



On Saturday night September 12, 2020, John Longwalker and Geert Lovink ('We Are Not Sick') launched their theory-music album *Sad by Design* in OT 301 in Amsterdam (info on the event here: <http://ot301.nl/agenda/9908>). The event was organized by Amsterdam Alternative. You can watch the performance [here](#), including the Q&A with Geert Lovink and John Longwalker, moderated by Sebastian Olma (AA). For this 'covid' event only 25 seats were available (the event was 'sold out'). This was the third performance, after its premiere at the opening of [Impact Festival](#) in Utrecht (November 15, 2019) and [Transmediale](#) in the Volksbühne theatre, Berlin (February 1, 2020).



Two years in the making, Sad By Design is an album of music inspired and interwoven with the book of the same title by band member Geert Lovink. John Longwalker provides production across a variety of genres — from gentle ambient to a raw, nearly brutal hip hop style to anthemic acid house — in order to maximize the potential audience space. Together as We Are Not Sick, we present our first offering on our journey to make critical thinking sexy again... Sad By Design.

You can listen to the entire album on YouTube, Spotify, iTunes etc. [Here](#) is the overview of all platforms. For instance, you can find<sup>25</sup> the digital album on Bandcamp (7 euros). This includes unlimited streaming via the free Bandcamp app, plus high-quality download in MP3, FLAC and more. On Bandcamp: <https://wearenotsick.bandcamp.com/album/sad-by-design>.

#### Tracks

1. ... enternetworkedpsyche 03:40
2. Your Ranking Is Low 04:18
3. Signs of Social Media Addiction 02:40
4. We Are Not Sick (02:45)
5. Sad by Design (03:38)

6. Speaking Truth to the Platform (04:34)

7. Ambient Theory Declarations (08:35)



### **Lyrics of the Sad by Design theory-music album by We Are Not Sick**

#### **1. ... enternetworked psyche**

Today's sadness is a system, an assemblage of mind, body and techne.

Capitalist accumulation is driven by organized optimism.

Youth feel the anxiety, the stress and become sad by empty promises and diminishing opportunities. They are the experts at reading daily life through the sadness lens. This does not mean we should medicalize them.

Every situation, every object and service can and will be sad. This is why we trapped and do not see how collective action can lead to change.

Emotional rides are no longer experienced in solitude. The virtual others are always there as well.

Intuitively, many feel that their mental mess is produced by society. It is *not* a sickness in our heads. Capitalism is said to be able to deal with all these contradictions it produces. It is not.

Predictable continuity is not just elitist, it's escapist. It walks away from the dirty present. Much in the same way romantics did in the industrial 19<sup>th</sup> century.

How do we comfort the disturbed? Not by taking their phones away. What can we do that's liberating and prevents moralism? This is not about natural or artificial worlds. It's cutting straight through the post-modern lingo.

The social is very real, messy, ugly, sexy, boring—most of the time.

We can no longer leave the management of the world to Silicon Valley. We need to dismantle the free and invent new ways to work together and deal with differences and disputes, rather than rehashing them for the billionth time.

Let's hope the content is halfway cool...



## **2. Your Ranking Is Low**

Your ranking is low (4x)

It's considered sad, hours of swiping

You keep opening the app, in the hope of finding something... exhausted... hours of swiping

Your blue tick marks haunt me in my sleepless nights

Why? Why didn't you respond?

The online world is obsessed with waiting

Most relationships are obsessed with waiting

CHORUS: Most relationships are machine-generated anyway / Your ranking is low (2x)

Finally caught up, your ranking is average

You finally caught up, your ranking is medium

Your ranking is medium

Most relationships are machine-generated anyway

END

Grab the phone, swipe and text back

Homeopathic doses, flatly distributed via technical means

Sadness expresses the growing gap between the self-image of a perceived social status and the actual precarious reality

Sadness expresses the growing gap between the self-image of a perceived social status and the actual overloaded awareness

CHORUS REPEATS

Your ranking is low

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### **3. Signs of Social Media Addiction**

You recognize total strangers on the street because you saw them on your friend's page.

Your Facebook friends know you're pregnant before your family does.

You choreograph your picture-taking according to what would make a great profile picture.

You know exactly what your ex — from ten years ago — had for breakfast this morning.

You don't see the point in reunions. You already know everything about your former classmates, including the potty habits of their children.

You ask your spouse to change your Facebook password temporarily so you can get some work done.

You break up with your girlfriend by changing your relationship status to single. Ouch.

If you want to know the results of a Heat game, Marlins game, or presidential election, you check everyone's status updates.

You didn't get that great job because your would-be employer saw photos of you doing Jell-o shots while topless.

Your lawyer uses your ex's status updates in court to milk him for all he's worth.

Your just-out-of-jail childhood friend jacks your TV because he knows exactly when you "check in" at Coldstone Creamery every day.

The cops track down your kidnapper because you checked in at the mall and had not been seen since.

You have threatened, at least once, to end a 20-year friendship over the posting of a picture.

Your sister's friend's ex-boyfriend says he liked your wedding dress. He wasn't at the wedding.

(Taken from: 25 Signs You Spend Way Too Much Time on Facebook by Miami New Times Staff, April 26, 2011, <https://www.miaminewtimes.com/arts/25-signs-you-spend-way-too-much-time-on-facebook-6518206>)

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#### **4. We Are Not Sick**

We online billions are not sick and not a valley patient / Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened / Pump yourself, dump yourself / We are not sick (3x)

We... Are... Not... Sick (2x)

We Are Online / We Are Billions

We smile because we are not sick

We... Are... Not... Sick / It happened because valley billions (2x)

Pump pump pump pump pump pump yourself

Dump dump dump dump dump dump yourself

It happened because valley billions

Pump pump pump pump pump pump yourself

Dump dump dump dump dump dump yourself

We... Are... Not... Sick

Don't cry, smile / it's over

—

#### **5. Sad by Design**

Bet on acceleration and never mourn a lost object

Bet on acceleration

CHORUS: Sad... by... design...

But what's this message?

But what's this message that just got in?

CHORUS: Sad by design



## 6. Speaking Truth to the Platform

Speaking Truth to the Platform (x3)

“Great minds discuss ideas; mediocre minds discuss events; small minds discuss people. Premium mediocre minds discuss bitcoin.” Venkatesh Rao

“Go down into the underground, and pass from the hyper-virtual, fleshless world to the suffering flesh of the poor.” Pope Francis

“I can’t believe video games are real.” Sarah Hagi

“We are not afraid of ruins. We who ploughed the prairies and built the cities can build again, only better next time. We carry a new world, here in our hearts.” - Errico Malatesta

“Anyway, it’s always the others who die.” Marcel Duchamp

“The internet is a metaphysical horror game, not a representational machine.” @bognamk

“When defenders of this barbaric system talk about defending “choice”, they really mean the choice between bankruptcy and death.’

“All science begins with fiction.”



### Speaking Truth to the Platform (3x)

“You read one email, you’ve read them all.” Andrew Weatherhead

“I thought the dystopic future would be more exciting.” So Sad Today

“Every time I think I’ve sorted out my life, capitalism collapses.” Juliet

“Once I was mine. Now I am theirs.” Shoshana Zuboff

“All this time I thought I was a nomad, nah I’m just a runaway.” Sybil  
Prentice

“Recession is when your neighbor loses their job. Depression is when you  
lose yours.” Nicolas LePan

“Internet is the God that failed.” Johan Sjerpstra

“Bring up irrelevant issues as frequently as possible.” CIA manual

“We’re Not Bored. We’re Boring.” Snapchat saying.