

Upside Down The Rabbit Hole

Generative Networked Performance

Robert Spahr

United States, Southern Illinois University, Department of Cinema and Photography
<https://www.robertspahr.com>



Abstract

'Who are you?'

'I – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

'What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!'

'I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir,

because I'm not myself, you see.'

- - - **Lewis Carroll – Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**

Using the 19th century novel, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (or *Alice in Wonderland* for short) as a starting point for an investigation into the isolation and disarray forced upon the world by the global pandemic, this generative networked performance will ask the question: "Who are You?"

In his book *After The Future*, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi refers to the 'the slow cancellation of the future [which] got underway in the 1970s and 1980s.' He is referring not to a direction of time, but rather a psychological perception. Berardi also suggests we are stuck between globalization and global war, between identity and capital and we seem to be incapable of producing radical change. Berardi is describing my own sense of time. Standing still, no forward movement, no progress.

The pandemic forces us to a grinding halt as the emergency break of capitalism is pulled. Stillness, uncertainty, and loss. Post-traumatic stress. Post-traumatic growth. Realignment.

These ideas are explored in relation to my own identity and memory as I use generative processes which rely on the latency of the network as well as repetition to potentially wake us up to the fact that change is happening and it is time to decide who we are.

rob@robertspahr.com
rspahr@siu.edu

Key words: Identity, Memory, Post-traumatic stress and growth, Networked Performance

Main References:

- [1] Lewis Carroll, "*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*", Macmillian, U.K., 1865
- [2] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "*AND Phenomenology of the End*", Semiotext(e) / MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2015
- [3] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "*After the Future*", AK Press, Oakland, CA, 2011