time I did this, the bitter man selling rakija on the corner across

from the library yelled at me in a drunken voice: 'They should burn them, burn all the books, who needs knowledge when madness like this is allowed.' As months passed, the windows became caked with dirt and dust. But I could see the section with maps and exhibition catalogues, so close to me, but beyond my reach. Unfortunately, both literally and metaphorically, since for five years my family was not able to leave the country. Then one day, the books were all gone... just empty shelves, overturned in the rush to get everything out. To this day, I am not sure where everything was sent.

Maybe everything was burned?

Who needs knowledge?

And what kind of knowledge do we need?

When I started my residency at Live Art Development Agency in December 2016, Lois Keidan pointed me to the right corner of the room. Slightly outside of the existing Study Room collection was a slightly messy archive of catalogues, books and videos. The Library of Performing Rights. In 2006 I was invited to present a paper about my art piece 'Insomnia' for the Performance Studies International 12: Performing Rights. However, my visa for the UK was denied due to lack of finance. The UK embassy in Macedonia judged that as a freelance artist based in a small, poor country, I didn't have enough money to support my trip to London. Of course I was devastated, but as someone who comes from the Balkan region, this decision came as no surprise. The exercise of privilege and order through visa regimes is so normalised in certain parts of the world that rejection or acceptance is just an affirmation of a complex system of politics that guard the European borders.

One thing that I regret about not attending this conference is not being able to get involved earlier with The Library of Performing Rights. The Library was developed for the conference in 2006 by the Live Art Development Agency in collaboration with Lois Weaver and Queen Mary University of London. It is, however, amazing how cyclical life is, and how with this residency I was brought back into

contact with this amazing resource. Here I am, at the start of my residency, in front of The Library of Performing Rights. It contains over 250 publications, videos, DVDs, CD-ROMs, brochures, digital and web-based initiatives submitted by artists, activists and academics from around the world, all of which examine the intersection between performance and Human Rights. Lois is slightly apologetic about the shape of the resource, she says we simply didn't have time to look after it properly. We both agree in a minute that we need to revisit and rejuvenate this initiative. Lois Weaver generously agrees to this, and very quickly we are joined by The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home as well. The Library of Performing Rights was alive again, and had two homes now, both in London and Liverpool.

It is clear that we need this knowledge to be revisited, brought back into perspective. The dust needs to be wiped, the discussions revived, we need to decide if we need to redefine what human rights mean to artists in these mad times. We need this knowledge to survive.

Elena Marchevska is an art practitioner and researcher interested in historical discontinuities.

ON EXILE **Alister Lownie**

The problem with scapegoats was that they didn't work.

Plenty of civilisations tried it, but it turned out that whether you used a real goat, or a carefully selected criminal, or a servant of God, loading society's problems onto one body and sending it away into exile simply wasn't effective in ridding society of evils.

The idea is appealing: by exiling the body, we also exile the problems they embody. But the problems societies face aren't abstract sins (for which purchasing penances - charitable donations in modern vocabulary - may be more effective in any case), they are practical and not at all beyond society's control.

Recognising this, modern scapegoating practices attempt to engage groups demarcated by religion, wealth (or lack of), ethnicity and fecklessness. Acknowledging that exile beyond national borders has been historically ineffective, modern practitioners have inverted the practice: scapegoats kept in popular consciousness through their repeated identification and the careful labelling of the scapegoat group with terms such as ‘migrant’.

This innovation is transformative. To take one example, annual tax bills show each person how their contribution to the state has been spent, and highlights ‘benefits’ as by far the largest area of spend. This serves a dual purpose of demonising the heavy burden of supporting the impoverished, disabled and feckless while simultaneously diminishing the perceived spend on the military.

An insistence on identifiable characteristics of scapegoated groups means it is much easier to recognise who is responsible for stabbing young people in London’s streets, manipulating popular opinion using complex technologies, or maintaining rigid social inequalities. The scapegoats, identified as working against a fairer society, are then repeatedly blamed for society’s problems (such as unemployment, industrial decline and wonky veg). By accepting that the scapegoats cannot effectively be exiled, however, society is given permission to accept these problems as intractable, and turn away from attempting solutions. This means each individual is free to pursue personal gain through manipulation of their assets (information, money, influence) without taint of ‘sin’: the new scapegoats, kept within society, are thus far more effective than those exiled scapegoats of antiquity.

Alister Lownie makes and thinks about theatre as an expression of identity.

ON EXILE

Katherina Radeva

It’s a sunny day in late January. I am sitting at the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home talking with Lena and Alister. We are talking about everything! Absolutely EVERYTHING! It’s glorious!

Towards the end of the day Lena drops this invitation. My heart skips a beat! An invitation to write a thing on exile for the tenth year of the Institute. I am mega delighted and honored.

Lena has been something of an inspiration ever since I met her, years ago, I don’t



Previous pages:
*On Otherness
 Conversation
 Lena and Alister
 in Stanley Park,
 January 2018.*
 Photo by
 Katherina Radeva.

know where, but I do remember the time I was hanging out with her proper and a myriad of brilliant artists at the Bluecoat in Liverpool in 2009 or was it 2008? I think she and Gary had just formed the Institute, the spare room in their council house. I was like - Hell, I wanna go to the Institute.

So, here I am, in late January 2018, years later, in the Institute, with Lena and Alister and lots of cups of tea surrounded by life, art and politics.

Months have passed. I am mid flight! Edinburgh - Sofia! I am headed home for an overall of four days, for my sister's eleventh birthday! The flight is packed, it stinks of sweat and polyester, beer and cheap vodka. To top the atmosphere the man behind me is playing chalda on this phone, out loud. My guts turn! I put on my headphones, Paloma Faith is on singing "I am ready for the Good Life!"

Fuck That. I take my headphones off. I am determined to be more Bulgarian, embrace the gypsy in me of which there is fucking plenty, so fuck it I say! Fuck it! I have become so bloody British, I decide to spend the following five days getting pissed, dancing on chalda, wearing a ton of make-up, stuffing my bra with additional socks, pouting my lips at every opportunity and pretending I am a porn star in her mid thirties. I reckon it probably won't last, I feel so voiceless, quiet and powerless right now but fuck it, wouldn't it be great!

Home! Wouldn't it be Great?
 Home! Wouldn't it be Great?

It began as typed faxed letters. My dad would type the letter on the computer, then print it, then fax it over to the main office to the college where I was studying. Then it turned out that my tutor was reading (in Bulgarian!) the faxed letters so I asked my dad to hand write them which he did. I would get the faxed hand written letters usually left on my desk. I would read them through tears... then read them again, then cry some more. Then go out for a walk. Sit on a bench, cry some more.

Homesickness and exile defines my coming of age! It has shaped everything for me. Immigrancy, home, otherness, nostalgia define my life. I look at everything

through that frame. The frame of 'work twice as hard', 'despite it all', 'coming to get our jobs'- these notions have framed everything and it is only now I am beginning to break the frame, opening its corners gently, pushing from within!

Then email kicked in. I would go to the library and have fifteen minutes to send an email and read a couple. I used to type very slowly. Language and type was weird. We wrote in Bulgarian, which uses the cyrillic alphabet, but transliterating to the latin letters on the keyboard. It was stuff like:

Zdraveite mamo i tati. Dnes v kolega imashe poshar, obache vsichko beshe ok. Predadox si proekta za skulptura i poluchix nai visokata otsenka. Anglichanite izobshto ne mogat da risuvat. Moiata priatelka Georgie me pokani na gosti u tiaux i v petak ste xodia s neia i neinoto gadge v Bristol. Ste vi pisha pak v ponedelnik. OBBBBBBBBBiiiiiiiiicham vi! Tseluvki za Zaharka, kaka Katia

Hello mum and dad. Today at the college there was fire but everyone was ok. I handed in my sculpture project and I got the highest grade in my course. The English are shit at drawing. My friend Georgie invited me over to hers and on Friday I will go and visit her and go over to Bristol with her and her boyfriend. I will write again on Monday.
 Iiiiiiiiiiiiiii LooooooooooooooooOve you! Kisses to Zahary. Big sister Katya

Then, I left college and started going to the city library. There was a lot more competition for the free fifteen minutes internet slots, but again, I waited and waited and waited to send a short 'I am fine' email.

Home!

It used to be possible to attach a photo but because I didn't have my own computer it was a lengthy process. Take a photo, develop the film, go to the library, scan the developed photo, wait for the fifteen minutes free internet slot and try to figure out how to attach it, quick and send.

This continued for years, until in 2005 my now ex husband and I bought a laptop

together. Emails got lengthier and digital technology allowed a cable to transfer the photos from a digital camera onto the laptop. BOOM!

Soon after, skype kicked in. Mega brilliant. Just a couple of years later British Telecom offered a plan for free landline calls to countries in the European Union, this meant that during the time of living in London I called home almost every evening to chat.

Then my sister was born and I saw her growing through skype. I began to relax a little and started to travel a little more within Europe, I started sending postcards from everywhere to Home. It was a way of my family seeing what I was seeing. I mean, obviously not really, one's own experience is never the same as an experience translated using words.

An experience translated.

I have been searching for home ever since I arrived in the UK at 16. Home meaning, my place in this society, here, now. And then about a year or so ago I stopped. I stopped searching. The frame shifted. From wanting to belong, I realised I never will. In the process I have also become an alien in my own culture, in the culture I came from. My language fading and as my language fades, the rose tinted lenses looking at the land and the culture are getting rosier.

Now, I am in a process of accepting, a process I will probably never complete. I am now of two places, of two languages, of two exiles, of two homes, of two cultures which in themselves are a multiplicity of many, all those that came, settled and went and those after them that came, settled and moved on.

It's a split screen reality - of what I imagine and what it actually is. My exile was my immigrant experience, now it is my experience as an immigrant I can't change.

Home! Wouldn't it be Great?

I am mid flight. Between places, between cultures, between languages, between

people. An exile of society desperate to define definites, to mark, to label, to demarcate me from you, boundaries are there to be crossed. So, watch me dance to that chalga, watch me get pissed, watch me embrace the ugly and the dirty and the anarchy.

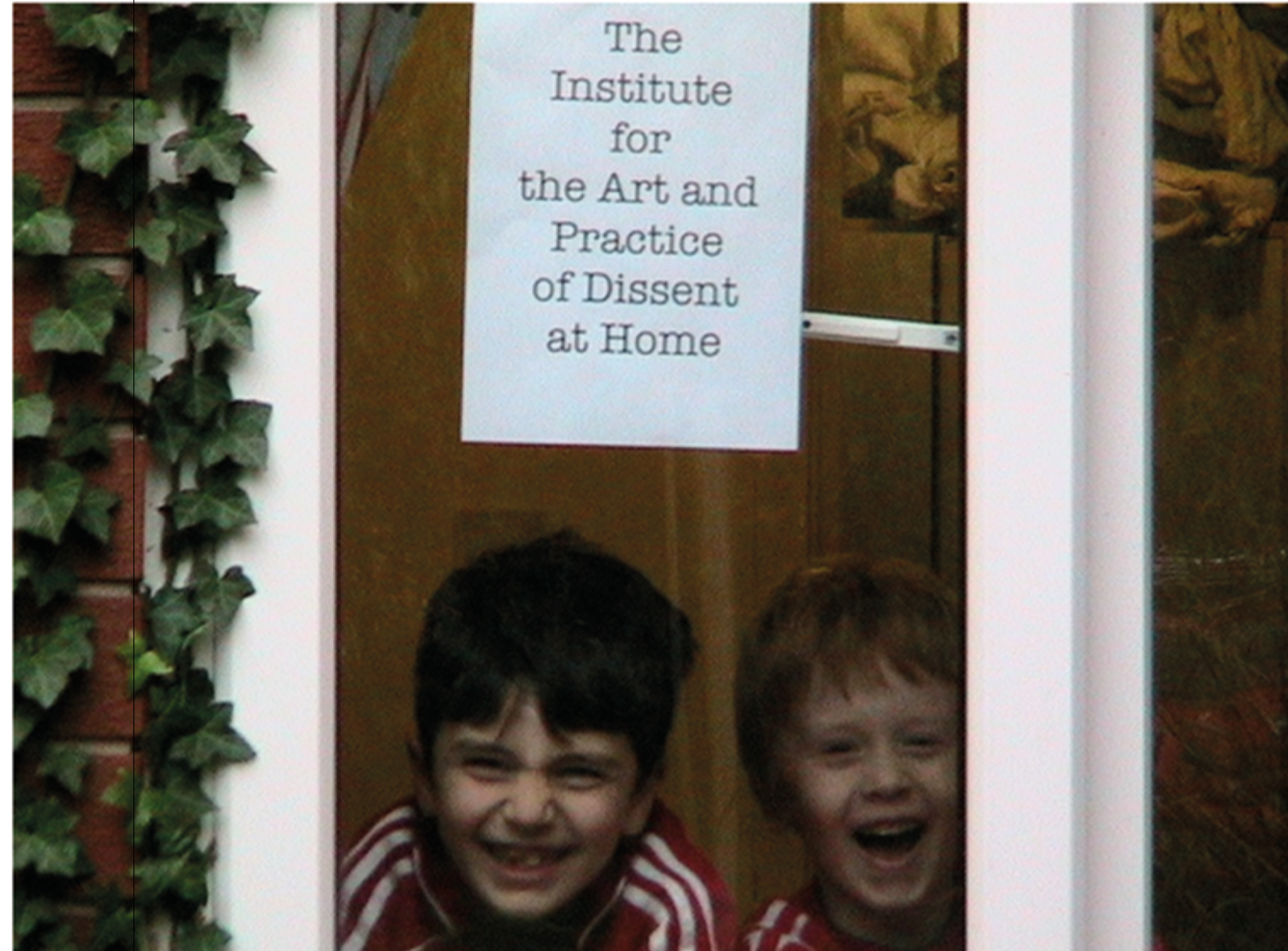
Katherina Radeva creates intercultural dialogues in theatrical forms.

08
ARCHIVE

[HTTPS://WWW.DISS](https://www.diss)

[ENTATHOME.ORG/](https://www.diss)

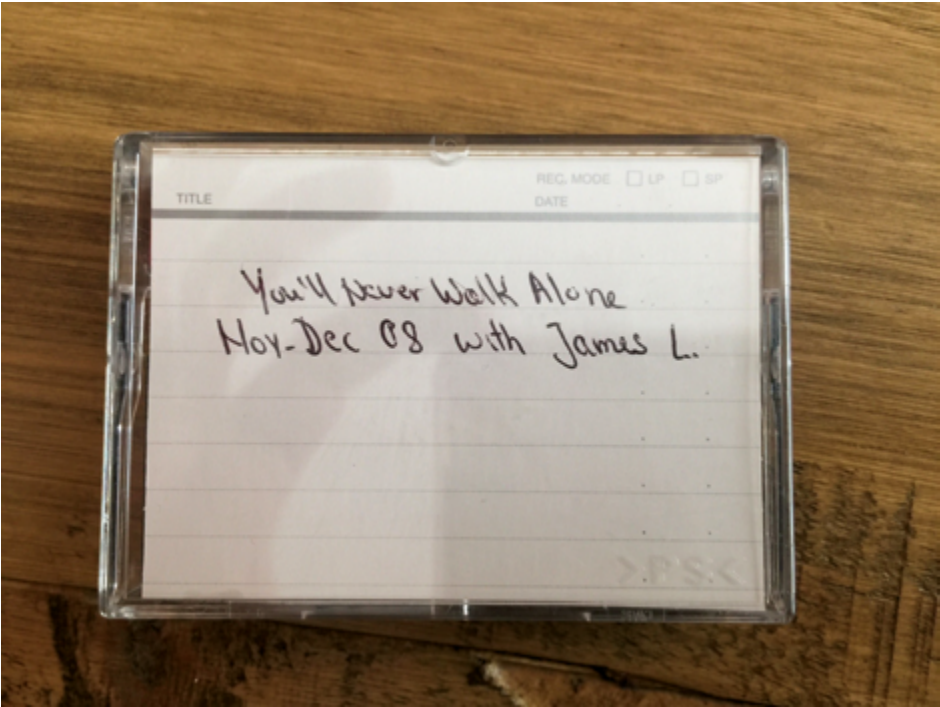
Edit





The Institute's physical archive.

ARCHIVE



Tour of Anfield with James Leadbitter, 2008.



ENERGY

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

We have been worried about our personal levels of energy. We are also in a panic about energy use and climate breakdown. We tried to tackle these big issues in collaboration with organisations like Artsadmin and Platform and networks, like the Family Activist Network and more recently, Artists4Corbyn.

Since 2009 at the invitation of Mark Godber the Institute participated in every 2 Degrees festival at Artsadmin up to and including 2015. We came up with names for our collaborations: **A Promising Family Picnic** (2009); **The Family Cut Out** (2011); **Families in Transit** (2013); **Family Activist Network Recruitment Day** (2015).



*A Promising
Family Picnic
(2009)
Two Degrees,
Artsadmin,
London.*

We also went to Copenhagen for the United Nations Conference of Parties 15 'COP15' in 2009 and Paris for 'COP21' in 2015.

In 2009, it was thanks to our participation at *C Words: Carbon, Climate, Capital, Culture* by Platform at the Arnolfini in Bristol that we got the means to travel to Copenhagen along with other art activists that year, as our banner proclaimed: 'With Our £2000 Artist Fee We Are Going to Cop15'.



*With Our £2000
Artist Fee We Are
Going to COP15
(2009),
The Institute
residency at
*C Words: Carbon,
Climate, Capital,
Culture* exhibition,
Arnolfini, Bristol.*



Family Activist Network in front of Hotel Baby (2015), COP21 Redlines Action, Paris.

In 2015, for COP21 we set up the Family Activist Network, engaged in snail mail correspondence with a number of families, raised £4372 and all slow travelled to Paris. This became part of a new phase of work for us.

For this chapter, James Marriott from Platform wrote 'The Commonwealth of Wind – Taking Possession of the Windfarms'. This is an early draft of a passage from the book *Crude Britannia - How Big Oil shaped a nation's past and future* by James Marriott & Terry Macalister. The script was performed by the Artists4Corbyn collective on a boat under the wind turbines of Burbo Bank in Liverpool Bay. It was also performed at The World Transformed in September 2018. Zoë Svendsen, who came along to Burbo Bank trip, from Metis Arts and a part of Family Activist Network wrote to us a hand written letter on energy, and sent a post card 'The People Will Possess The Wind' inspired by our performance at Burbo Bank.

THE PEOPLE
WILL POSSESS
THE WIND

THE COMMONWEALTH OF WIND TAKING POSSESSION OF THE WINDFARMS **James Marriott**

JAMES The 'Discovery' slips through the lock gates of Liverpool Marina and Gary Flint steers her out into the broad brown stream of the Mersey. The tide has just come on to the ebb and the current helps this fibre-glass catamaran out into Liverpool Bay.

Ours is a strange crew. There is Gary and Lena, from the Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home. The children chose not to come, and Tesla Spinoza, the dog, wasn't allowed on board. There is Tim and Ken from Walton Constituency Labour Party. Terry is here and Zoë with her recording equipment, both from Cambridge. And there's me from Platform.

CHORUS “We are all excited by our first adventure at sea, together.”

JAMES We have come not to pull Cod, Whiting or Ray from the murky sea but to take possession of the Burbo Bank Offshore Windfarm.

It is not long before we catch a glimpse of our prey, the array of wind turbines standing pale on the western horizon. From this moment we never lose sight of them. Behind us the terraces and tower blocks of the city stretch away to the north and south.

There is a steady Force 2 from the North East. The breeze is cold in this early hour, but the wind with tide makes for a calm passage. We leave Burbo cardinal buoy to port, the boat alters its bearing and we settle in for the 40 minutes it will take us to reach the base of the turbines.

Lena calls us together by unfurling a white mainsail banner whose scarlet lettering reads ‘The people will possess the wind’.

In full voice Gary reads verses from Norman MacCaig’s ‘A Man in As-synt’.

GARY “Who owns this landscape?
*Has owning anything to do with love?
 For it and I have a love-affair so nearly human
 we even have quarrels. –
 When I intrude too confidently
 it rebuffs me with a wind like a hand
 or puts in my way
 a quaking bog or a loch
 where no loch should be. Or I turn stonily
 away, refusing to notice
 the rouged rocks, the mascara
 under a dripping ledge, even
 the tossed, the stony limbs waiting.*



Tim Jeeves,
 Lena Simic and
 Gary Anderson
 performing
 at Burbo Bank
 Off Shore
 Wind Farm,
 Liverpool Bay,
 2018.

*I can't pretend
it gets sick for me in my absence,
though I get
sick for it. Yet I love it
with special gratitude, since
it sends me no letters, is never
jealous and, expecting nothing
from me, gets nothing but
cigarette packets and footprints.*

*Who owns this landscape? –
The millionaire who bought it or
the poacher staggering downhill in the early morning
with a deer on his back?*

*Who possesses this landscape? –
The man who brought it or
I who am possessed by it?"*

LENA "Who owns this seascape? The millionaire who bought it or we who are possessed by it? What does it mean to be possessed by the sea? What does it mean to take possession of the wind turbines that dominate this western horizon?"

TERRY "We can see before us Burbo Bank Windfarm and Burbo Bank Extension Windfarm. The first array of 90 wind turbines had been erected by the Danish state owned company DONG by 2007. The second array, of 258 generators, was commissioned by the same corporation in 2017. Together the blades of these machines generate on average 256 mega watts of electricity. Burbo Bank has the capacity to power 230,000 households. When every home and office, every school and shop is properly insulated and efficiently lit and heated, then these turbines will provide enough power for all citizens of Liverpool and beyond."

LENA "How did DONG, which has since changed its name to Ørsted, seize this resource in the first two decades of this century?"

ZOË "The bed of Liverpool Bay belongs to the Crown Estates. Ultimately it is the Queen, of course guided by the government, who grants the right for Ørsted to erect its turbines here. This wind that blows from the coast of Lancashire across the sea towards Ireland, belongs to everyone and no-one."

TIM "A platoon of accountants marshalled the loan from a general staff of international banks who financed Ørsted to construct these machines. Now Ørsted sells power to the Big Six electricity corporations who go house-to-house collecting their profits on the bills of millions of households and businesses across the UK. And yet more than 1 in 7 Liverpool households live in fuel poverty!"

JAMES We are getting close now. The extraordinary towers rise above us. Their monstrous blades slice though the air. They sing.

Wooh Wooh Wooh
 Wooh Wooh

GARY "Every part of each turbine was loaded on barges at the Cammell Laird dockyards in Birkenhead and pulled by tug on the same sea route that we are following. With the aid of cranes of outlandish size the towers were lifted into place and fitted onto concrete foundations sunk deep in the mud bed of the Bay. At the pinnacle of each pillar was fixed the generating unit onto which three blades were attached."

LENA "How can we have not noticed the building of these massive structures? Once the western horizon was a grey line, now it is dotted with an army of machines that suck money from the movement of air. That same breeze was the power that filled the sails of the trading ships that made the fortunes of the merchants of this city."

Burbo Bank
Off Shore
Wind Farm,
Liverpool Bay,
2018.



ZOË “How are we to harness the common resource of the wind that rocks our boat on the Bay? How are we to harness it for the common good? How can we ensure that the money gathered from the bills of families and companies is turned to repair buildings and seal them from the Winter cold and Summer heat?”

TERRY “What if the land and sea shift from being spaces under corporate control, utilised in generating return on capital, to places under common control, common ownership? The common-land and the common-sea.”

GARY “What is now the property of Ørsted will have to become the property of the people of Liverpool. The rights that the Crown and government hold over the seabed of the Bay will have to become the common rights of those that live along this coastline.”

TIM “What is the benefit of ‘control’ over a resource, over a place, without a sense of ownership through the heart? A sense of possession. Before ownership comes possession. And we have come to here today to help possess these windfarms. To grab them in our imaginations, to let them seep into our dreams, and fill our daily thoughts.”

JAMES Someone has been silent for the voyage but now speaks up.

KEN “Thirty years back the Merseyside band, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, released their song ‘Stanlow’. They used a wild track recording of a pump at the Stanlow Refinery to create the base rhythm of the piece. To the beat of the machine Andy McClusky sang:

*We set you down
To care for us
Stanlow”*

JAMES Now we will record the blades of turbine number seven on Burbo Bank Windfarm to provide the base rhythm for a track of some future sound.

The captain cuts the engine and boat begins to gently rock. With headphones on and staring intently at her digital recorder Zoë holds the microphone above her. We stand silent.

Wooh Wooh Wooh
 Wooh Wooh

A short while passes with the blades swooping above us.

The engine is restarted and we turn for home. We have gathered what we came for. Tesla Spinoza the dog would have howled.

The possession and occupation of the windfarm has begun. The resources of the air are coming back into common ownership.

CHORUS “The people will possess the wind. The people will possess the wind.
 The people will possess the wind. The people will possess the wind.”

James Marriott – artist, activist, naturalist – works as part of Platform.
www.platformlondon.org



‘The People Will Possess the Wind’ sail and banner, 2018.

A LETTER ON ENERGY

Zoë Svendsen

6 December 2018

To the Institute of the ^①
 Art & Practice of Dissent
 at Home,

A letter on energy — the energy that in modernity, since its advent over a century ago, has come to be figured as our life blood, bringing our cities to vibrancy, lighting our stages, powering our productivity, enabling speed, allowing us to imagine there can be an everlasting acceleration. Traffic buzzes & we feel the pulse of the city, the lights go on & we feel safe at home.

All this — underpinned by the

extractive force of fossil fuel ^②
energy. The feeling of connection
with others becomes synonymous
with electric flow, and 'keeping
the lights on' - with civilization.

In modernity we need to use
things up — to extract, transact
& chuck — for our sense of power
to be served. Modern life is rubbish:
the Britpop mantra of the late
20 takes on a different sense:
without rubbish, we wouldn't feel
the power of excess, of discard. We
leave the lights on because it
implies we can afford to waste —
and wealth is power: where

the lights are on is where the
party is. It is a narrative of
progress, from 'developing' to
'developed'; that is in fact making
parasites of those of us living
in so-called 'developed' countries.

So what else might be possible?
There are good pragmatic reasons
for public ownership of energy. —
lower costs, greater efficiency, more
investment in infrastructure, smoother
& quicker transition to zero carbon.
But there are cultural-psychic
ones as well, implying nothing
less than a complete transformation
in our recognition of what power is.

④ Neighbourhood renewable energy collectives might sound prosaic, but they represent a radical alteration in our sense of self. How? It's in their invitation to a distributed yet localised and visible co-responsibility; it's in the proximity to energy sources, making the use-produce-to-use axis clear; it's in their action of drawing down energy rather than using it up; it's in their requirement that neighbours relate to one another rather than undertake individual transactions with anonymous corporations and the

grid. And if we can co-produce energy with our neighbours, what else might we co-produce?

And what if this neighbourly exchange is coupled with a complete transformation in all energy provision? THE PEOPLE WILL POSSESS THE WIND — what if the power of the wind that blows off our shores is returned to those who live within, rather than being harnessed to profit? ~~What if~~ What if areas without access to local energy independence are provided for by our abundance of offshore wind? What if ecosystem —

⑥
sensitive care is taken of the positioning of wind farms, and those silent blades — radically silent, even in close up (as we heard, or rather didn't hear, at Bwbo Bank), turn in aid of equality in access to energy? What if the abundance of that energy didn't enable more for a few, but allowed each of us an energy entitlement for our basic needs? What if, beyond that entitlement, excessive uses of energy had to be paid for proportionately? We'd quickly get more efficient:

⑦
because of course the challenge is not only to free the winds from the shackles of corporate financial models, but also to ensure that the perception of energy provision as a right does not relegate it to another de-valued ~~trans~~away.
Such a sense of energy could help steer us beyond the sea-surge of ethnicity-based, running-scared nationalism, into calmer waters. Waters that might generate a renewed sense of collective self: a geographically-powered sense of us bound together not by background, but by being

that island's current residents,
encircled by a sea over which
flows a power we take pride in
harnessing for the common good. If
just 2% of the world's winds
were transformed into energy, it
would cover the current electricity
needs of everyone on the planet.

& this is an era when energy-
use is rising — and carbon
emissions as well, in defiance
of global agreements and the
small scale actions of millions
of individuals, groups and cities
to alter their practices. Just
think of that power, blowing

away, blown away, that could
be drawn down to scale up that
transformation.

Once energy is about harnessing
rather than consuming, and
distributing rather than selling,
energy is no longer a commodity.
If energy is no longer a commodity
to which access is withheld for the
generation of profit, it becomes
possible to dream a wind-powered
world into being. In this wind blown
redistribution, there is a symbiotic
relation between energy, power and
life — one in which human power
means not being licenced to

abdicate responsibility, to waste,⁽¹⁰⁾
or to destroy, as at present, —
but one in which human power
means efficacious + attentive
action — making & enabling.

I think this is what people
mean when they speak of
energy democracy.

Very best to
you all,
Zoë

Zoë Svendsen – theatre maker concerned with the contemporary – in particular,
climate change and capitalism.

10

SURPLUS

SURPLUS

Gary Anderson and **Lena Simic**

This book is too much. It shouldn't exist. It's here as a surplus, 10%. It's beyond our means. The writing of this book happened on Tuesdays in 2018, 9am – 12:30pm, but sometimes we missed some of the Tuesdays due to work obligations, and holidays; sometimes the work spilled into different days, even when this was rare. We tried to be consistent in our allocation of time and work. We tried to stick to doing this in 10% of our work time.

On one Tuesday in April 2018 we sat down and did a review of a surplus event from each year in the past decade, the ones that exhausted us that particular year. On one Tuesday in October 2018 we decided to provide each one of them with 10

words, focussing in particular why it was ‘too much’, a surplus. In November 2018 we edited the 10 words.

We wondered what it was that made these Institute projects ‘too much’? Was it the amount of time we committed to them, the children’s insistent nagging, the juggling of arts and parenthood, the intensity of people we invited into our world, the impossible encounters we forged, the sheer ambition of the task, an expectation, a demand that was too grand, a different kind of desire which took us elsewhere? Each project is entirely different and yet produces a similar kind of exhaustion, something extra, a surplus to us, a kind of dissent at home.

- 2008 **Miss Julie in Utopia** – Cathy, rehearsals every night, learning all the lines, at home
- 2009 **A Couple of Attempts at Slow Travel** – children, arguments on Paris train, corkscrew, unreachable Blackheath Climate Camp
- 2010 **Macbethmachine** – Ben, Britt, Dan, Lorena, Penny, Tim, ambition, inward intimacy, heteronormativity
- 2011 **The Institute in the Empire** – children, drive, motels, pure excess across the New Deal road
- 2012 **40th Birthday** – children, everyone, marathon-performance night, Gabriel vomiting, cheese, partying, conflict
- 2013 **Five book** – squashing five years into one book, unfinished, took ages transcribing
- 2014 **The Anarchist Communist Sunday School** – young families, unsolvable differences inside group dynamics, boredom around democracy
- 2015 **Will** – Gary’s Mum dies, project half-realized, no grief training, DIY funeral
- 2016 **4 Boys [for Beuys]** – constant delays, rethinking the design, making children remember their activism
- 2017 **War and Peace** – Fern, Jane, Jen, Lorena, Natasha, Pete, Phil, some lost, unfinished

For this last chapter we asked Lorena Rivero de Beer, our closest collaborator on the Institute projects over the years, to give us her perspective on ‘Surplus’. Gary and Lena also have a correspondence on the theme.

A PERFORMATIVE EXPLORATION OF A SURPLUS MANIFESTATION AT THE INSTITUTE FOR THE ART AND PRACTICE OF DISSENT AT HOME

Lorena Rivero de Beer

Part 1. The presentation of the case.

Voice 1 Let’s start with the recent context. A few weeks ago I received an email from Lena (and Gary) inviting me to contribute to the book 10 on the subject of surplus. The email said they realised my contribution was missing and also said there was a very quick deadline... with an “I know” acknowledging comment on it.

Uff... I wrote in the responding email, isn’t it really like asking me to write about jouissance?

And thought, are you asking too much of me?

Voice 2 Surplus seems to me like a nice politically charged word, while jouissance is more dirty, self obsessed and privileged...

Voice 1 As I write this I can picture Gary and his notion of life as surplus and as such beautiful, the comfort of excess; profoundly settled, in his unsettledness. And Lena, how do I picture her? Angry, expansive, somehow more difficult to pin down, a question always emerges for me, in terms of desire... what does Lena want? And myself, I seem to be pictured as being all about death (thus jouissance, excess, the need for castration, lack...)

Voice 2 There's a triangle here, not just a polarity... It's always been incestuous between us - and that's not a judgement! - incestuous in terms of knowledge, knowing, being known, at least so far!

Voice 1 And it's interesting, I think, how I came in contact with the Institute 10 years ago. I was about to leave behind a life that felt too much, too wild, too unrooted, too tiring... I fell in love and decided to move up north, I wanted to find a home that was not fully temporary. And like many broken artists I know, I wanted roots and yet was profoundly frightened about that not being enough. I mean, I was also scared about practicalities, jobs and general survival but somehow there was another dimension that felt more vital. Where in Liverpool could I find a space to express the surplus? Where would creative transgression be located? The Institute became a great source of it. So difficult...

I always experienced an impossible demand in my encounters with the Institute, a demand to be myself in its full potentiality and at the same time to not transgress, to be a dutiful friend.

Voice 2 I was not. They weren't either.

Voice 1 I think that those are similar demands like the ones they demand of their own family. Its impossibility, it's too much. Which goes together with productivity and intensive learning, a sort of joy.

In my encounters with them I felt as if the accumulation, the potentiality, brought us constantly to the edge of a cliff, and we fell, or rather we were stuffed, we went beyond need, we had to then go our separate ways for a while.

Voice 2 Energy is dripping out of me. I should never have started writing about this impossibility. Yet I am. And there is definitely enjoyment in it.

Part 2. An explanation

Voice 3 There's always a question looming for me, a question that I also believe to be part of the Institute's structure. What does it mean to take responsibility for one's life?

That's complex enough if I take that question at face value but if the question takes into account that I can't really know, that there's a great deal of unconscious motivations I can't know about, then responsibility enters that space in which I have to acknowledge management of the unknown and things such as surplus. And it is at that space where surplus translates for me into jouissance. Of course there is the factual surplus but that seems to call for redistribution or forms of containment that in essence stop it being surplus. I am interested in the surplus that remains surplus and that is needed to be such. That is, the need to transgress the prohibition imposed on my enjoyment - which in this context I suspect is the enjoyment of thinking, of knowing.

Voice 1 I have a clear memory of being at the Institute's old house in Bright Street, sitting on a brand new black and red sofa discussing art and politics and experiencing something that made me feel there was no limit, we could just sort it out, it was just a matter of time.

Then someone...

Voice 3 And I am not saying who because, it's obvious, to the trained eye, on the one hand, but also at this stage I believe it does not matter who, it was a necessity... not part of a polarity.

Voice 1 ...said something I translated as:

'No! We can't!'"...

At the time I couldn't understand it, it was fucking frustrating... oh my god, why? How are we going to change this fucked up world if we accept its limits?

For a long time I thought my relationship with the Institute had that quality, slightly addictive, of pure potentiality, constantly blocked.

Voice 3 I suspect that back then I sort of believed that one can know, that somehow the world was knowable, so if you just keep going, you will eventually know how to. So the blocking seemed somehow intentional.

I am thinking now, isn't that one of the ways in which the need to transgress translates? In other words, a way to sense the limits of the self, to imagine a beyond while also living in a world full of demands.

It is something that might be contained in the question of how does one have a family and keep being, allowing the struggle for survival and the omnipotent fantasies that one can change the world, to co-exist? I can't know this, but I suspect I wouldn't have had kids if I hadn't come across the Institute. My internal demand/fantasy to save the world would have won the fight. Nothing more castrating (at an imaginary level) than having kids, and yet nothing more expansive and creative in real terms.

Voice 1 and 3 My actual relationship with the Institute is a kind of reverse of that, it's really expansive and creative at an imaginary level and yet quite constraining in reality... So there the challenge seems to be how to translate this potentiality into the incredibly constraining reality. And finding a voice in such a virulent context, one that opens and closes with equal violence, is proper creative destruction.

Voice 1 Constantly torn. When asked to write I thought "No!" You have to say no. And yet the loss of saying no haunted me. What was it?

Are we, am I then, talking about jouissance? Of what kind?

Voice 3 Jouissance as suffering, as excessive, as something that needs to be cut, commonly known as phallic jouissance? Or a feminine jouissance? An abundance that dismantles power/patriarchal hierarchies and enables radical transformation?

Voice 1 Or maybe, are they co-existing? Maybe the only tyranny is the belief that either should prevail. That either I say "No! I am not writing, I am not contributing to the surplus or I say yes! ..."

Voice 2 And I said NO! (internally... at first)... And then, I have done it anyway.

Voice 3 Or maybe it has never been about transgression, rather about following the traces of what was originally lost, struggling to create space for authentic, livable desire...

Lorena Rivero de Beer - artist, psychotherapist,
member of the School of the Freudian Letter.

A CORRESPONDENCE ON SURPLUS IN 100 WORDS EACH 10 TIMES OVERALL **between Lena and Gary**

Lena We thought about different words for this chapter before we settled on 'surplus'. These were: 'overdrive', 'productivity' and 'confidence'. I fear that the people we aspire towards, those who shape our critical thinking and art making, are the ones who are in constant overdrive, crucially with lots of integrity. As for me I fear I have none. I lack desire for long-term commitments. I love a line from *Adaptation* (Jonze, 2002), when the character John Laroche decides he's finished with a decade's interest in fish. He says: 'Fuck fish'. He moves onto something new. I am impatient. I move on.

Gary It's all too much. I feel dizzy trying to keep everything in my head. If I count them all up I've got 10 full time jobs – all of them secrets.

1. Getting Lena to commit fully to the Labour Party without her realising I'm doing that.
2. Getting Lena to open up to other relationships without her feeling pushed into it.
3. Convincing Neal without him noticing that he should study History at UCL.
4. Maintaining Gabriel's good humour and strength by making him feel he has more space than he actually has.
5. Keeping Sid pleased about his new senior school by telling him he has lots of agency there, when he doesn't.
6. Keeping James' energy and love for life up by brushing him off sometimes and telling him he needs to be quiet – when actually I know that just feeds him with desire for life even more – and he needs to learn his lines for his nativity play.
7. Telling Tesla Spinoza (the family dog) off in order to get her happy to take instructions.

(Maybe I'm cheating everybody – or just treating them like dogs. But after what feels like a lifetime of practice, I think I know what I'm doing with Lena and kids).

8. Changing the atmosphere at work (inside senior managers heads) in relation to the manifold struggles of the union. I've done that for the past decade and it's really started to work this past year or so, but I have to keep it all secret – people have to just realise, as if it were their own insight, that things are 'much better now' with institutional relations.
9. Managing Lena's expectations with my desire for an open relationship.
10. The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home.

Those jobs are in addition to the job I get paid for which is a Senior Lecturer in Drama at Liverpool Hope University.

Lena Gary writes 320 words, and in the wrong document on Dropbox. All is on surplus, of course. Do I need to be managed in this way? Treated like a dog? It must be nice to be undone, not so tight, not so controlled.

Gary 43 words from Lena and typically cutting and hurtful about my organisational skills. I'll just say this: I like to 'bump into things and transform them' (see Lena in 'Time') because that reduces surplus and the stress that comes with the fear of letting people down – letting you down, making it last too long or making you wait too long before it's done. I want to make everything the same thing so that my life is easier and more meaningful. I'm sorry I wrote this in the wrong place with the wrong word count – more than 300% surplus. I'm sorry.

Lena Perfect Gary strikes with 100. No mess. Gary says, 'everything is too much already, why deal with the lack?' We are living in abundance, too much space around us, too many things, too much work, too many kids, too many people, too many relationships, too many projects, too many words spent on explanations, too muchness of the experience of living, utter decadence of feeling, and wanting more, more and more. The Institute is our double agent: it controls our living by framing it, but it also acts as surplus to it, our 10% extra, enough to lose your head. More.

Gary A 'classic' surplus project was War and Peace (still unfinished). In it Pierre recovers from being a prisoner of war after the battle of Borodino in the Napoleonic wars. He suffers months of privation, solitude, worsening health and gets back home where Tolstoy narrates his new understanding of the world something like this: all problems come from surplus. There is a deep joy in satisfying basic needs: hunger, need for warmth, a friend. Everything else just causes problems. And here we are causing problems. We can't help ourselves. They are all surplus problems, but somehow we can't stop producing them.

Lena 1 January 2019 and I'm smoking again – not letting go of my vices. What are our surplus problems in relation to the Institute? All those projects and

people (all those others) we couldn't control? We thought it was possible to frame our living through the Institute, all that's possible through the 10% of time and money? And yet, even with this writing we over-spilled into 2019. The question of the overspill, the surplus, or as Lorena renames it into *jouissance* relates to the Other, and its im/possibility in our relationship. It is through the Institute we attempted towards the Other...

Gary I've been trying to understand surplus as natural but that ruins my points about the Institute being surplus – because the Institute is invented, obviously. So I keep trying to Spinoza-fy my thinking by understanding surplus as more or less inevitable. We want surplus because it's already there, waiting for us to bring it into existence. Our desire for more of everything is evidence. I think our desires for others get folded into the Institute. I think that's because the Institute is a place where we could encounter anybody we wanted without it being too weird for us as a couple.

Lena I remember when we first set up the Institute, it was about having a name, a space, a reason to invite anyone round to our family home. Strangers could email and ask for a visit, artists could apply for residencies. We had energy for it, for all those others. We are closing it now, in 2019. It's time to take a break, to consolidate aspects of what we've done, to put our energies, properly, seriously, into a different kind of Labour. Mainstream politics is still surplus to our paid jobs and family life: a place for us to be others.

Gary I remember the first time we really considered the end of the Institute. It was when we started getting heavily involved in the Labour Party. You are now Liverpool Walton CLP chair, I'm political education officer. You've been selected to be a councillor for Anfield with elections coming up in May. I will stand for Everton ward next year. You, always a year ahead of me! Our surplus energies now going into making sure there's a socialist, grassroots, democratic, locally accountable base for when socialist back bench rebel Jeremy Corbyn becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

EPILOGUE: TOWARDS LABOUR

Gary Anderson and Lena Simic

In 2019 we have decided to put the Institute to sleep in order to better concentrate on our work in Labour. In these coming months, before May when Lena becomes a councillor for Anfield Ward, we will sort out the online and physical archive, and finalize this book. Our main art project now is Labour. Neal is 18 and is leaving home in September. Gabriel is taking his GCSEs in May. Sid has started LIPA drama classes and secondary school. James is lighting up Liverpool at the Beacon school in Everton Park. We've been at it for more than 10 years. Our email is defunct. The website <https://dissentathome.org/> will be an archive.

“We can resurrect the Institute if we want, but now we are in Labour.”

Lena 11:44am 15/01/2019

“I feel relieved.”

Gary 11:45am 15/01/2019

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Publisher

The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home
<https://dissentathome.org/>

Liverpool
2019

ISBN

978-0-9564165-5-1

Print run

150 copies



The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home, based in a family home in Liverpool, UK, founded in 2007, was an intervention into normative family life and raising kids. The Institute identified as anarchist, anti-capitalist and feminist. Our interventions happened by way of performances, conversations, protests, conferences and publications. We also took each other to political demos and learned how to be critical citizens rather than passive consumers. We were funded by 10% of the family's net income (two university lecturer salaries, child benefit and any other artist commissions), and that finally stood at around £524 per month.

[HTTPS://DISSENTATHOME.ORG/](https://dissentathome.org/)