



*No soap radio*

a play by  
Huysmans Ringheim

Meister Bertram<sup>1</sup>, Jan Haudemann<sup>2</sup>, Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven<sup>3</sup>, Louis Moe<sup>4</sup>, Amanda Fielding<sup>5</sup>, Matthew Cox<sup>6</sup>, Lance Armstrong<sup>7</sup>, the Le Nain-brothers<sup>8</sup>, Mohamed Hamri<sup>9</sup>, Bokken Lasson<sup>10</sup>, Alina Kabaeva<sup>11</sup>, Pittoni<sup>12</sup>, de Sade<sup>13</sup>, Balzac<sup>14</sup>, Cher<sup>15</sup>, Winona Ryder<sup>16</sup>, Olav Aukrust<sup>17</sup>, Bastien-Lepage<sup>18</sup>, Urban Hjärne<sup>19</sup>, Heywood Jablome<sup>20</sup>, Louise Varèse<sup>21</sup>, Tim Wendelboe<sup>22</sup>, Meyerhold<sup>23</sup>, Carl August Ehrensvärd<sup>24</sup>, Martha Stewart<sup>25</sup>, Mike «The Situation»<sup>26</sup>, King Solomon<sup>27</sup>, Alexandre Dumas<sup>28</sup>, Han Van Meegeren<sup>29</sup> and a few other nobodies sits in, and stands around a bath tub. A rather large one, that is. In reality, it looks more like a swimming pool, but no one is swimming. Just sitting around, talking, drinking... partying! They're having a *pool party* is what they're doing. There is an outdoor kitchen area with two bar stools. On the counter stands a jug and a tellus globe. Left from, beneath the bath tub patio, is a bench with a handmirror on it and a small fountain in front of it. The sun-beds have been trashed during the drunken frenzy and a Queen-sized mattress has been dragged outside, serving as temporary replacement. There is also a waterslide.

Everyone is drunk and sunburned, but otherwise as we usually imagine them. Except! Each character is a severely overweight, vulgar, gluttonous, ugly, grandiose, dishonest, stupid, jejune, voracious, greedy and cruel version of themselves. What a time to be alive!

The stage lights up.

Ehrensvärd is manspreading on the kitchen counter, pouring Masseto mixed with Coca-Cola from a jug into Winona's, Cher's, the Baroness' and his own cup. The light dims and the spotlight is set on them as we jump into the swede's vibrant monologue in medias res.

«Life seeks constantly to set up norms, you know? It longs for a state of rest, strives for the natural, så att säga. And so we see the rise of systems which, above all else, serve to support and fortify order, in the sense of the accustomed norm and the state of inactivity within this norm. Life wishes not to live but to rest. You know? It strives not for activity but for passivity. For this reason, agreement among the dynamic or static values of the additional element affecting the system is taken for granted, and a *bringing-into-agreement*, så att säga, of the dynamic elements. Systematizing them. Transforming them into static elements, for every system is static, even when it is in movement, whereas every construction is dynamic because it is *on the way*, så att säga, toward a system. You know?»

The girls giggle.

«Yeah..»

«The Situation», Tim Wendelboe and Mohamed Hamri approaches the trio. The girls greets them, smiles and goes for a cool-down swim. Ehrensvärd is in a state of whatever the opposite of a total ego death is.

«Guys, it actually works. This is amazing. They're buying every fucking bit of it. I drop a casual *'Our conception of reality is changeable and depends upon the interplay of those elements of reality which, as they make their appearance, are subject to one kind of distortion or another in the mirror of our consciousness, since our ideas and conceptions of matter are always distorted*

*images having not the slightest relation to reality'* and the  
panties drop with it.»

The guys laugh hysterically.

Wendelboe is visibly nervous. His eyeballs are vibrating, almost  
falling out of his skull.

Ehrensvärd continues, barely containing an explosive laughter,  
closer to losing it for each word.

«Matter itself is eternal and immutable. It's insensibility to  
life, it's lifelessness, så och säga, is unshakeable. The changing  
element of our consciousness and feeling, in the last analysis, is  
illusion, which springs from the interplay of distorting  
reflections of variable, derivative manifestations of reality and  
which has nothing whatsoever to do with actual matter or even  
with, like, an alterat-... Ha ha ha ha ha!»

The guys explode in unison panicked laughter.

Hjärne and Cox is right behind them, by the tellus globe on the  
kitchen counter, having a deeply engaged and animated one-on-one.  
The spotlight moves abruptly to their conversation. Cox  
gesticulates.

«So the idea is, the organization or association or whatever, is called *I.N.V.A.L.I.D/D*, right, so an acronym for *Intersectional Neo-Volcel Association for Lovers In Development/Decay*.»

Hjärne smirks.

«Right? So the key idea or what ever, is that men, actually just beta men, but that's part of the conspiracy, lives in a constant flux between being in sexual development and sexual decay. You aren't getting laid? That's *alright!* It's not because you're a loser or anything, you're just not *ready*, or rather, sex isn't ready for *you*. Either that, or you're simply done with it. You've had your share and want to pursuit other missions in life other than constantly trying to get your noodle wet. So yeah, the structure or what ever, the conspiracy that serves us, the alphas by default, is to cater to the incel *cleverer-than-you*, irony-bros with a sarcastic-protective shield structure in which they pose as *volcels* and distract themselves from their depressing selves by coming together in a sort of performative Virgins Anonymous-like clusterfuck of sarcasm where everyone can be their clever, virgin self. They are lured into giving up - and being happy about it!»

Hjärne is not impressed, but not *unimpressed* either. He smirks, chugs his Banco, and throws his hand around Cox' shoulder.

«I like you.» He says. «You're a character. I like it. Me and you, we make up a good team.»

He burps and tries to focus his gaze on the tellus globe.

«You know... Me and you should go on a trip together. Leave the old lady and the kids behind and disappear for a couple of months.»

Cox is visibly intrigued. Hjärne continues.

«There's a whole world out there for great men like me and yourself to explore and take advantage of! Here, give me your hand.»

Hjärne grabs Cox' arm and fixates it on the tellus globe on the approximate latitude of New York City, seemingly random. Urban Hjärne has always dreamt of The Big Apple.

«There! Spin the globe! Where ever your finger lands, we conquest!»

Cox spins the globe and as it spins, the spotlight shifts to Haudemann and Amanda Fielding, laying on the mattress in the garden, seemingly dazed. Jan mumbles.

«It translates soooo badly to English, but... It's like, so, you're setting up a joke, right, where one of the subjects have to get past a guardian of some sort. Sneak out of a house or something. Tricking someone. Any kind of action where a disguise of some sort would be obviously convenient! And... So, in Norwegian «løsbart» translates to «solvable», but also to «fake mustache!» So, you see, the punchline is, like, «it's solvable with solvable», but the last «solvable» also means «fake mustache.» Ha ha - it

translates so badly, but I'm telling you, it's brilliant when it's done by the right performer. It's like The Aristocrats joke, but with an actual, solid, linguistic punchline. The premise is already set, all you have to remember is that little punchline and the stage is yours - fill it with whatever! Ha ha... But hey, so... The whole trepanation thing. Does it work in the dick? The dick head? Extra dick hole for extra flow and harder dicks? Ha ha. Just kidding.»

Amanda smiles, but not at Jan's brilliant joke or at his inappropriate remark. She blinks hard, staring blankly into the afternoon sky. She laughs, then cries for a brief second, then laughs again.

«Absurdity and banality is armwrestling without a clear winner. The volatility of intention versus perception is put at stake! Isn't it so meaningless, Jan? What to do about it? Sometimes, life just feels like one, never-ending hunger strike in the foie gras farm! Nothing comes out of it. Absolutely nothing at all. You know, I had a pet turtle once. We called him Queen Elizabeth, or Liz for short, 'cus he was a picky eater. Did you know the queen only eats corn flakes? Anyways, Liz died suddenly when I decided to move to Italy. You're not supposed to move pet turtles from where they are born. They spend years getting comfortable in a new territory and sometimes, if you move them, they get depressed and just lay down to die.»

Jan sighs. Amanda continues.

«It's like I'm struck by this sudden sense of obviousness. It's so clear to me now. Only he who recognizes that he cannot possess anything, that absolute certainty is unattainable, who completely resigns himself and sacrifices all, who gives everything, who does not know anything, who does not want anything and does not want to

know anything, who abandons and neglects everything.. He will receive all!»

For a brief minute, we are back in Cox' and Hjärne's conversation. Hjärne is becoming very drunk and is ranting, almost screaming, into Cox's left ear.

“The moment the first optical devices appeared on the scene, like Al-Hasan ibn al-Haitam's camera obscura in the tenth century, you know, Roger Bacon's instruments in the thirteenth, the increasing number of visual prostheses like lenses, astronomic telescopes and so on from the Renaissance on.»

He burps violently without moving his head away from Cox' ear.

«These things profoundly altered the contexts in which mental images were topographically stored and retrieved. The imperative to re-present oneself. The imaging of the imagination which was such a great help in mathematics according to Descartes and which he considered a veritable part of the body. *Veram partem corporis!* Just when we were apparently procuring the means to see further and better the unseen of the universe, we were about to lose what little power we had of imagining it. The telescope, that epitome of the visual prosthesis, projected an image of a world beyond our reach and thus another way of moving about in the world. The logistics of perception inaugurating an unknown conveyance of sight that produced a telescoping of near and far, a phenomenon of acceleration obliterating our experience of distances and dimensions.»

Hjärne, screaming now, continues.



«You don't get that in Madrid, man. You don't get that in Madrid!!!»

Cox, shirtless by now, starts further undressing as the spotlight shifts back to the Swedish admiral/count and his new friends. Almost every female guest, except Fielding which is laying in the bed with Jan, and Stewart, sitting in lotus at the top of the water slide, is flocked around them. Hamri is talking now, telling a story.

«...but that's a long digression to save for another day! What's funny is, Marvin Gaye, right? Marvin Gaye changed his surname from *Gay* to *Gaye* so his name wouldn't be so gay! He was born *Gay*! *Ha ha ha ha ha ha!*

Everyone laughs.

De Sade has joined them in hope of some *trickle down-attention* from the ladies. Finally, he succeeds in getting a word in the conversation.

«Y-yes... He he... I mean... S-stigma... What man with respect for himself can endure the gruesome shackles of all that is stigma? You know, the Greeks, who, as we all know, were strong on visual aids, actually originated the term stigma to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertised that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor. A blemished person! Ritually polluted, to be avoided. Especially in public places. Later, in Christian times, two layers of metaphor were added to the term. The first referred to bodily signs of holy grace that took the form of eruptive blossoms on the skin. The second, a medical allusion to this religious allusion, referred to bodily signs of physical disorder.»

A moment of awkward silence extends to a full minute.

Ehrensvärd breaks the silence.

«Yeah, yeah... Nothing wrong with a little silence, don't you agree, ladies?»

His hand is around the Russian gymnast's waist now and she is leaning on his shoulder.

«I mean, the 21st century is pre-eminently and in all the senses of the word a time of speech. Bla bla bla bla bla bla! It doesn't stop, you know? One of the chief characteristics of this world is noise. Nothing is more noisy than the modern man. He *likes* noise! Noise is his passion, his life, his atmosphere, så att säga. Publicity replaces for him a thousand other passions which die, stifled by this supreme passion, så att säga. The 21st century talks, weeps, cries, boasts, despairs. It makes a show-window, så att säga, of everything. This century which detests secret confession bursts out every moment into public confession!»

Every single one of the ladies giggles in unison. The spotlight moves to one corner of the pool where Meyerhold, The King, Dumas and Balzac is sitting around, staring enviously at Ehrensvärd, Mohamed and the Coffee King, surrounded by all the women and also de Sade. The sight of Ehrensvärd's hand around Kabaeva's waist is a painful one for poor Meyerhold. A feeling of unendurable jealousy grows in his stomach. His weak spot for gymnast girls has

been a lifelong battle, and also a never realized fantasy. Only in his work at the theater has he had the pleasure of getting to tell a gym-girl what to do for him. Balzac has his eyes on Freytag Loringhoven who is dressed in a huge and intricately ornamented feathered hat, a striped bathing suit and a mini skirt. Mohamed Hamri and her seems to be getting along particularly well. Honoré sighs.

«What a woman. What beauty, what grace. Style! She is truly breathtaking, isn't she? Out of all the lovely ladies present this fine afternoon, no one comes close to her discernment for style. Nothing attracts me more than a women who understands that to dress well is to dress in one's own life, turned towards one's own life and away from death. The well dressed woman shows more consideration for the world than regard for the depth of the abyss.»

Salomon, Dumas and Meyerhold is not listening. Dumas has his eyes on Bokken, who's now holding hands with Mike «The Situation», and King Salomon is staring at Cher, who is making out with Wendelboe. Honoré continues.

«Her elegance is the perfection of outer and material life. The art of spending one's income as a woman of wit. Or even the science that teaches her to do nothing like anyone else while appearing to do everything just like them. Perhaps even better! It is the development of grace and taste in everything that belongs to us and that surrounds us. This woman is an artist of divine brilliance just by her sheer existence.»

Salomon snaps out of his fixated gaze.

«Did you say Cher?»

For a second, the spotlight moves abruptly to Stewart, who is still sitting in lotus at the top of the water slide with a blank stare. She is reciting a poem to herself.

«The bells ringing profusely,  
head for the higher ground  
I saw the sea just disappear  
tsunami rushing without a sound

Torrents, tidal sweeps through all  
families ripped apart never seen again,  
ripping up everything in its path  
deadly waters take lives with free rein»

The spotlight moves back to King Salomon, Dumas, Meyerhold and Balzac, now sitting silently in a collective state of severe, torture-like jealousy. The King breaks the silence.

«Screw this. To hell with this. I'm done. I can't do this. Making a move *in this economy* is like moving a piano to the alps. Those guys got to go. This is nothing else than unbearable. They got to go. Without the women, that is!»

Meyerhold snaps out of his fixated gaze.

«Aren't you married, anyways?»

The King snorts in a ridiculing manner.

«Well, yes - to about six hundred different women, you absolute numbskull! Infidelity is not part of my, or any of my wives, vocabulary. Cope, halfwit. Should we do something to get these guys moving or no? We have been sitting in this tub for, what, three hours? My ballsack is the least wrinkled part of my body at this point.»

Balzac snaps out of his fixated gaze by the sound of his name.

«Huh?»

The King continues.

«Those guys got to go. I'm not doing this any longer. We're manifesting the damn *Seducers Diary* here. The night is young. They're going, or I'm going. Let's just fucking kill them, no? What is there to lose? There is something about this party, something dreamlike. This is the moment were we realize that we are in fact dreaming, and therefore, anything is possible. I say we fucking kill them. Hamri, Mike, Wendelboe and the Count. They fucking die and we conquer the women.»

Meyerhold, Dumas and Balzac looks at The King in disdain, all curiously amused at his sudden emotional eruption.

Dumas lets the silence hang for a second before responding.

«*They fucking die and we conquer the women.* My god. Literature at its finest, your Highness. I'm in. What's the game plan, Mr. Hecatomb?»

The guys laugh optimistically.

The spotlight moves back to Stewart. She continues her poetry recital.

«The devastation as it starts to recede  
bird sounds gone as in a total eclipse,  
the thick mud churned in places we  
People in pain, hurting, a total apocalypse

Now, let's pick up people that drowned  
the church bells on the hill definitely saved,

never to forget the decimation of the water  
forever on my memories this horror engraved»

A melancholic smile paints her face before she, with a howling gag loud enough to adjourn every ongoing conversation, barfs on herself and an uncanny amount of liquid runs down her body, down the waterslide and into the pool. Everyone, especially the Italians and Mr. Armstrong, are immediately alarmed and relentlessly disgusted and as Louise Varèse starts vomiting before successfully fleeing the exceedingly contaminated tub, a chain reaction begins. Aukrust follows, then Meister Bertram, then Bastein-Lapage, then Pittoni, then Jablome, then Louis Moe. There is vomit everywhere. The bath water is cloudy. De Sade decides this is a nice time for a swim and dives military-style into the tub with a gaping mouth. Everyone else is pissed and disgusted. Everyone is either vomiting or trying not to. Lance has gotten into a fist fight with the Le Nain-bros over a clean towel. After knocking both out cold, he grabs Han Van Meegeren by the neck, puts him in a Kimura armlock and starts a rant thunderous enough to temporarily punctuate the vomiting paroxysm.”

The whole stage lights up brightly.

«Pain is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually it will subside and something else will take its place. If we quit, however, it lasts forever. Listen closely: This is not where the party ends - this is where it starts! Who's with me?»

The turmoil has awoken Haudemann and Fielding who fell asleep hours ago in the water fountain, getting shoulder massages from the pouring water. Jan also stars vomiting by the sight and smell of the scene. He stutters, confused.

«What... My god... What is going on?»

The contaminated fountain water has made a full circuit and is now pouring over him and Fielding, splashing everywhere. They continue to vomit as they desperately crawl out of the fountain.

Mr. Armstrong is still amped.

«I'll tell you what the fuck is going on! Don't let me repeat myself - this is where the fucking party starts! Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming *wow! What a ride!* This should, and will, be a night we won't remember with friends we'll never forget! I hate to advocate drugs, alcohol, violence, or insanity to anyone, but they've always worked for me!"

He releases Han Van Meegeren from the armlock, knees him in the stomach and throws him into the pool. He drowns silently, perhaps already dead. Mr. Armstrong continues.

«That's how we do it. American way, baby! Now, speaking of fucking drugs. Who's cash ready? Haudemann, aren't you worth like seven billi's, or something? Big time investor, aren't you? Tell you what - how about you invest some pocket change into this fucking party? My guy can probably be here with a half-ounce of Peruvian face candy within the next thirty! Get it moving brother, let's turn those pockets inside out!»

Jan is not necessarily shy on the idea of fetching some gear and keeping the party rolling, but the rhetorics and attitude of Lance's alpha-moment has made him feel disrespected. He is hit by a sudden feeling of absolute rage. He reaches for his Bottega Veneta-dufflebag, unzips it and reveals its contents for everyone,

who is not fainted or busy vomiting, to see. There us kilos of bankfresh Euro notes and also his dirty tennis clothes. He looks around, agitated, before starting a screeching rant.

«You wan't to get the party going? I'll show you sorry peasants how to start a fucking party. You wan't to see a party? You wan't investment? I'll show you what investing looks like, you fuckface. Watch out, villagers! Protect your crops! Here comes the fucking storm!»

Jan starts frantically throwing stacks of Euro notes around him. Making it rain. Within seconds, the ground, the pool, the patio, the whole stage, is carpeted by cash. A new manic frenzy erupts as everyone, except Stewart who is still on top of the water slide with a tranquil look on her face, starts fighting for the raining cash as they slip and slide around the vomit infused stage.

Jan laughs in ecstasy as he stands around enjoying the show. Pittoni slips by the edge of the pool and falls to his death as his skull is crushed into the mosaic pool ledge. Jan laughs.

«Did your mother never tell you not to run around the pool? Ha ha ha ha. Slowly now, slowly, guys! Ha ha!»

He continues to throw cash around and it's like gasoline on a campfire. The mania intensifies. Several dead bodies are floating in the pool now. Others are laying around gurgling in pain, exhaustion and near-death.

Ehrensvärd, covered in blood, vomit and cash sticking to his body, severely beaten by Meyerhold, Dumas, The King and Balzac is trying to save his own life as his abusers are attacked by Lepage and Pittoni, giving him a chance to flee. He is crawling towards the house entrance, backstage that is, to hide and save his life. Jan notices him as he collapses on te doorstep.



«Are you okay over there Carl August? Heading inside? Such a lovely day out here! Grab me a cold one from the fridge and get back outside. Let's go, baby boy, the party is finally back on track. Actually, maybe grab a mop and some soap too! A quick swipe wouldn't hurt!

Ehrensvärd, laying on the doorstep on his stomach, gets up on his elbows, turns around, looks Jan dead in the eye and struggles to contain a sudden urge to explode into laughter. He stutters, but then, loud and clearly, delivers his final line.

«No soap radio!»

Everyone laughs hysterically.

The curtain closes.

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Huysmans Ringheim, 2022

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- 1 German emo-prepper
  - 2 Quiz master and aspiring tennis player
  - 3 Anti-patriarchal Dada-swinger
  - 4 Kittelsen's coulda-shoulda-woulda surrealist-trailblazer
  - 5 Ornithophile countess of Wemyss and March
  - 6 Art deco master, real estate mogul and author of true crime
  - 7 Jewelry designer, cancer survivor and Tour de France-loser
  - 8 Family institutional cosplay directors
  - 9 Waiter to the stars, neutral good human trafficker
  - 10 19th century Oslo-hipster, friend of Ghandi
  - 11 Surrogate/gymnast/judo fangirl
  - 12 Heavy grindset private education gründer
  - 13 French daddy-dom
  - 14 Undisputed title holder of «Funniest Given Name In Onomastic History» since 1799
  - 15 Petroleum industry tech innovator
  - 16 Aluminium market whale
  - 17 Linguistically incomprehensible linguistics genius
  - 18 Former naturalist, now apple tree
  - 19 From a Norwegian-speaking perspective, holder of the objectively coolest given name in onomastic history
  - 20 A real persons real name
  - 21 Close friend of Marcel himself, publisher
  - 22 Norse Brew-Bro, stimulant expert
  - 23 Hefty lover of balance, strengt, flexibility, agility, coordination, dedication and endurance
  - 24 Militant count, kinkshaming social-climber
  - 25 Former speculative fraudster and TV-chef de cuisine
  - 26 Pioneer proto-influencer, creative tax return writer, Situationist
  - 27 Israeli exorcist, P.I.M.P, gold hoarder
  - 28 Crybaby, sufferer of severe carpal tunnel syndrome
  - 29 Honorable Dutch art dealer/forgery, Vermeer-aficionado