

EGTESKAB

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Avant-Gardes in Context
Niels van Poecke
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Final Assignment

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The classroom has a glass wall and door on one side, making the entire corridor look visible to the students. NIELS enters the classroom, while students slowly sit on chairs and begin to take their laptops out from their bags.

NIELS turn on the powerpoint slide that projects on the white board, students become completely silent and pays attention to NIELS.

NIELS

Let's first recap about last week's lecture...

GUY1 sitting on the first row of the class, makes a sarcastic sniffle. GUY2 who sits next to GUY1, seems distracted but continues to pay attention to NIELS.

NIELS

Last week, we discussed the sublime in the romantic. I thought Javier's example of Dogma 95's sublime was an interesting point, although it drives away from neo-romanticism. I also thought we could use Dogma 95 as a case study for return of postmodernism in today's lecture...

JAVIER makes a proud smile to MIREI, who sits next to him.

JAVIER

(whispering)

My examples are the best, that's why they always get chosen.

MIREI rolls her eyes and snorts.

NIELS

For those of you who don't know what Dogma 95 is, it's a cinematic movement created by Lars von Trier, I think you guys may have all heard of Nymphomaniac or Anti-Christ, well the director of those movies announced the manifesto in 1995, with list of restrictions for making a Dogma movie...

MATTIA slams a fist on his table, ignoring Niels' speech and launching a finger towards BASTIAAN.

(CONTINUED)

MATTIA
You. Piece. Of. SHIT!

Students wince and turn their heads to MATTIA, who's eyes burn with tears.

MATTIA
(Walking away from his seat,
towards the door)
Fuck off, DON'T COME NEAR ME!

Eyes follow him out of the classroom. BASTIAAN sighs, rolls his eyes.

BASTIAAN
(muttering under breath)
Well you are the one walking
away...

BASTIAAN stands up and follows MATTIA outside of the classroom. As soon as he exits the classroom, there is whispering among students.

NIELS
Hey! Wait a moment. You can't...

BASTIAAN ignores him and slams the door after him. He grabs MATTIA's shoulder behind the transparent wall and they begin a heated discussion that cannot be heard from the inside of the classroom.

JAVIER and MIREI raise their eyebrows at each other. NIELS hawks and shows the classroom a jolly smile.

NIELS
Well, I don't think we can do much about those two! Let us continue then, while they figure out whatever it is they need to figure out... (Turning to Javier) So, Javier, explain to us how Dogma is sublime...

ANDREA interrupts NIELS with a loud snort, then crosses her arms and nods towards the arguing couple outside of the classroom. Her eyes lock on CAMILLE, sitting next to her with a malicious smile.

ANDREA
HA! I told you shit was gonna hit the fan today in class...

CAMILLE
(Slightly shaking her head)
Some much for IBACS' *Golden Duo...*

JAVIER turns away from ANDREA and CAMILLE to look at NIELS. He seems distracted, but answers the asked question.

JAVIER
Well, it's an example of sublime
because..

ANDREA and CAMILLE continues to whisper their gossips, ignorant of Javier's speech. JAVIER shakes his head and continues.

JAVIER
It tries to show us the beauty of cinematic realism, by portraying the ugly "truth" let's say, von Trier doesn't care how unpleasant the naked scenes or sex scenes might seem to audience, he shoots it just the way they are on camera to convey reality to the audience.

NIELS nods, looking pleased with JAVIER's answer.

NIELS
Very good. Can anyone expand on his answer and how that makes Dogma 95 avant garde?

MIREI raises her hand. NIELS glances at her and she answers the question.

MIREI
I think it's avant-garde because it challenges the current film industry trend. Like.. I don't know, in Hollywood they only want to please the audience so they can earn money. Dogma doesn't try to please the audience. It's trying to resist the film industry institution symbolically?

NIELS smiles and taps the screen of his tablet.

NIELS
I'm happy to know some people have been doing the readings. We can't be too avant-garde in the classroom...now let's look at
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NIELS (cont'd)
Foster's literature, and what Lacan
said about trauma...

JAVIER turns to MIREI and points at MATTIA and BASTIAAN, who keep shouting at each other outside of the classroom.

JAVIER
(Not caring to lower his
voice)
What is wrong with those two?

MIREI
(Sighing)
Who knows? Something must have
happened yesterday at the club...

KEVIN, who sits at the table in front of JAVIER and MIREI's, turns with a silly smile on his face.

KEVIN
He read something on his phone
before shouting out loud, what do
you think it was?

JAVIER snorts and shakes his head.

JAVIER
Bet you anything there's a girl in
between them

MIREI
(Sacastically)
What a lucky girl.

Meanwhile, NIELS moves on to his laptop and turns on the projector.

NIELS
In Foster's article, he discussed
three different aspects of
post-modernisms in the 30s, the
60s, and the 90s. Can anyone apply
one of these aspects in Dogme95
films? Anyone?

Everyone remains silent. NIELS wait patiently for someone to raise their hand for an answer. Meanwhile, JAVIER nudges MIREI on the shoulder, to look outside the window.

MATTIA and BASTIAAN are yelling at each other. Their voices mix and it's indiscernible what they are actually saying.

After a while, they run out of breath and make a tense pause. BASTIAAN looks through the glass wall and sees the entire classroom in silence while giving them furtive looks from time to time.

BASTIAAN

We are making a scene for the entire class.

MATTIA

(With a heavy voice)
I don't give a shit!

BASTIAAN

Can we just walk back in and talk about it later?

MATTIA

(Infuriated)

No, we fucking can't! I am going to die from embarrassment if I walk back there after this scene!

BASTIAAN

Hey, I'm not the one that exited stage mid-seminar!

MATTIA

(Laughing cynically)

No, that's true! You are the guy that couldn't keep his hands off that bitch yesterday!

BASTIAAN

(Plunging his fingers into his hair)

Why are you doing this? All I did was tell her her zip was open!

MATTIA

Fuck off, dude. I'm not blind, you know?

BASTIAAN

Look, I'm worried about you, this isn't the first time you are behaving crazy...

(CONTINUED)

MATTIA
(Screaming)
I'M NOT CRAZY!!

BASTIAAN seems startled by MATTIA's sudden burst of anger. He slowly puts his hands on MATTIA's shoulder, MATTIA turns at BASTIAAN with furious look and puts his hands on BASTIAAN's neck.

3 INT. CLASSROOM

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The classroom continues to be silent, while NIELS wait for someone to answer his question.

ANDREA
(whispering to CAMILLE)
Am I the only one lost with this
Dogme thing?

CAMILLE
No me too! He didn't even tell us
to study about this movie in
advance?

They both look back at NIELS, who lets out a loud sigh.

NIELS
(louder in his tone)
SINCE NO ONE CAN ANSWER MY QUESTION
I AM GOING TO TELL YOU...

JAVIER raises his eyebrows. MIREI looks confused.

NIELS
(goes into a loud monotonous
fast speech)
VON TRIER EXTENDS HIS ANXIETY
ELECTRONICALLY INTO THE
SCHIZOPHRENIC CHARACTERS IN
IDIOTERNE, CONSUMING SCHIZOPHRENIA
AS A SPECTACLE FOR THE AUDIENCE,
PARADOXICALLY RESISTING THE
TECHNOLOGY BY RESTRAINING THE USE
OF DIGITAL EFFECTS...

JAVIER
(Looking at MIREI)
What the fuck?

MIREI opens her eyes wide, takes her phone and starts to record NIELS.

(CONTINUED)

NIELS
THIS POST-MODERN MOVEMENT, IS YET
CHARACTERIZED BY TRAUMA FROM THE
PAST, AS THE VOW OF CHASTITY
REMAINS OBSESSED WITH THE NEW WAVE
AND THE NEOREALISM...

CAMILLE points at the window with a shocked look on her face. Student's eyes follow her finger.

CAMILLE
Look!

Outside the window, MATTIA has his hands around BASTIAAN's neck, BASTIAAN seems to be in resistance. All of a sudden, MATTIA brings his face closer to BASTIAAN and kisses him forcefully. Everyone in the classroom gasps, except for NIELS, who continues his speech.

NIELS
HOWEVER WE MUST NOT BE RESTRICTED
BY OSCILLATION BETWEEN THE MODERN
AND THE POST-MODERN BUT INVESTIGATE
THE RADICALLY INNOVATIVE AS THE
POST-POST-MODERN!

The cellphone in MATTIA's bag rings, playing 1812 Overture loudly. Students no longer pay attention to NIELS's speech, as they are distracted by MATTIA and BASTIAAN struggling outside the classroom.

ANDREA
(yells)
Someone call the security!

KEVIN stands up and walks outside the class, to interrupt MATTIA and BASTIAAN. MATTIA pushes KEVIN, and KEVIN falls on the floor. The students are now in hysteria, screaming at the fight outside of the class.

NIELS
NOW, WOULD ANYONE LIKE A
STROOPWAFFEL?

The classroom suddenly silences. As MIREI and JAVIER look at NIELS with wide opened eyes in horror. NIELS pulls out a bag of stroopwaffel from his bag, walks up to MIREI and JAVIER, and hands them one stroopwaffel each.

NIELS
I would like to appreciate you two
for your participation in class
today.

As the whole class watches, NIELS walks back to the front of the whiteboard.

NIELS

Now, class dismissed early.

NIELS begin to pack his things. MIREI and JAVIER look at each other in the faces, not capturing what occurred in the last 5 minutes.

CAMILLE

(pointing at the window)

Awe! Now they are crying!

Students all look outside the window, where MATTIA and BASTIAAN sit on the ground, MATTIA crying and BASTIAAN embracing MATTIA. Students giggle. The giggle slowly turns into an outburst of laughter.

MIREI

(To JAVIER)

Um, I'm gonna go to lunch.

JAVIER

Good idea.

They both stand up, and walk out of the classroom, while the entire classroom remains in laughter. 1812 Overture continues to play in repeat, from MATTIA's phone. JAVIER closes the classroom door, and the screen blacks out.

THE END